

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/50/00

UA 171/00

Fear for

COLOMBIAAndis VILLALOBOS GALAN (f)]abducted
Yaser LARIOS VILLALOBOS (infant)]

Civilian population of San Martin de Loba, Sur de Bolivar

A mother and her infant son have been abducted by army-backed paramilitaries who were searching for her husband and brother-in-law. They are reportedly being held at a nearby paramilitary base. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

On 2 June 2000 a group of more than 100 paramilitaries entered the village of Pueblo Nuevo Mejía in the municipality of San Martín de Loba, Sur de Bolivar, in search of Omar Larios Fernandez and his brother, Eduard Larios Fernandez. Both had fled the town. Five paramilitaries then abducted Ana Galan de Villalobos, her daughter Andis Villalobos Galan, who is married to Omar Larios Fernandez, and their infant son, Yaser Larios Villalobos. They were taken to a paramilitary base in the municipality of Barranco de Loba, Sur de Bolivar. Ana Galan de Villalobos was freed later that day. It is reported that Andis Villalobos has been ill-treated and may have been threatened with sexual abuse and is being forced to cook for the paramilitaries.

The authorities have failed to take action against paramilitary forces in the area, and this is putting civilians, including community leaders at great risk of further attacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have recently been several paramilitary incursions in the region despite a large army presence. In the week of 5-10 June 2000, paramilitaries reportedly entered several towns in the municipalities of Morales and Santa Rosa in Sur de Bolivar, and threatened the civilian population. Amnesty International also received reports that between 21-26 April 2000 a group of 400 paramilitaries was active in Cerro Azul, in the municipality of San Pablo in southern Bolivar department (see UA 100/00; AMR 23/29/00; 28 April 2000).

Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Paramilitary groups have killed several thousand civilians in the last five years. The Colombian government suspended the constitutional legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups in 1989, yet they continue to work with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country.

Guerrilla forces have also committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, including executing those they accuse of being security force or paramilitary force collaborators.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Andis Villalobos Galan and her infant son, Yaser Larios Villalobos, who were abducted on 2 June 2000;
- calling for the authorities to take immediate action to secure the release, unharmed, of Andis Villalobos Galan and her infant son, Yaser Larios Villalobos, who were abducted on 2 June 2000;

- calling for full and impartial investigations into the abduction of Andis Villalobos Galan and her infant son, Yaser Larios Villalobos;
- expressing concern for the safety of civilian inhabitants of the municipality of San Martín de Loba, Sur de Bolívar and urging that all steps deemed necessary by themselves are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the municipality of San Martín de Loba, Sur de Bolívar, 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 stated government commitments and United Nations recommendations.

APPEALS TO:President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 2186 / 337 1351

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana

Minister of the Interior

Señor Humberto de la Calle, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No. 8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO

Faxes: + 57 1 342 3201 / 341 9739

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Defence

Dr. Luis Fernando Ramírez Acuña, Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:Non-governmental organisation

Corporación Cleber
Cll. 19 # 3A -37 (306)
De. PROCOIL T- B
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 2 August 2000.