

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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TORTURE AND KILLINGS

6 February 2015

COLOMBIA:           Hildegard FELDMANN (Swiss national) (f)  
                      Tomás RODRIGUEZ  
                      One other person unidentified

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Amnesty International is concerned at the reported killing of the above-named people and one other whose name is not known to Amnesty International, in the department of Nariño in circumstances suggesting they were the victims of extrajudicial execution within the context of counter-insurgency operations in the region.

Silvie Seltmann, a Swiss national was killed on 9 September in El Sande community, municipality of Samaniego, department of Nariño (in south east Colombia). According to reports she was killed by troops belonging to the Cabal group (Grupo mecanizado de caballería No. 3 Cabal), under the army's III Brigade who went to El Sande as part of their armed offensive against guerrillas operating in the region. Silvie Seltmann worked as a nurse in the community at the Sociedad Misionera de Belén. During the same army incursion in El Sande, two members of the indian community Gran Cumbal were reportedly detained and tortured before being killed by members of the same army patrols. The two indians, one of whom has been identified as 40-year-old Tomás Rodríguez, were reportedly accused by the army of having assisted the guerrillas.

These killings followed armed confrontations at the end of August between troops under the III Brigade (based in Cali, department of Valle del Cauca) and members of the armed opposition group Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas, (FARC), in the south of Nariño department. Amnesty International does not have further details about these armed confrontations. In their offensive against communities the army believes are under the control of the guerrillas, (such as El Sande), aerial bombardments which have affected the civilian population have been reported.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the beginning of 1990, Amnesty International has become seriously concerned at the increasing number of reports of killings of non-combatant civilians in Colombia. The majority of attacks on non-combatant civilians occur in rural areas placed under tight military control as a result of guerrilla activity. Some appear to be largely indiscriminate attacks against whole communities, targetted for their perceived (left-wing) political allegiances. In several other cases, however, torture, "disappearances" and killings of non-combatant civilians appear to be carried out in direct reprisal for guerrilla attacks against army personnel with the apparent intention of intimidating the civilian population.

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

- expressing concern at the reported killing of Silvie Seltmann and the torture and killing of Tomás Rodríguez in circumstances suggesting they were the victims of extrajudicial execution;
- requesting an immediate independent and impartial inquiry into the torture and killings in order to bring those responsible to justice.

