

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "disappearance"

22 April 1993

COLOMBIA: Delio VARGAS, aged 28, president of human rights group

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Delio Vargas, who has not been seen since he was taken forcefully from a street in Villavicencio, capital of Meta department, on 19 April 1993.

According to the information received, Delio Vargas and his wife arrived at their home in the Villavicencio suburb "Barrio 20 de Julio" at approximately 6 pm on 19 April and were ambushed by five heavily-armed men in civilian dress, who forced Delio Vargas into a vehicle. According to eye-witnesses, Delio Vargas attempted to escape from his captors, but fell as he ran and was forced back into the vehicle and driven to an unknown destination. His abduction has been denounced to the Procurator General's office, Procuraduría General.

Delio Vargas is president of the regional office of ASCODAS, Asociación Colombiana de Asistencia Social, Colombian Association for Social Assistance, an organization working with people from the department of Meta who have been displaced from their homes and land by political violence. Delio Vargas has been involved in the organization of a forum entitled "Peaceful Alternatives in Meta department", due to take place in Villavicencio on 23 April 1993, with the aim of bringing together all sectors of the community, including local and national authorities to discuss peaceful solutions to the violence of the region. Delio Vargas is also a member of the legal opposition party Unión Patriótica, (UP), Patriotic Union. The UP claims that since its creation in 1985 more than 1,500 of its members have been the victims of politically motivated killings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Villavicencio is the capital of Meta department. Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports in recent months of human rights violations against members of the civilian population of Meta by Colombian armed forces and paramilitary groups working under their control or with their acquiescence, violations including arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. This coincides with an escalating offensive by the Colombian armed forces against the armed opposition group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, in the region. In areas where guerrilla forces are active, the local population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. Particular victims have been community leaders, human rights workers and members of opposition parties.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Delio Vargas, who has not been seen since 19 April 1993 when he was abducted by heavily armed men in Villavicencio;
- urging an immediate and thorough inquiry into his whereabouts;

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- urging that if he is in detention, that he be humanely treated and allowed access to lawyers and relatives;
- urging that if in detention, that he be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released immediately.

APPEALS TO

1) Governor of Meta department:

Señor Omar Armando Baquero
Gobernador del Departamento del Meta
Gobernación del Meta
Carrera 33 No. 38-45
Villavicencio
Meta, Colombia

**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador /
Dear Señor Baquero**

Telegrams: Gobernador Baquero, Villavicencio, Meta, Colombia

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

**Salutation: Sr. Procurador de la
Nación /
Dear Dr. Arrieta**

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
Defensor del Pueblo
Defensoría del Pueblo
Calle 34, Carrera 5
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

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

**Telegrams: Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota,
Colombia**

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

4) Attorney General:

Dr. Gustavo de Greiff
Fiscal General
Fiscalia General
Apartado Aéreo 29855
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Greiff /
Dear Dr. de Greiff**

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalia General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 287 0939

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324, + 57 1 287 7937

2) Human Rights and Educational Organization:

Señores
CINEP
AA 25916
Santa Fe 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 3 June 1993.