

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/"Disappearance"

30 May 1991

COLOMBIA: Rodrigo NAVARRO PINTO, aged 34 ) both trade unionists and  
Robert VALET FUENTES, aged 27 ) local community leaders

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of trade unionists Rodrigo Navarro Pinto and Robert Valet Fuentes, who went missing on 23 May 1991 between Puente Sogamoso and Barrancabermeja, Santander department.

Rodrigo Navarro Pinto and Robert Valet Fuentes both work at an oil products factory called "*Oleaginosas Las Brisas*" and are active members of the Puerto Wilches branch of the Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Industria Agropecuaria (SINTRAINAGRO), National Union of Agrarian Workers, as well as being local community leaders in Puente Sogamoso. They have not been seen since 6.30pm on 23 May 1991 when they left Puente Sogamoso, in the municipality of Puerto Wilches, to travel by motorcycle to Barrancabermeja where they both live with their families. A military operation was reportedly taking place in the area they were travelling through and it is feared that they may have been picked up by an army patrol. However, as far as Amnesty International is aware, their detention has not been acknowledged. Two men who were detained in separate incidents by army patrols in the nearby municipality of Yondó on 6 May 1991, Luis Fernando Vásquez and Oscar Muñoz Jimenez, were both later found dead (see UA 177/91, AMR 23/29/91, 23 May 1991).

In recent years scores of agricultural workers, many of them SINTRAINAGRO members and representatives, have been seized and killed by the armed forces or civilians working with them or under their authority, particularly in the banana-producing region of Uraba, Antioquia department.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including "*disappearances*". Local human rights groups estimate that over 2,000 people have "*disappeared*" and remain unaccounted for since 1980. Principal targets have been people associated with trade unions, civic and community movements and legal left-wing parties, as well as alleged members of or sympathizers with armed opposition groups. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each individual "*disappearance*", as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, on the basis of available evidence, the organization concludes that many such abuses are carried out by members of the Colombian security forces or civilians working under their control.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of Rodrigo Navarro Pinto and Robert Valet Fuentes, who were last seen on 23 May 1991;
- urging that there be an immediate effective investigation to establish their whereabouts;
- urging that, if in detention, they be humanely treated and be provided full access to lawyers and relatives;

- urging that, if in detention, they be immediately brought before a competent court or released.

**APPEALS TO:**

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Bogotá D.E., Colombia

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066; + 57 1 287 7937  
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 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Procuraduría General  
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**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogota, Colombia**

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**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

General Oscar Botero Restrepo  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**

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**COPIES TO:**

Señores

CSPP (Comité de Solidaridad con Presos Políticos)

A.A. 22803

Bogotá

Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 July 1991.