

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/054/2003

18 August 2003

Further Information on UA 28/03 (AMR 23/11/23, 28 January 2003) Fear for safety / Threats

**COLOMBIA**      **Civilians in El Castillo municipality, Meta department**  
**Human rights activists in Villavicencio, Meta department**

**Killed:**            **Reynaldo Perdomo (m), human rights defender**  
**Pedro Torres (m)**

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of human rights activists in Villavicencio and civilians living in El Castillo municipality, Meta department, following recent killings, which were reportedly carried out by army-backed paramilitaries.

At 9pm on 12 August, whilst at home in the Ciudad Porfía neighbourhood of Villavicencio, the capital of Meta department, Reynaldo Perdomo was reportedly informed that there was a telephone call for him in a bar nearby. As he went to answer the call, an unidentified gunman reportedly approached him and shot him three times in the head, killing him instantly. According to reports, the gunman made his getaway on foot apparently unhindered despite the fact a police station is located near to Reynaldo Perdomo's house.

Reynaldo Perdomo was a human rights activist and social leader. He had been forcibly displaced a year ago from his home in the hamlet of Esmeralda, in El Castillo Municipality. This was reportedly as a result of joint military operations undertaken by the *Fuerza de Despliegue Rápido* (FUDRA) Rapid Deployment Force, the *Batallón Vargas No 21*, Vargas Battalion No 21 of the Colombian Army and army-backed paramilitaries.

In Villavicencio, Reynaldo Perdomo was working with other forcibly displaced members from the Ariari region of the department of Meta. In the past, human rights activists and activists supporting displaced people have been labelled subversives by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. These accusations have frequently been followed by serious human rights violations, which were committed by the security forces and their paramilitary allies.

In the municipality of El Castillo itself, army-backed paramilitaries continue to carry out human rights violations. On 9 August, Pedro Torres was travelling by bus from Medellín del Ariari to El Castillo when a known paramilitary reportedly boarded. The bus was reportedly followed by other paramilitaries in a grey vehicle, who subsequently forced the bus to stop. Pedro Torres was forced off the bus and into paramilitaries' vehicle. Witnesses report seeing the paramilitary vehicle, with Pedro Torres inside, crossing Medellín del Ariari and heading towards the municipality of Puerto Esperanza. At 7:00 pm Pedro Torres' body was found by his family in the community of Puerto Esperanza.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of human rights activists in Villavicencio and civilians living in El Castillo municipality, Meta department;
- calling for an investigation into the killings of Reynaldo Perdomo and Pedro Torres, for the results of the investigations to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern about the increasing army-backed paramilitary presence in the region and urging the authorities to take action to protect the civilian population;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Meta 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 recommendations made by the United Nations;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to human rights defenders, as laid out in the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution of the Organization of American States and in repeated recommendations made to them by the United Nations.

**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, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:**               **+ 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92**

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

Minister of Defence

Ministra de Defensa Nacional  
 Martha Lucía Ramírez de Rincón  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52 OFI. 217  
 Centro Administrativo Nacional (CAN)  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:**     **Ministra Defensa, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:**               **+ 57 1 266 0193**

**Salutation:**     **Sra Ministra/Dear Minister**

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**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organization  
 Inter-ecclesial Commission of Justice and Peace  
 Comisión Intereclesial 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 29 September 2003.