

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 362/90 Incomunicado detention/Fear of Torture

12 September 1990

COLOMBIA: **María Elena SALINAS GALLEGO**
 Jorge RESTREPO FLOREZ

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AI is concerned about reports of the incomunicado detention and possible ill-treatment of María Elena Salinas Gallego and her husband Jorge Restrepo Florez. They were reportedly detained on 10 September 1990 by agents of the military police and taken to the base of the army's IV Brigade in Medellín, Antioquia department.

María Elena Salinas herself was previously detained on 3 August 1990 by members of the military intelligence (F-2), but released on 4 August without charge.

María Elena Salinas works at the University of Antioquia, Medellín and is in charge of the Department of Communication of the Instituto Popular de Capacitación (IPC), the Popular Training Institute in Medellín, a legal non profit-making organization. On 8 september 1989 the IPC was raided by personnel from the Military Police Battalion No. 4, acting under the authority of the IV Brigade and four members of staff were taken into custody. They were allegedly held blindfold in incomunicado detention and the three men were subjected to ill-treatment by army personnel from the IV Brigade. They were charged with terrorist activity, apparently on the basis of a communique issued by the Commander of the IV Brigade, but were ordered to be released unconditionally on the grounds that there was no evidence against them. Since that time, they have been threatened with re-arrest and their defence lawyers have reportedly received anonymous threats.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights violations are occurring on an increasing scale in Colombia against a background of escalating civil conflict and non-political violence.

The local civilian population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by army personnel and civilians working for them.

Following the introduction of new state of siege legislation in August 1989, thousands of people have been arrested as part of the government's attempts to combat drug trafficking. Amnesty International recognises the rights of governments to combat criminal activity but is concerned at reports that the Colombian armed forces are using their increased powers to repress legal opposition movements and grassroots organizations.

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

- requesting that the legal situation of Maria Helena Selinas Gallego and Jorge Restrepo Florez be clarified, that they be allowed access to relatives and lawyers and that they be humanely treated whilst in detention;

- urging that they be released unless charged with a criminal offence and brought before a competent court.

APPEALS TO:

President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo	Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria,
Presidente de la Republica	Bogota, Colombia
Palacio de Narino	Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
Bogota, Colombia	Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324
Comandante	
Brig-Gen Harold Bedoya	
IV Brigade	
Medellin	Telegrams: Comandante IV Brigada,
Antioquia, Colombia	Medellin, Antioquia, Colombia
General Oscar Botero	
Ministro de Defensa Nacional	Telegrams: Ministro Defensa,
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional	Bogota, Colombia
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52	Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; Bogota,
Colombia	44561 CFAC CO
	Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874
Dr Alfonso Gomez Mendez	
Procurador General de la Nacion	Telegrams: Procrador General Edificio Banco
Ganadero Gomez, Bogota, Colombia	
Carrera 5, No. 15-80	Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO
Bogota, Colombia	41213 PGNDP CO

COPIES TO:

Instituto Popular de Capacitación
AA 9690
Medellin
Antioquia
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 17 October 1990.