

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 456/91, (AMR 23/72/91, 20 December 1991) and follow-ups AMR 23/02/92 of 30 January 1992, AMR 23/13/92 of 19 March 1992 and AMR 23/31/92 of 5 June 1992 - Threats/harrassment (new concerns)

COLOMBIA: Twenty members of the Paez Indian community of Caloto, Cauca Department

and Carlos Edgar TORRES APARICIO, lawyer
Rodolfo ALVAREZ, lawyer
Etnio VIDARDO, anthropologist
Oscar Elias LOPEZ, lawyer

Amnesty International has learned with concern of reports of serious threats and harassment against survivors and relatives of victims of the massacre which took place on 16 December 1991 of at least 20 Paez Indians . Lawyers working on behalf of the victims have also reportedly been threatened.

The Indians who were killed were members of a Paez indigenous community which had been occupying a property called "El Nilo", near the town of Caloto, Cauca department. About 60 armed and hooded men burst into a building where the Indians were holding a meeting. Those killed included women and children.

Official investigations initiated by the judicial and Public Ministry authorities found evidence that members of the Colombian National Police were implicated in the massacre of the Paez Indians, although the results of these investigations have not yet been made public.

The Indigenous organization Consejo Regional Indigena del Cauca (CRIC), Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca, now states that survivors and relatives of the victims have been repeatedly threatened and harassed by armed civilians operating in the area. In spite of the fact that the area has been militarized by the army, these armed groups have reportedly been able to move around without hindrance. The CRIC also states that lawyers working on the investigation of the massacre have been the victims of serious harassment, they have been followed and have received threatening phone calls and anonymous threatening letters. Amnesty International has also been informed that documentation relating to the investigation of the massacre has reportedly gone missing from the lawyers' office in Santa Fe de Bogotá.

Only a few weeks after the massacre, on 8 January 1992, three men who were involved in an independent investigation of the massacre, Carlos Edgar Torres Aparicio, Rodolfo Alvarez and Etnio Vidardo, were killed or "disappeared". At that time the CRIC, which has been involved in advisory work with the indigenous communities of northern Cauca,

reported that five of its leaders had been receiving death threats since the massacre occurred. On 29 May 1991, Oscar Elias López, who worked as the CRIC's legal adviser and had received numerous death threats, was killed in circumstances suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution.

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

- expressing concern at the reports of the threats and harassment of survivors and relatives of those killed in the "El Nilo" massacre and of lawyers working on the investigation of the case;

Page 2 of 4FU 456/91

- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into the threats and harassment, the results of which should be made public and those found responsible brought to justice;

- urging that the government take all possible measures to protect the survivors and relatives of those who died and all those involved in the case investigation.

APPEALS TO

1) 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

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

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 41213 PGNDP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

2) Director General of the Police:

Mayor Miguel Antonio Gómez Padilla
Director General de la Policía Nacional
Tr. 45, No. 40-11
Santa Fe de Bogotá
Colombia

Salutation: Sr. Director General /
Dear Sir

Telegrams: Dir.-Gen. Policia Nacional, Bogota, Colombia

3) Minister of Justice:

Andrés González
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Carrera 15, No 9-63
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister

Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

4) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr.
Presidente /
Dear President Gaviria

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066, + 57 1 286 7324, + 57 1 287 7937

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Indigenous People's Association of Cauca:
CRIC (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca)
AA 516
Popayán
Cauca
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 4 December 1992.