

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: AMR 23/69/92**

**Distr: UA/SC**

**27 November 1992**

**Further information on UA 314/92 (AMR 23/51/92, 9 October 1992) - Death Threats**

**COLOMBIA:Oliva BALLONA (female), peasant leader  
Avelino DOMÍNGUEZ, peasant leader  
Octavio SIERRA, peasant farmer**

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Amnesty International has received information from the Colombian Presidential Adviser on Human Rights concerning the death threats against Oliva Ballona, Avelino Domínguez and Octavio Sierra.

Amnesty International was concerned at serious harassment and death threats against members of the civilian population, including the above-named peasant farmers and leaders, by members of the Colombian army and paramilitary forces under their command in the central Colombian Magdalena Medio region in September 1992.

Peasant farmers in the region have reportedly been told they must cooperate financially and actively with military and paramilitary forces in counter-guerrilla operations in the surrounding area. Those who have refused have been tortured, "disappeared" and killed and many others have been forced to flee the region. Oliva Ballona, Avelino Domínguez, Octavio Sierra, together with other community leaders have been threatened with death by members of the Colombian army.

The Presidential Adviser on Human Rights informed Amnesty International that the death threats against Oliva Ballona, Avelino Domínguez, Octavio Sierra are the subject of an investigation and that measures are being taken to protect their lives.

In addition, administrative and penal investigations have been opened into the allegations that members of the armed forces acting with paramilitary groups were responsible for the threats and harassment against civilians, including peasant and community leaders in the Magdalena Medio region. These investigations, now in the preliminary stage, are in the hands of the Regional Procurator's office, Procuraduría Departamental, of Barrancabermeja, Santander department and by the Regional Attorney's office, Fiscalía Regional, of Cúcuta, Norte de Santander department.

While Amnesty International welcomes the investigations now initiated, there is concern that whilst many such investigations are opened, only exceptionally do they lead to the prosecution and conviction of those actually responsible for human rights violations in Colombia.

The Presidential Adviser on Human Rights further informed Amnesty International that representatives of national and local government authorities, including the Ministry of the Interior, Ministerio de Gobierno, and the offices of the Procurator Delegate for the Armed and Security Forces, Procuraduría Delegada para las Fuerzas Militares,

the People's Advocate, Defensoría del Pueblo, and the Presidential Adviser on Human Rights had held meetings to discuss the situation of violence in the region. These meetings have reportedly resulted in the recommendation that concrete measures be taken to neutralize the criminal activities of the paramilitary forces.

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

- welcoming the information received from the Colombian Presidential Adviser on Human Rights that investigations have been initiated into the serious threats and harassment against Oliva Ballona, Avelino Domínguez, Octavio Sierra and that measures have been taken to protect their lives;

- welcoming the information that investigations have been initiated into the allegations that members of the armed forces acting with paramilitary groups were responsible for the threats and harassment against civilians;

- urging that these investigations do result in the prosecution and conviction of those found responsible so that they cannot continue to act with virtual impunity;

- welcoming the meetings held by national and local authorities to discuss the situation of violence in the Magdalena Medio region and urging clarification of the measures to be taken to halt the criminal activities of paramilitary forces active in the region and to protect the lives of all non-combatant civilians.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) 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**

2) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño  
Defensor del Pueblo  
Defensoría del Pueblo  
Calle 34, Carrera 5  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: **Estimado Dr Triviño /  
Dear Dr. Triviño**

**Telegrams: Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 41213 PGNDP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

3) Minister of the Interior:

Dr. Humberto de la Calle Lombana  
Ministro de Gobierno  
Ministerio de Gobierno  
Calle 13, No.8-38, Of.304  
Santa Fe de Bogotá DE, Colombia

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

**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Calle Lombana, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO**

4) 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, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro /**

**Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights group:

Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz

AA 52332

Santa Fe 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 8 January 1993.