

EXTERNAL

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Death threat / Fear for safety

23 May 1996

COLOMBIA Jairo Alfonso Gamboa López, trade unionist

Amnesty International fears for the safety of Jairo Alfonso Gamboa López, a member of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de Titán S.A*, Titan S.A. Worker's Union and other members of the trade union following a recent death threat.

On 17 May 1996 a written death threat was reportedly found in the office of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de Titán S.A.*, Titan S.A. Worker's Union. The message announced that Jairo Alfonso Gamboa had been "sentenced to death" by a paramilitary group calling itself *Colombia sin Guerrilla*, Colombia without Guerrillas, for being a "dogmatic communist of the Maoist tendency, camouflaged as a trade unionist in the Titán company, a highly-dangerous professional agitator who moves confidently in any sector of the country or the city preparing the ground for the creation of guerrilla groups and groups of assassins set up to execute the opponents of his criminal activity" ("*comunista dogmático de tendencia maoista, camuflado de sindicalista de Titán, agitador profesional de alta peligrosidad que se mueve con propiedad en cualquier sector del campo o de la ciudad preparando el terreno para el nacimiento de cuadrillas bandoleras y grupos de asesinos para ejecutar a los opositores de su criminal actividad*")

On 26 October 1995 a list of approximately 100 social, trade union activists and political activists whom COLSINGUE accused of being guerrillas was made public. The list included members of the *Junta Directiva*, Executive Board of the Titán S.A. Worker's Union. In the past those accused of being guerrillas or guerrilla sympathizers by members of the security forces or their paramilitary allies have frequently become the victims of human rights violations. The death threat against Jairo Alfonso Gamboa has renewed fears for the safety of other members of the Titán S.A. Worker's Union and particularly members of its Executive Committee.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. President Ernesto Samper Pizano has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights and to tackle impunity.

Trade unionists, popular leaders, civic activists and human rights workers are among those frequently the target of human rights violations by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. 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/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Jairo Alfonso Gamboa López who received a death threat on 17 May 1996;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into the threats, that the results be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that all possible measures, deemed appropriate by Jairo Alfonso Gamboa López, be undertaken to protect his life;
- urging immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and bring those members of such groups responsible for human right violations to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377 / 286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2)Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro de Gobierno
Ministerio de Gobierno
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Serpa, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 286 6524 / 286 0053 / 286 0485

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence

Dr.Juan Carlos Esguerra
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa , Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Colombian Commission of Jurists
Comisión Colombiana de Juristas
AA 58533
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 20 July 1996.