

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 245/94 Extrajudicial Execution / Torture / Fear for safety 23 June 1994

COLOMBIA

David REYES CASTRO, Public Works Inspector

James PICÓN TORRES, peasant leader, aged 25

Amnesty International is seriously concerned by the apparent extrajudicial execution on 17 June 1994 of David Reyes Castro by army personnel from the Operational Command No 7 of the 2nd Mobile Brigade in the municipality of Pailitas, Cesar department. The organization is also seriously concerned for the safety of James Picón Torres who was reportedly detained and tortured by army personnel from the same Mobile Brigade unit on 20 June also in the municipality of Pailitas, Cesar department.

According to reports, on 17 June David Reyes Castro was visiting a tyre repair workshop situated some 200 metres from the base set up by the army's Operational Command No 7, *Base Militar del Comando Operativo No 7*, in Pailitas, in order to repair his bicycle. Two men followed him from the workshop to a road known as "Commercial Street", "*Calle del Comercio*", where they shot him repeatedly.

Bystanders took David Reyes to the Municipal Hospital of Pailitas where he died shortly afterwards.

Immediately after the shooting the two men were seen entering the military base. Witnesses reported that the two gunmen had been seen on several occasions prior to the attack wearing army uniforms and patrolling the town in vehicles belonging to the police and the army. Days before the shooting, David Reyes had reportedly been threatened by a police agent from the Pailitas police station who had told him that "*if you do not leave Pailitas we will kill you*", "*Si no se va de Pailitas lo vamos a matar*". On 3 June 1994 David Reyes had survived an attempt on his life. Two army officers are reportedly under investigation for their participation in that incident.

James Picón Torres, a peasant and community leader, was reportedly detained by troops from the Operational Command No 7 in the hamlet of Terror, municipality of Pailitas. According to eye-witnesses, James Picón was badly beaten by the soldiers at the time of his arrest and there is serious concern for his safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. Despite the Colombian government's repeated pledges to protect human rights, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses with impunity. Left-wing political activists and peasant farmers living in areas of guerrilla activity have been the principal victims.

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

- expressing concern about the apparent extrajudicial execution of David Reyes Castro and the torture of James Picón Torres;
- urging that there be an immediate and independent investigation into the killing of David Reyes Castro and the results of this investigation be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that any security forces personnel under investigation for the previous attack on David Reyes Castro should be suspended from active service whilst

the investigations are under way;

- urging that James Picón Torres be humanely treated and allowed access to lawyers and relatives and be given required medical treatment;
- urging that he be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately released.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

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

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 571 286 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: + 571 284 0472

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

3) Minister of Defence

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional;
 Avenida Eldorado
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda,
 Bogotá, Colombia**

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: +571 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

4) Attorney General

Dr Gustavo de Greiff Restrepo
 Fiscal General de la Nación
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 AA 29855
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: +57 1 287 0939

Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Greiff/ Dear Dr. de Greiff

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Human Rights and Educational Organization:

MINGA
 AA 40303

Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: +57 1 334 3765

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 3 August 1994.