

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/61/95

12 October 1995

Further information (1) on UA 202/95 (AMR 23/49/95, 15 August 1995) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Domingo Rafael TOVAR ARRIETA,
Jorge ORTEGA GARCÍA

New names: Cesar CARRILLO, Álvaro SOLANO, Fredy PULCIO, Nicodemus LUNA, Hernando HERNÁNDEZ, Ramón RANGEL, Luis GALINDO, Rafael CABARCAS, Alfonso MARTÍNEZ, Luis VIANA, Daniel RICO, Raúl VACA, Gustavo GUTIERRES, Edgar MOJICA, Carlos CANO, Hernán MOTA MOTA, Luis GARZÓN, Fernando RAMÍREZ, Jorge GAMBOA, Neftali VÁSQUEZ and Salomom AYALA

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for the safety of the 23 men named above, after an open letter, addressed to 'public opinion' in the Magdalena Medio region threatened to kill 22 leading trade unionists and a member of the Colombian Congress. The letter was delivered to the offices of the *Unión Sindical de Obreros*, (USO) Worker's Trade Union, in Barrancabermeja, Department of Santander, and was written by a paramilitary group operating in the region, calling itself *Organización de Autodefensa de los Campesinos de Colombia Henry Pérez*, the Henry Pérez Peasant Farmers' Self-Defence Groups of Colombia.

Among those threatened are Domingo Rafael Tovar, Jorge Ortega and Luis Garzón of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, United Confederation of Workers' Executive Board, and Hernán Mota Mota. Hernán Mota Mota is the only *Unión Patriótica* (UP), Patriotic Union, senator in the Colombian Congress. He had taken the place of UP senator Manuel Cepeda, who was killed in August 1994 by paramilitary forces. Of the others named in the letter, at least 16 are members of the USO and one is a member of *Federación de Trabajadores Petroleros* (FEDEPETROL).

The open letter accuses the USO leadership of being guerrillas in disguise and requests the public to provide information that will lead to the capture of the trade unionists, "*para hacerles los juicios correspondientes y fusilarlos*", "to bring them to trial and execute them". The letter declares that "*las siguientes personas han sido juzgadas y condenadas a muerte*", "the following persons have already been tried and sentenced to death".

There is serious concern for the safety of the 23 men, many of whom have already been threatened and forced to leave Barrancabermeja.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the 23 men whose lives were threatened in a letter received by the USO and urging that all possible measures, deemed appropriate by those threatened, be taken to ensure their safety;
- calling for full and impartial investigations to be undertaken into the threats, asking that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the lives of other trade union and political activists in Colombia;
- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to dismantle paramilitary groups in line with stated governmental commitments.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377 / 286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Procurator General

Dr. Orlando Vásquez Velásquez
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Vásquez, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 342 9723 (there may be taped office sounds, then engaged signal, then fax tone)

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez

3) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro de Gobierno
Ministerio de Gobierno
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Serpa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 8025 / 286 0053 / 286 0485

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Carlos Esguerra
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Lawyers' Association

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados
AA 44456
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 23 November 1995.