

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/18/00

UA 77/00 Fear for Safety / Possible "Disappearance" / Killing 5 April 2000

COLOMBIA Members of the Indigenous *Embera-Katío* communities in Antioquia
Department

possible "disappearance":
Remigio BAILARÍN

Killed:
Rubén Darío BAILARÍN, aged 12

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the indigenous *Embera-Katío* communities in the department of Antioquia who are being attacked both by paramilitary forces, who operate with the support or acquiescence of the security forces, and armed opposition groups. Neither side in the long-running armed conflict accept the community's right not to be drawn into the conflict.

On 26 March 2000, community member Remigio Bailarín was reportedly abducted by paramilitaries belonging to the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia. His whereabouts remain unknown and Amnesty International is very concerned for his safety.

On the 28 March the body of 12-year-old Rubén Darío Bailarín was found in a rural area between the towns of Frontino and Dabeiba in northwest Antioquia. It appears he had been shot by paramilitaries.

These latest attacks on the *Embera-Katío* community follow reports of an increased paramilitary presence around the town of Dabeiba and neighboring towns in the department of Antioquia (see UA 61/00, AMR 23/14/00).

On 6 February Guillermo Niasa, an indigenous leader of the *Embera-Katío* community, and his 12-year-old son, Ivan Niasa Domicó, were reportedly killed by the armed opposition group: *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, near to the town of Ríosucio, in the neighbouring Department of Chocó.

On 9 March Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action on behalf of indigenous rights activist Jairo Bedoya Hoyos, who "disappeared" on 2 March 2000 in Medellín, capital of Antioquia Department (see UA 59/00, AMR 23/11/00, 9 March 2000). As a member of the *Organización Indígena de Antioquia* (OIA), Indigenous Organization of Antioquia, Jairo Bedoya Hoyos is involved in the "*Para que Embera Viva*", "For the Life of the *Embera* Indigenous People" campaign for the respect of the cultural rights and security of the community. It is believed that this work may have exposed him to attack from both the security forces and their paramilitary allies and armed opposition forces. His whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Peasant, black and indigenous communities living in disputed zones in Colombia's armed conflict are often attacked by both sides. In response to the lack of security faced by the indigenous communities in Antioquia, the OIA declared the communities's neutrality in an effort to get both sides to respect the safety of their members.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the *Embera-Katio* community in Antioquia and calling on the authorities to take all appropriate steps, as agreed by the community, to guarantee their safety;
- condemning the killing, apparently by paramilitaries, of twelve year old Rubén Darío Balarín, a member of the *Embera-Katio* community in Antioquia;
- expressing concern for the safety of Remigio Balarín whose whereabouts are not known since he was reportedly abducted by paramilitaries 26 March 2000;
- calling on the authorities to take steps to secure the release of Remigio Balarín;
- calling for full, prompt and impartial investigations into the abduction of Remigio Balarín and the killing of 12-year-old Rubén Darío Balarín, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- condemning the killing of indigenous leader Guillermo Niasa and his son, reportedly by FARC guerrillas, calling for full, prompt and impartial investigations, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434 / 284 2186 / 337 1351

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Néstor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No. 8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministerio del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 8025 / 281 5884 / 342 3201

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Governor of the Department of Antioquia

Dr. Alberto Builes Ortega, Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia
Gobernación de Antioquia, Calle 42B, # 52-106, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Telegrams: Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

Faxes: + 574 381 1342

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Indigenous Organization of Antioquia

Organización Indígena de Antioquia (OIA)
Cra 49#63, Medellín, Antioquia, 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 15 May 2000.