

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA

**Domingo Tovar Arrieta (m), Director of the Human Rights Department of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, (CUT), Colombian Trade Union Confederation  
Ana Paulina Tovar González (f), student, his daughter**

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Domingo Tovar Arrieta, Director of the Human Rights Department of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, (CUT), Colombian Trade Union Confederation, and his family. Domingo Tovar Arrieta has received death threats and his daughter, Ana Paulina Tovar González, has twice been targeted by kidnappers.

At around 6.20 am on 21 March, as Ana Paulina Tovar González was walking to the Barranquilla Hospital in Atlántico department, where she is working on a university placement, she was reportedly stopped by two unidentified men. One of the men allegedly grabbed her and pushed her into a waiting car. She was reportedly punched several times in the car before she was able to climb out and get away.

This is the second attempted abduction of Ana Paulina Tovar González this year. On 17 January she and her sister were reportedly followed by a group of men who tried to force Ana Paulina Tovar González into their car. A passer-by came to the girls' aid and Ana Paulina Tovar González was able to escape.

At the beginning of March, Domingo Tovar Arrieta gave information to the authorities about a paramilitary plan to kill several national trade union leaders, including Domingo Tovar Arrieta himself. On 28 March, he reportedly received a threatening call on his radio telephone, which had been provided by government human rights officials for his protection after previous threats and fears for his safety. The telephone call was from an unidentified woman who said, "*ya estas sintiendo y vas a sentir más*" ("you are already feeling it and you're going to feel it more").

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The security and armed forces and their paramilitary allies have often accused trade unionists of being guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators. As a result, trade unionists and their families have frequently been harassed, tortured and killed, often by paramilitaries (see AMR 23/023/2003, 6 March 2003 and UA 192/02, AMR 23/067/2002, 25 June 2002). According to CUT, ten trade union leaders have been killed so far this year, eight have been detained and hundreds have been forcibly displaced due to threats.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Domingo Tovar Arrieta, his daughter Ana Paulina Tovar González and other members of his family;
- asking the authorities what action they will take to guarantee the safety of those at risk;
- calling for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists to be adequately resourced in order to provide more effective protection to trade unionists;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the two kidnapping attempts against Ana Paulina Tovar González and the reported plan to kill Domingo Tovar Arrieta, with the results of both investigations made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, for the results to be made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice;

- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the United Nations (UN) and other intergovernmental organizations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño  
Carrera 8 No.7-26  
Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:** **Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax:** **+ 57 1 342 0592**

**Salutation:** **Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe / Dear President Uribe**

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,  
Ministro del Interior y de Justicia  
Ministerio del Interior  
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:** **Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:** **+ 57 1 566 4573**

**Salutation:** **Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,  
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,  
Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),  
Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:** **+ 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say “me da tono de fax por favor por Dr Osorio”)**

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

**COPIES TO:**

Trade Union Confederation

Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia  
Calle 35 N1 7-25, Piso 9 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 12 May 2003.