

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/036/2002

5 April 2002

Further information on UA 240/01 (AMR 23/093/01, 20 September ) and follow-up (MAR 23/123/01, 10 December 2001, AMR 23/093/01, 20 September 2001 and AMR 23/097/2001, 24 September 2001) - Fear for safety

COLOMBIA Members of the National non-governmental human rights organization *Sembrar*, including Ludivía Giraldo(f) and Diana Herrera(f)  
New name: Alexander Herrera(m)

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Amnesty International is extremely concerned for the safety of those named above, as in recent weeks the threats and harassment against them have increased in intensity and frequency.

On 27 March, while walking toward the western part of Bogotá, Alexander Herrera noticed that he was being followed by an unidentified man who was also taking his picture. Alexander alerted police officers nearby, who immediately arrested the man and removed the film from his camera for further investigation.

At 6:30 pm on 26 March, as members of *Sembrar* left their office they noticed a blue car parked in front of the building. A man and a woman inside the car switched on the lights and engine of the car as soon as they saw them on the street. Alerted by their presence, the members of *Sembrar* decided to return to their office and contacted a trade unionist friend who has bodyguards allocated to him as part of the protection program of the Ministry of Interior. The trade unionist and his bodyguards answered their appeal and went to the *Sembrar's* office. The car drove quickly away as soon as they arrived.

On the same day Diana Herrera, member of *Sembrar*, was followed by three unidentified men on the streets of the centre of Bogotá. As Diana attempted to elude her followers, the men following her fell back. A few minutes later a fourth man began to follow her.

Blanca Lucía Valencia, legal representative of *Sembrar*, was forced to leave the country to protect her life after being intensively harassed and threatened during the last six months of last year. On 26 February Ludivía Giraldo, who has replaced Blanca Lucía, was also followed by two unidentified men in a van after leaving *Sembrar's* offices.

As part of this apparent campaign of harassment and threats all members of *Sembrar* are receiving threatening phone calls on their mobiles.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Immediately after the death of Yolanda Cerón (see UA 240/01, AMR 23/093/01, 20 September 2001) *Sembrar* workers received a telephoned death threat apparently making reference her murder. Since then the threats against them have increased. Human rights defenders are frequently labelled guerrilla collaborators by security forces and their paramilitary allies. Such accusations are frequently followed by serious human rights violations such as abductions, murders or torture

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ludivia Giraldo, Diana Herrera, Alexander Herrera and other Sembrar members in Bogotá;
- urging the authorities to do everything deemed appropriate by those under threat to guarantee their safety;
- urging the authorities to provide the members of Sembrar with the preventive measures that were recommended by the Interamerican Human Rights Commission on 5 October 2001 and UN recommendations to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the recent death threats against Sembrar members, urging that the results be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and United Nations recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA  
**Telegram: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telex: 44281 PALP CO**  
**Fax: + 57 1 566 2071**  
**Salutation: Dear President Pastrana / Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente Pastrana**

Minister of Defence

Dr. Gustavo Bell  
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52, Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA  
**Telegram: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telex: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**  
**Fax: + 57 1 222 00 59 / 221 3653**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister Bell / Sr. Ministro Bell**

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Armando Estrada Villa,  
Ministerio del Interior, Ministerio del Interior,  
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.,  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA  
**Telegram: 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**

**COPIES TO:**

*Non-governmental Human Rights Organization Sembrar*  
Apartado Aéreo 18621, 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 May 2002.