

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 99/92 Torture/Death Threats

25 March 1992

COLOMBIA: César CHAPARRO NIVIA, trade unionist, political activist
Vladimir HINCAPIÉ GALEANO

Margarita AGUDELO ALZATE (female)

Hernando AGUDELO ALZATE

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the alleged torture of César Chaparro Nivia and Vladimir Hincapié Galeano whilst in the detention of Colombian security forces and of the subsequent death of César Chaparro on 4 March 1992, reportedly as a result of injuries received during his detention. Amnesty International is also concerned for the safety of César Chaparro's wife Margarita Agudelo Alzate and her brother Hernando Agudelo Alzate, who have reportedly received death threats after making a formal complaint (*denuncia*) about César Chaparro's death to the Colombian Procurator General, Procurador General de la Nación.

According to reports, at approximately 3 pm on 29 February 1992 César Chaparro Nivia and Vladimir Hincapié Galeano were detained in the Kennedy neighbourhood of Bogotá by agents of the Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS), Department of State Security. César Chaparro reportedly received several gunshot wounds at the time of detention. Both men were taken to a DAS base.

At approximately 5 pm Vladimir Hincapié was reportedly admitted to the San Juan de Dios hospital, with injuries allegedly incurred as a result of torture and at 12.35 the next morning César Chaparro was admitted to the same hospital. Witnesses say that both men were constantly watched over by DAS agents, who prevented them from communicating with relatives. César Chaparro spoke to one of the nurses attending him, reportedly telling her that he was a teacher, that he had been tortured and requesting that she report this to the Procurator's office. César Chaparro died, allegedly as a result of his injuries, on 4 March. Vladimir Hincapié is believed still to be in hospital.

On 18 March, at 6.30 pm, César Chaparro's wife, Margarita Agudelo Alzate and her brother Hernando Agudelo Alzate reportedly received an anonymous phone call threatening them with death. They believe that this phone call was a direct result of the *denuncia*, formal denouncement, made by them to the Procurator's office following César Chaparro's death.

César Chaparro was a trade unionist and an active member of the legal left-wing coalition party Unión Patriótica (UP), Patriotic Union. Since its creation in 1985, the UP claims that over 1,500 of its members have been victims of politically motivated killings, from grassroots activists to national leaders.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In an official report produced by the Procurator General's office in September 1991,

the Public Ministry stated that more than 3,000 complaints had been lodged against the army and police in the past two years for human rights abuses including murder, "disappearance" and torture. The report said that a significant number of the victims were members of the Unión Patriótica or trade unionists. President César Gaviria Trujillo, on presenting the report, stated:

"No puede el Gobierno desconocer la gravedad de las acusaciones que se hacen en forma reiterada y masiva contra sus agentes, ni ignorar hasta que punto reina la impunidad por violación de derechos humanos."

"The government cannot fail to recognise the seriousness of the accusations made constantly and on a massive scale against its agents, nor ignore the extent of impunity in cases of human rights violations".

However, despite the government's declared commitment to uphold respect for human rights, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses, including torture, extrajudicial execution and "disappearance" with virtual impunity.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of Margarita Agudelo Alzate and her brother Hernando Agudelo Alzate, following serious threats to their lives;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation into the threats in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- expressing concern at the death of César Chaparro Nivia and the injuries to Vladimir Hincapié Galeano, allegedly the result of torture carried out whilst in the custody of the Department of State Security, Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS);
- urging that these allegations be investigated, the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging that the government take all possible measures to protect the lives of civilians, members of trades unions and legal opposition parties and ensure that they are able to carry out their lawful activities without fear.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic:
Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472
Salutation: Sr. Procurador General de la Nación /
Dear Dr. Arrieta

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066
+ 57 1 286 7324
+ 57 1 287 7937

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /
Dear President Gaviria

2) Procurator General:
Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or
41213 PGNDP CO

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr Jaime Córdoba Triviño

Defensor del Pueblo

Procuraduría General

Edificio Banco Ganadero

Carrera 5, No. 15-80

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Defensor del Pueblo Trivino,
c/o Procuraduria General,
Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia**

Telexes: 41224 PREGN CO OR

41213 pgndp CO

Faxes + 57 1 284 0472

**Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño /
Dear Dr Triviño**

4) Head of State Department of Security:

Dr Fernando Brito

Director

Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad

Carrera 28, No. 17A-00

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Director Departamento
Administrativo de Seguridad,
Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia**

Telexes: 43363 JEDAS

**Salutation: Estimado Dr Brito /
Dear Dr Brito**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Justice:

Fernando Carillo

Ministro de Justicia

Ministerio de Justicia

Carrera 15, No 9-63

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country

2) Lawyers' Association:

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados

AA 44456

Santa Fe de Bogotá

Colombia

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 May 1992.