

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety/Possible Extrajudicial Executions

5 September 1994

COLOMBIA Carlos GARCÍA MALLORCA TAPIAS

Juan Carlos GARCÍA MALLORCA TAPIAS

Killed: Gabriel RIBON, Julio DEL CASTILLO, Eliecer AVILA, Luis PEREZ

Amantine VILLAREAL

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of community leaders, opposition political party sympathisers, student activists and members of the García-Mallorca Villareal family, following a wave of apparent extrajudicial executions in the town of Guamal, department of Magdalena. The victims were reportedly named in a death list drawn up in 1992 which accused them of being guerrilla sympathisers and collaborators.

According to information received by Amnesty International, the García-Mallorca Villareal family has received a number of death threats since Joaquín García-Mallorca, a member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)* - was killed in a confrontation with the armed forces on 17 November 1991.

Following their relative's death, members of the family, who have reportedly had no involvement with the FARC, have received several written death threats in which they were accused of aiding the guerrilla.

Three members of the family, Juan Carlos, Alejandro García-Mallorca Villareal and Carlos García-Mallorca Tapias were reportedly named in a death list of 40 people. Alejandro García-Mallorca Villareal has now fled the country.

Amongst the other people named in the list were student activists, community leaders and opposition party activists. The list was drawn up at the beginning of 1992 by members of paramilitary forces which include powerful local cattle-ranchers. The paramilitary forces allegedly operate in the region with the acquiescence of the police and the army.

Since July 1994 several people on the black list have been killed, reportedly by members of the armed forces. The corpses of those who have been apparently extrajudicially executed have been found with notes which read: "*Por que te queremos Guamal te vamos a limpiar*" - "Because we love you Guamal we are going to cleanse you". The same message has appeared on walls around the city.

At the beginning of July 1994 Gabriel Ribón, a 34 year-old clothes merchant, was killed. The authorities are believed to have made no attempt to capture the assailants. Gabriel Ribon was known to be a sympathiser of the opposition political party, *Unión Patriótica* - Patriotic Union. On 16 July 1994 Julio del Castillo was killed. Julio del Castillo was also a sympathiser of the *Unión Patriótica* party.

Eliécer Avila, Luis Pérez and Amantine Villareal were reportedly killed on 7 August 1994 by two armed individuals who shot them whilst they were in a billiards halls. Eliécer Avila was a known student leader and *Unión Patriótioca* activist.

Approximately 17 young people who were also named in the death list have fled Guamal, fearing for their safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Despite repeated government pledges to protect human rights, members of the Colombian armed forces and security forces together with their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious violations with virtual impunity. Perceived opponents are often the target of these violations. Many paramilitary forces have been set up and trained by the armed forces, and continue to play a central role in the Colombian armed forces' counterinsurgency strategy. Although in 1989 the Colombian government suspended the legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the Colombian armed forces to disband such groups, paramilitary forces continue to operate. President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, made several promises, both during his election campaign and subsequently, to improve the human rights situation. His promises include a commitment to dismantle the paramilitary forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Carlos García-Mallorca Tapias, Juan Carlos García-Mallorca and other members of the family and that those responsible for death threats issued against the family be brought to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of the other individuals named in the alleged death list and urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into the death list, the results of which should be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing concern at the killing of Gabriel Ribon, Julio del Castillo, Eliécer Avila, Luis Pérez and Amantine Villareal in Guamal, department of Magdalena in July and August 1994;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into these killings, the results of which should be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to dismantle paramilitary forces operating in the region in line with stated government objectives. Urging the authorities to bring members of such forces responsible for human rights violations to justice, together with any members of the armed forces who permit or participate in human rights violations perpetrated by paramilitary forces in Guamal.

APPEALS TO

President of Colombia:

Señor Ernesto Samper Pizano

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

Minister of Defence

Dr. Fernando Botero Zea
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa Botero Zea, Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Minister of the Interior
Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro de Gobierno
Ministerio de Gobierno
Carrera 8A, No.8-09, Piso 7^o
Santafé de Bogotá DE, Colombia
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno, Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:
Andean Commission of Jurists
Comisión Andina de Juristas
AA 58533
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 17 October 1994.