

PUBLIC

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Fear for

COLOMBIA Julio HENRÍQUEZ SANTAMARÍA - environmental activist

Environmental activist Julio Henríquez Santamaría was abducted by army-backed paramilitaries on 4 February. His whereabouts are now unknown, and Amnesty International is seriously concerned for his safety

Julio Henríquez was at a meeting with peasant farmers, discussing an environmental project, at the local school in the village of Calabazo, department of Magdalena, in the Caribbean coastal area of northern Colombia. A paramilitary group arrived in a pick-up truck, beat him and drove him away.

Julio Henríquez is a well-known community activist and member of the *Madre Tierra* (Mother Earth) environmental association. He is a former member of the guerrilla organization *Movimiento 19 de Abril* (M-19), 19 April Movement, which formally demobilized in 1990, when it was recognized as a legal political party and its members received an amnesty.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Colombian armed forces, and their paramilitary allies, commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups over the past five years. The Colombian government suspended the constitutional legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and in 1989 issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups, yet they continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Julio Henríquez Santamaría, who reportedly "disappeared" after being abducted by paramilitaries on 4 February;
- urging that there should be a full and impartial investigation to establish the whereabouts of Julio Henríquez Santamaría and that, if in detention, efforts should be made to ensure they he is released immediately;
- urging that his abductors are brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Magdalena, urging that the results are made public, and that those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and decisive action to combat and dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with repeated government commitments and United Nations recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Fax: + 57 1 336 2109 / 337 1351

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr. Presidente

Vice-President of the Republic

Señor Vicepresidente Gustavo Bell Lemus

Alto Consejero Presidencial para asuntos de Derechos Humanos y lucha Contra la Corrupción

Cra. 8 #7-26, Palacio de Nariño,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 337 1350 / 337 1351

Salutation: Excmo. Sr. Vicepresidente / Dear Vice-President

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

Señor Rodrigo Villalba Mosquera

Ministro de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural

Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural

Avenida Jiménez N°7-65, Piso 3

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: +57 1 336 1562

Salutation: Excmo. Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'

Apartado Aéreo 33035

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 March 2001.