

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 23/57/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 335/92

Threats and harassment

28 October 1992

COLOMBIA:

Manuel CEPEDA VARGAS

Aída ABELLA (female)

Alvaro VÁSQUEZ DEL REAL

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of Manuel Cepeda Vargas, Aída Abella and Alvaro Vásquez del Real, opposition leaders, who are facing death threats.

According to reports, since the beginning of October 1992 several national leaders of the left wing opposition party Patriotic Union, Unión Patriótica, (UP), and the Communist Party, Partido Comunista Colombiano, (PCC), have received threatening anonymous telephone calls and have been followed. On 2 October two telephone calls were made to the UP's central office in Bogotá saying they would all be killed ("*Los vamos a matar a todos*") and on 26 October 1992 the UP received information indicating that members of a paramilitary groups based in Puerto Boyacá, department of Santander, had been contracted to kill leaders of the UP and the PCC. Members of the PCC and the UP have been subjected to harassment and threats over a number of years, however, in recent weeks death threats have intensified and Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their physical safety. PCC and UP leaders have denounced the threats against them to the Colombian national authorities, including the Procurator General and the Advocate for the People, Defensor del Pueblo.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Both the PCC and the UP have been particular targets for human rights violations, including death threats, politically motivated killings and "disappearances" in recent years. Leaders of the UP have repeatedly denounced the involvement of the Colombian armed forces in the killings and "disappearance" of its members, however, in the vast majority of cases those responsible have not been brought to justice. At the beginning of October 1992 the Advocate for the People, Dr. Jaime Triviño Córdoba, published a report about investigations into the political killings and "disappearances" of members of the UP and another left-wing political party. The report concludes that the main perpetrator of violence against the UP are paramilitary groups, members of the security forces and hired gunmen. According to the official report 717 members of the UP have been killed since the party's creation in 1985. UP estimates reach over 1,500.

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

- expressing concern at the reported threats against opposition leaders Manuel Cepeda, Aída Abella and Alvaro Vásquez del Real;
- urging for an immediate investigation to identify and bring to justice all those responsible;
- urging that the Colombian government take effective measures to ensure that members of the political opposition are able to carry out their lawful activities without their lives being at risk.

Page 2 of UA 335/92

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**  
**Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066, + 57 1 286 7434**  
**+ 57 1 287 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  
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telexes:41224 PRGEN CO, 41213 PGNDP CO**  
**Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472**

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

3) Minister of Defence:

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda, Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia**  
**Telexes:42411 INPRE CO, 44561 CFAC CO**  
**Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874**

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

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Unión Patriótica  
AA 38622  
Santa Fé 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 9 December 1992.