

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/ possible “disappearances”

COLOMBIA

Ronaldo Ramos Arboleda (m)

José Joaquín Mosquera (m)

]

] peasant farmers

Killed:

Ramiro Antonio Sánchez Denis (m)

]

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Ronaldo Ramos Arboleda and José Joaquín Mosquera, two members of the Afro-Colombian peasant farmer communities in the Jiguamiandó River Basin, in Carmen del Darién municipality, Chocó department. They have not been seen since 30 May, when they were reportedly abducted by army-backed paramilitaries.

At around 12pm on 30 May, Ronaldo Ramos Arboleda, Ramiro Antonio Sanchez Denis, José Joaquín Mosquera and another Afro-Colombian peasant were travelling on a boat along the river Jarapetó. When they reached a place known as Guapetó, near the settlement of Pueblo Nuevo, they were reportedly attacked by a group of army-backed paramilitaries who operate in the area. One of the paramilitaries was seen to aim a gun at the peasant farmers. When Ramiro Antonio Sanchez Denis jumped into the water in an attempt to escape, the paramilitaries shot him. His body was later found a few metres down the river. The other man in the boat also jumped into the water and managed to reach the bank of the river alive.

The paramilitaries reportedly abducted the other two men in the boat, Ronaldo Ramos Arboleda and José Joaquín Mosquera, allegedly taking them in the direction of the Uradá area where a paramilitary base is said to be situated. There has been no further news of their whereabouts.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has previously voiced its concerns for the safety of the Afro-Colombian, indigenous, peasant farmer and displaced communities in Chocó department. They have frequently been labelled as guerrilla collaborators by the security forces and their paramilitary allies since they live in areas where the left-wing armed opposition group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, maintain a strong presence. Forces of the armed opposition group *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, (ELN), National Liberation Army, are also present in large numbers in Chocó. The accusations of the communities' collaboration with guerrillas have frequently been followed by serious human rights violations committed by the security forces and their paramilitary auxiliaries. Guerrilla forces for their part have frequently accused members of the returned displaced communities of collaborating with the security forces and their paramilitary allies, and have threatened and killed those they have accused. The communities have demanded that they should not be drawn into the conflict.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ronaldo Ramos Arboleda and José Joaquín Mosquera, who were reportedly abducted by army-backed paramilitaries on 30 May and whose whereabouts are now unknown;
- urging the authorities to do everything necessary to establish the whereabouts of the two men;
- calling for an investigation into the death of Ramiro Antonio Sánchez Denis, who was reportedly killed by paramilitaries;
- expressing concern for the safety of all the communities living along the Jiguamiandó River in Chocó department;

- expressing concern about the increasing presence of army-backed paramilitaries in the region, despite the fact that the area is heavily militarized, and urging the authorities to take action to protect the civilian population in the area;
- calling for full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Chocó department, urging that the results are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with repeated United Nations recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 02**

Salutation: **Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe / Dear President Uribe**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,

Fiscal General de la Nación

Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B 52-01

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Fiscal General, Bogota, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say “me da tono de fax por favor”)**

Salutation: **Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio**

National Advocate for the people

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz,

Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,

Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 office 301,

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Defensor del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 640 0491**

Salutation: **Estimado Sr. Cifuentes Muñoz / Dear Mr. Cifuentes Muñoz**

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental human rights organization

Inter-congregational Commission of Justice and Peace

Comisión Intercongregacional De Justicia y Paz

Calle 50 No 13-19, oficina 203

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 15 July 2003.