

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety/Possible Extrajudicial Execution

4 August

COLOMBIA Jesús Antonio Gonzalez Luna, director of human rights at the national *Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT)*, Trade Union Confederation.

Killed: Giovanni Rodríguez Loaiza, bodyguard for Jesús Antonio Gonzalez Luna

Humberto Herrera Gallego]  
Victor Eloy Mieles Ospina] CUT activists  
Rosa Ramirez Espina (f), his wife ]

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Amnesty International is very concerned for the safety of prominent trade unionist Jesús Gonzalez Luna after a group of heavily armed men opened fire outside his house in Cali, Valle del Cauca, on 1 August 1999, killing his bodyguard.

Jesús Gonzalez Luna, director of human rights for the national *Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT)*, Trade Union Confederation, was attending a meeting of the *Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz*, Civil Society Assembly for Peace, in Cali city at the time. His bodyguard, Giovanni Rodriguez Loaiza, was assigned to protect him by the Government's *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS)*, Civilian Intelligence Service, as a result of death threats he had received.

The shooting comes in the wake of a July publicity campaign by the national paramilitary organisation, *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*, United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, in which they used leaflets, graffiti and posters to announce their arrival in Valle del Cauca. The AUC have been responsible for systematic human rights violations against the civilian population throughout Colombia, particularly targeting human rights defenders, trade unionists and social activists.

Since 1986 over 2300 CUT activists have been killed in Colombia. Recent killings of CUT activists occurred on 12 July when Humberto Herrera Gallego was killed in Antioquia department. Then, on 23 July, Victor Eloy Mieles Ospina and his wife, Rosa Ramirez Espina, "disappeared" and were later found dead in Magdalena department.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Trade unionists, human rights workers and other civic activists are often targeted for human rights violations by the security forces and their paramilitary allies.

Amnesty International has documented systematic persecution of trade union activists. On 20 October 1998, CUT Vice-President, Jorge Ortega Garcia, was shot dead (UA 274/98, AMR 23/80/98, 21 October 1998 and follow up). CUT activists in the municipality of Cartago, also in Valle del Cauca department, have also been systematically killed and intimidated (UA 150/98, AMR 23/29/98, 13 May 1999 and follow-ups). None of these crimes has been resolved and those responsible have not been brought to justice.

Although in 1989 the government suspended the legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups, they continue to operate with the support of

the security forces in many areas of the country. The Attorney General has said that the security forces have not acted on over 300 outstanding arrest warrants issued against alleged paramilitary members responsible for widespread human rights violations. So far, the government of Andrés Pastrana, who became president in August 1998, has failed to take effective steps to tackle the country's long running human rights crisis.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jesús Antonio Gonzalez Luna and other CUT leaders and activists;
- urging that all measures deemed necessary by those at risk be taken to guarantee their safety;
- urging for full, prompt and impartial investigations into the attempt on the life of Jesús Antonio Gonzalez Luna and the killing of his bodyguard Giovanny Rodríguez Loaiza, for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for full, prompt and impartial investigations into the recent killings of Humberto Herrera Gallego, Victor Eloy Mieles Ospina and Rosa Ramirez Espina, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and decisive action to dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the department of Valle del Cauca following the AUC's announcement of their arrival in the region.

**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 1 286 7434 / 337 1351**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana**

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Néstor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministerio del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 8025 / 281 5884 / 342 3201**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

Commander of the Armed Forces

General Fernando Tapias Stahelin, Comandante de las Fuerzas Militares  
Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Comandante Fuerzas Militares, Bogota, Colombia**

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 2096**

**Salutation: Sr. Comandante / Dear Commander**

Governor of Valle del Cauca Department

Juan Fernando Bonilla  
Gobernador del Departamento de Valle del Cauca,  
Gobernación de Valle del Cauca  
Carrera 6ª, Calles 9ª y 10ª, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia

**Faxes:+ 57 2 889 8818**

**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**

**COPIES TO:**

CUT (Trade Union Confederation)

Calle 35 N° 7-25, Piso 9

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 15 September 1999.