

COLOMBIA Carlos Andrés AGUDELO HENAO, Student

Student Carlos Andrés Agudelo Henao was abducted by gunmen in Antioquia department on 21 April, and his whereabouts are now unknown. Amnesty International believes he is in grave danger.

Six unidentified gunmen apparently forced their way into his grandmother's house, in the community of Damasco, municipality of Santa Bárbara, at 11pm. They searched the house, looking for weapons and someone named "Hernando". When the gunmen demanded to know where they were from, Carlos Andrés and his mother said they were visitors from Medellín. The gunmen replied that if this was not true they would return to kill everyone there.

The gunmen handcuffed Carlos Andrés and forced him and his brother, Raúl Henao, into a waiting vehicle and again demanded to know where "Hernando" was. They then released Raúl Henao and drove off in the direction of El Cairo, in the department of Antioquia, where there are reported to be many army-backed paramilitaries.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Several thousand civilians have been killed or "disappeared" at the hands of paramilitary groups over the past five years. Others have been forced to flee after guerrilla forces have threatened or killed those they consider to be army or paramilitary collaborators.

The Colombian government suspended the legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups in 1989, yet they continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country. The authorities have taken no effective steps to control their actions and to hold members accountable for serious and widespread human rights violations. The Attorney General recently stated that the security forces have yet to act on more than 200 outstanding warrants for the arrest of alleged paramilitary members responsible for widespread human rights violations. Colombia's President, Andrés Pastrana, took office on 8 August 1998. So far, he and his government have not taken effective steps to tackle the country's long running human rights crisis.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Carlos Andrés Agudelo Restrepo, who was reportedly abducted by gunmen in the community of Damasco, municipality of Santa Bárbara, department of Antioquia, on 21 April 2000;
- calling on the authorities to open an immediate and comprehensive investigation into the "disappearance" of Carlos Andrés Agudelo Restrepo, to establish his whereabouts and bring to justice those responsible;
- urging that the results of the investigation be made public;
- asking that all measures are taken to guarantee his safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups in the department of Antioquia, for the results to be made public and for those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice;

- asking the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and UN recommendations.

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

Telex: 44281 PALP CO

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

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez,

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 571 570 2022 (If the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor" and wait
for the signal.)

Salutation: Estimado Dr./Dear Dr.

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

Fax: + 574 381 1342

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores

ASFADDES

AA 011446

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 7 June 2000.