

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 91/94 Fear for Safety

7 March 1994

COLOMBIA Adelaida SIERRA AVILEZ (f), and her four young children

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Adelaida Sierra Avilez and her family who have decided to return to the home they were forced to abandon in 1993 after they were reportedly subjected to death threats and harassment by the Colombian armed forces.

On 3 August 1993, Adelaida Sierra's husband, a bus driver, was detained by members of the armed forces and charged with "rebellion" (*rebelión*). Adelaida Sierra and her four young children were then reportedly subjected to threats and harassment by members of the armed forces. Concerned for their own safety, the family abandoned their home and land in Puerto Inirida, Arauca department.

Currently homeless and without means of support, they have now decided to return home.

In view of the fact that the authorities have taken no steps either to investigate who is responsible for the threats or to protect Adelaida Sierra Avilez and her children, there is serious concern that on their return home the family will be targeted by the security forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. President César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Civilians living in areas where guerrilla forces are active are often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and have, as a result, been subjected to extrajudicial execution and other abuses. Only exceptionally are perpetrators brought to justice; the vast majority of members of the armed forces responsible for gross human rights violations remain in active service.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Adelaida Sierra Avilez and her four young children in the light of the threats and harassment they have reportedly been subjected to since the detention of Adelaida Sierra's husband in August 1993;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough investigation into the threats and harassment, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging that the Colombian government take all possible measures to protect the physical integrity of Adelaida Sierra Avilez and her children so that they can live their lives in the home of their choice without fear.

APPEALS TO

- 1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939
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
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472
Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta

3) Advocate for the People:
 Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo,
Bogota, Colombia
Faxes:+ 57 1 288 6683
Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/Dear Dr. Triviño

4) Minister of Defence
 Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda, Bogota, Colombia
Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Lawyers' Association:
 Corporación Colectivo de Abogados
 AA 44456
 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 18 April 1994.