

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 23/41/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 188/94

Possible "disappearance" / Fear for Safety

12 May 1994

COLOMBIA

Francisco Eriberto GALVAN LOPEZ, aged 46

Manuel SOLERA

Joaquín SOLERA

On 2 May 1994 Francisco Eriberto Galvan López, Manuel Solera and Joaquín Solera were abducted from their homes by a group of between 50 and 60 heavily armed men. They have not been seen since and there is serious concern for their safety.

Eye-witnesses report that the abductors, wearing a mixture of military and civilian dress, arrived at 4am in two large vehicles in the community of San Vicente del Congo in the municipality of Turbo in the heavily militarized Urabá region of Antioquia department. They identified themselves as members of a paramilitary "self-defence" group and reportedly had a list of people's names.

Some of those whose names appeared on the list were forced out of their houses, including Francisco Galvan, Manuel Solera and Joaquín Solera. Francisco Galvan was reportedly forced out of his home when the armed men threatened to set fire to it. He was made to lie face down on the ground with his hands tied behind his back. He, Manuel Solera and Joaquín Solera were then driven to an unknown destination.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Urabá region of Antioquia department is located in the north-west of Colombia. For many years guerrilla groups have been active in the region and, as a result, there is a high presence there of both military and army-backed paramilitary groups. Many paramilitary groups have their origins in the civilian "self-defence" squads which the army created in the 1980s to act as auxiliaries during counter-insurgency operations. Over the past five years, several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups throughout the country. Although in 1989 the Colombian government suspended the legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the Colombia armed forces to combat and disband such groups, paramilitary forces have continued to kill and "disappear" perceived opponents with impunity in many areas of the country and continue to work with the support of the security forces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the abduction and subsequent "disappearance" of Francisco Galvan, Manuel Solera and Joaquín Solera on 2 May 1994 from their homes in the community of San Vicente del Congo in the municipality of Turbo, Antioquia department;
- urging that if they are in detention, that they be humanely treated and allowed access to lawyers and relatives;
- urging that if in detention, that they be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately released;
- urging that the government should immediately fulfil its commitment to disband paramilitary forces presently operating as auxiliaries of the armed forces or with armed forces' complicity. Members of such forces responsible for human rights violations should be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Gaviria

2) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General
 Edificio Banco Ganadero
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Calle 35, No.7-25, P.5
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 288 6683

Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/Dear Dr. Triviño

4) Governor of Antioquia

Sr. Juan Gómez Martínez
 Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia
 Gobernación de Antioquia
 Calle 42B, # 52-106
 Medellín, Antioquia

**Telegrams:Gobernador de Antioquia Gomez Martinez, Gobernación de Antioquia,
 Medellin, Colombia**

Faxes: (42) 518539

Salutation:Estimado Sr. Gómez Martínez/Dear Mr Gómez Martínez

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores
 ASFADDES
 AA 011446
 Santa Fé 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 23 June 1994.