

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/"Disappearance"

19 June 1991

COLOMBIA: Noel EDINSON RAMIREZ, law student, aged 26

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of Noel Edinson Ramírez, a 26-year-old law student, who was last seen on 17 June 1991 in Valle department.

According to reports, six hooded and heavily-armed men seized Noel Edinson Ramírez on 17 June 1991 near La Chapa Ranch (finca) between the communities (veredas) of Villacolombia and Liberia in the municipality (municipio) of Jamundi, Valle department, and forced him into a blue truck. He has not been seen since.

Noel Edinson Ramírez lives in the community of Liberia and, as well as being a law student, is an active member of the Unión Patriótica (UP), Patriotic Union, a legal left-wing coalition group. Since its creation in 1985, the UP claims that over 1,500 of its members, including grassroots activists, local councillors, congress members and national leaders, have been the victims of politically-motivated "disappearance" and/or extrajudicial execution at the hands of the security forces or civilians working with them or under their authority. According to the UP, over 50 of its members have already been killed since the beginning of 1991 and 13 have "disappeared".

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 Noel Edinson Ramírez, who was last seen on 17 June 1991;
- urging that there be an immediate, effective investigation to establish his whereabouts;
- urging that, if in detention, he be humanely treated and be provided full access to lawyers and relatives;

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

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APPEALS TO

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

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Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
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Dr Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
 Procurador General de la Nación
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 Edificio Banco Ganadero
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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
Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

COPIES TO:

Señores
 ASFADDES (Association of Relatives of the
 A.A. 011446 "Disappeared")
 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 31 July 1991.