

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats

9 December 1991

COLOMBIA

William PEÑA BARRIOS  
Ramiro ANTURY

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Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of human rights lawyers William Peña Barrios and Ramiro Antury, following reported threats to their lives.

William Peña Barrios and Ramiro Antury work for the Cali, Valle department branch of the Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (CSPP), the Political Prisoners' Solidarity Committee, a non-government organization offering legal support to political prisoners and victims of human rights violations. On 6 December an envelope arrived at the CSPP offices in Cali addressed to William Peña Barrios and Ramiro Antury and containing a *sufragio*, an invitation to their own funeral mass, signed by a paramilitary group called MAC - Muerte a Comunistas, Death to Communists.

Both men have received previous threats to their lives, believed to be as a result of their human rights work. William Peña had reportedly just presented his final statement in a case of "disappearance"/extrajudicial execution where members of the armed forces had reportedly admitted responsibility for the killing of a union treasurer, Jorge Eliécer Agudelo in 1989.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

President César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged his government to protect human rights. In his inaugural address in August 1990, he said that "the public opinion's trust and credibility in the armed forces depend on the armed forces' acting according to the constitution. The armed forces must respect human rights because the country's defence also means upholding the law". However, despite the government's commitment to uphold respect for human rights, members of the Colombian armed forces and paramilitary groups associated with them have continued to commit serious abuses, including torture, extrajudicial execution and "disappearance". Human rights defenders have increasingly been among the victims of such abuses.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of William Peña Barrios and Ramiro Antury, following the receipt of threats to their lives;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation into the death threats against them in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- urging that the Colombian government take all possible measures to protect the lives of human rights lawyers and ensure that they are able to carry out their lawful activities.

#### APPEALS TO

President of the Republic:  
Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota,  
Colombia**

**Telexes:** 44281 PALP CO  
**Faxes:** + 57 1 283 3066  
+ 57 1 286 7324  
+ 57 1 287 7937

[Salutation: Dear President Gaviria]

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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 Defensa, Bogota, Colombia  
**Telexes:** 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO  
**Faxes:** +57 1 222 1874  
[Salutation: Dear Minister]

Advocate for the People:

Dr Jaime Córdoba Triviño  
Defensor del Pueblo  
Procuraduría General  
Edificio Banco Ganadero  
Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams:** Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, c/o Procuraduria General, Santa Fe de Baogta, Colombia  
**Telexes:** 41224 PREGN CO OR 41213 pgndp CO  
**Faxes** + 57 1 284 0472  
[Salutation: Dear

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, Bogota, Colombia  
**Telexes:** 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO  
**Faxes:** + 57 1 284 0472  
[Salutation: Dear Dr. Arrieta]

**COPIES TO:**

Señores  
CSPP  
(Comité de Solidaridad con Presos Políticos)  
AA 22803  
Santa Fe de Bogotá  
Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 January 1992.