

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 286/91

Possible Extrajudicial Executions

21 August 1991

COLOMBIA:

Antonio PALACIOS URREA (aged 65)  
Blanca Cecilia PALACIOS ROMERO (aged 18) (female), student  
Camilo PALACIOS ROMERO (aged 27), mathematics student  
Janeth PALACIOS ROMERO (aged 19) (female)  
Rodrigo Elías BARRERA VANEGAS

plus two other men whose names are not yet known

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Amnesty International is concerned at the killings on 18 August 1991 of seven people in the city of Fusagasugá, Cundinamarca department, in circumstances suggesting that they may have been victims of extrajudicial executions.

At about 2.45am on 18 August 1991, about 30 men in military uniform travelling in two trucks arrived at the home of Antonio Palacios Urrea in Los Comuneros, a suburb of the city of Fusagasugá, Cundinamarca department. According to eye-witnesses, the men surrounded the house and entered it from several directions. They then killed five occupants of the house: Antonio Palacios Urrea, said to be a sympathizer of the **Unión Patriótica (UP)**, Patriotic Union, a legal left-wing coalition group; three of his children, Blanca Cecilia, Janeth and Camilo; and Janeth's husband, Rodrigo Elías Barrera Vanegas. Janeth is said to have been shot in the head as she was trying to flee with her two-month-old son in her arms. Her mother and at least two young children who were in the house escaped unhurt. However, two men, whom the assassins are believed to have brought with them and whose identity is not yet clear, were also found dead in the entrance to the house. A military communiqué from the commander of the 13th Brigade of the Colombian Army subsequently alleged that the seven people killed were members of the **Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)**, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a guerrilla group, who had been under surveillance for over a month and that they had been killed during an armed confrontation with soldiers. However, this version of events contradicts the reports of eye-witnesses as well as the findings of police and journalists who visited the scene shortly afterwards, who have repeatedly stated that there was no evidence that the people inside the house had fired upon their attackers.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights violations are occurring on an increasing scale in Colombia against a background of escalating civil conflict and drugs-related 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. Principal victims have included civic and community leaders and members of legal left-wing parties. Since its creation in 1985 the UP claims that over 1,500 of its members have been victims of politically-motivated killings, including grassroots activists, local councillors, congress members and national leaders. Many others have

"disappeared".

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

- expressing concern at the killings of Antonio Palacios Urrea, three of his children, his son-in-law and two others in Fusagasugá on 18 August 1991 in circumstances suggesting they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into their deaths, the results of which should be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice.

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**APPEALS TO**

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

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia**  
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General Oscar Botero Restrepo      **Señor Ministro**  
Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
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**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia**  
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**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

Brigadier General Jesús María Vergara Aragón      **Señor Brigadier General**  
Comandante de la XIII Brigada  
Carrera 7, Calle 100  
Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Comandante XIII Brigada Ejército,**  
**Carrera 7, Calle 100, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia**

Dr Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla      **Señor Procurador General**  
Procurador General de la Nación  
Procuraduría General  
Edificio Banco Ganadero  
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**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia**  
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**COPIES TO;**

Señores  
CINEP  
AA 25916  
Santa Fé de Bogotá  
Colombia (human rights group)

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 4 October 1991.