

Further information on UA 221/01 (AMR 23/085/01, 5 September 2001) and follow-up (AMR 23/111/2001, 2 November 2001) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Pablo Javier Arenales (m)]

José Guillermo Larios (m)] human rights activists

Yaneth Rubio Rodríguez (f)]

Diana Marcela Gallego (f) and her family

Diana Garcia (f)

Other members of REINICIAR

New name: Francisco Campo (m), Human Rights Worker

Other members of the non-governmental organization *Corporación Regional para la Defensa de Derechos Humanos*, (CREDHOS), Regional Human Rights Corporation
in Barrancabermeja, department of Santander

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of human rights worker Francisco Campo, a leading member of the *Corporación Regional para la Defensa de Derechos Humanos*, (CREDHOS), Regional Human Rights Corporation, after receiving information that he has been declared a "military target" ("*objetivo militar*") by army-backed paramilitary forces operating in the city of Barrancabermeja, department of Santander. Amnesty International is also concerned for the safety of other human rights workers, trade unionists and popular activists in the city.

According to information received, paramilitary forces belonging to the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, forced inhabitants of the La Esperanza district of Barrancabermeja to attend a public meeting on 20 February. At the meeting the AUC reportedly announced that they were soon to attack community leaders and trade union activists and that they had declared Francisco Campo to be a "military target". They reportedly stated that they had done this to silence the public denunciations CREDHOS issues constantly on human rights violations carried out by paramilitary forces in Barrancabermeja and surrounding areas.

CREDHOS, other human rights activists, trade unionists and popular activists in Barrancabermeja have been repeatedly threatened by paramilitary forces allied to the security forces, who have often labelled them guerrilla collaborators. These accusations have frequently been followed by serious human rights violations.

Amnesty International's concerns are further heightened because the AUC have been able to maintain a large presence in Barrancabermeja since the end of 2000 despite the fact that the city and surrounding region is heavily militarized. Secondly, despite repeated international alerts and denunciations, no decisive measures have been taken to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders or other activists. The authorities have also failed to ensure that threats and human rights violations against these activists in Barrancabermeja are fully investigated and those responsible are brought to justice.

There is no further information on Pablo Javier Arenales, José Guillermo Larios, Yaneth Rubio Rodríguez, Diana Marcela Gallego and her family and Diana Garcia at this time.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Francisco Campo, other CREDHOS workers and human rights activists, trade unionists and popular activists in Barrancabermeja following reports of paramilitary threats against them;
- urging that all measures, deemed appropriate by those under threat themselves, are taken to guarantee their safety;
- urging that full and impartial investigations into these threats are undertaken, that the results are made public and that those responsible are brought to justice;
- urging full and impartial investigations into links between the security forces and paramilitary forces in Barrancabermeja and surrounding areas are undertaken, that the results are made public and that those members of the security forces responsible for supporting and operating in unison with paramilitary forces are brought to justice;
- expressing concern at the continued large-scale presence of AUC forces in Barrancabermeja despite the heavy military presence in the city and urging immediate decisive action to confront and dismantle these groups in line with repeated UN recommendations and governmental commitments

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Colombia
Presidente de la República de Colombia
Dr. Andrés Pastrana Arango
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 566 2071 / 562 8930

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President

Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia
Vicepresidente de la República de Colombia
Dr. Gustavo Bell Lemus
Vicepresidencia
Carrera 8A No 5-57
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Vice-Presidente Bell, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 334 1138

Salutation : Excelentísimo Sr. Vicepresidente/ Dear Vice-President

Minister of the Interior
Dr. Armando Estrada Villa,
Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior,
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 562 5298 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")

COPIES TO:

CREDHOS
AA 505
Barrancabermeja
Santander, 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 8 April 2002.