

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/029/2002

6 March 2002

Further information on UA 62/02 (AMR 23/028/2002, 27 February 2002) - Fear for Safety/Possible "Disappearance"

COLOMBIA Gilberto Torres Martínez (m) - trade union leader
Other members of the Oil Workers' Union (USO), Monterrey Municipality,
Department of Casanare

On 3 March, the *Autodefensas Campesinas del Casanare*, (ACC), Peasant Self-Defence Forces of Casanare, part of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, (AUC), United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia, announced that they had captured Gilberto Torres Martínez and that he would face a paramilitary trial within the next 7 days. The ACC has accused Gilberto Torres Martínez of "*realizaba actividades subversivas en apoyo a las acciones y atentados terroristas guerrilleros*", "carrying out subversive activities supporting the actions and attacks of guerrilla terrorists". The results of the trial will be announced shortly.

In the past, other USO activists, accused by paramilitary groups of collaborating with the guerrillas have been killed. In December 2001, Aury Sará Marrugo and his bodyguard Enrique Arellano were forcibly abducted by paramilitaries and subsequently killed. (See UA 309/01, AMR 23/121/2001, 3 December 2001 and follow-up AMR 23/122/2001, 6 December 2001). Prior to his death, the AUC reportedly admitted to the abduction of Aury Sará Marrugo, whom they said would face a paramilitary trial for his alleged membership of Colombia's second largest armed opposition group, the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, (ELN), National Liberation Army.

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

- urging the authorities to order an independent, impartial and conclusive investigation into the abduction of Gilberto Torres Martínez by the ACC and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities undertake immediate action to guarantee the safety of Gilberto Torres Martínez;
- expressing concern for the safety of USO and other trade union activists in Casanare and nationally following the abduction of Gilberto Torres Martínez;
- asking the authorities what measures, deemed appropriate by those under threat themselves, they are going to take to guarantee the safety of those at risk;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Casanare urging that the results are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are 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 UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Presidente de la República, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 566 2071

Salutation: Dear President Pastrana Arango / Excmo. Sr. Presidente Pastrana Arango

Minister of Interior

Sr. Armando Estrada Villa

Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o., Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

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

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Commander of the Armed Forces

General Fernando Tapias Stahelin,
Comandante General de las Fuerzas Militares
Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante Fuerzas Militares, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 222 2935

Salutation: Dear Commander Tapias Stahelin / Sr. General Tapias Stahelin

COPIES TO:

Trade Union Confederation

CUT, Nacional, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia
Calle 35 N° 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 17 April 2002.