

PUBLIC

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UA 267/07 Fear for safety/Death Threats

COLOMBIA Hollman MORRIS (m), journalist

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Journalist Hollman MORRIS, director and presenter of the investigative television programme CONTRAVIA, has received email death threats that appear to come from a previously unknown paramilitary group. Amnesty International fears that his life could be in danger.

On 26 September Hollman MORRIS received an email signed by a group calling itself the National Patriotic Front (*Frente Patriótico Nacional*), which said that he had won a raffle for a coffin for being a guerrilla member, antipatriotic and an informer. He received another email from the group the next day. This time the message included a picture of him crossed out with the letter "X". There was also a message: "Four, three, two... almost there" (*4,3,2, ya casi*). Army-backed paramilitary groups often accuse those they threaten of being members of guerrilla groups.

CONTRAVIA has in the past received threatening and abusive emails from paramilitary groups, but this is the first time that death threats have been sent to Hollman MORRIS' personal email account.

Hollman MORRIS is well-known in Colombia. CONTRAVIA has highlighted sensitive aspects of the human rights situation in the country. The programme is not broadcasting at present, but some investigations for future episodes have been taking place. One of these investigations is about mass graves in which paramilitaries buried people they had killed during Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. Enforced disappearances carried out by paramilitaries are the subject of another programme which is being prepared.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Journalists are frequently threatened or killed by armed groups in Colombia's internal armed conflict, who accuse them of collaborating with their enemies.

Journalists and human rights defenders who have campaigned for justice in cases of human rights violations committed by the security forces or their paramilitary allies have often been subject to serious human rights violations themselves.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Hollman MORRIS, who has received death threats from a group calling itself the *Frente Patriótico Nacional*;
- urging the authorities to take action to guarantee his safety, and provide him with adequate protection in accordance with his wishes, so he can continue his legitimate work as a journalist in safety;
- calling on the authorities to order an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the threats made against Hollman MORRIS, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on them to order full and impartial investigations into the links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, to make the results public and bring those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to justice, in line with the UN's human rights recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

Vice-president of the Republic

Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón

Vicepresidencia, Carrera 8A No 7-27, Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax: +57 1 565 7682**

**Salutation: Dear Vice-president Santos/Estimado Sr. Vice-presidente Santos**

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C, Piso 4

Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax: + 57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)**

**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Mr Iguarán**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr. Fernando Araújo Perdomo

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

Calle 10 No 5-51, Palacio de San Carlos, Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax: +57 1 562 7822**

**Salutation: Dear Sir/Sr. Ministro**

**COPIES 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 30 November 2007.