

COLOMBIA **Fear for safety: The civilian population of Batata, Córdoba department. "Disappeared": Vicente Salcedo, Juan Salcedo and Enidia Monterrosa. Killed: Luis Pérez, Carlos Cipriani, Eduardo Hoyos, Luis Pérez Arroyo and Carmel Pérez.**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the civilian population in the community of Batata, Córdoba department. According to reports, members of the armed forces who operate in the region are in possession of a *lista negra*, blacklist, containing 17 names. Such lists often include the names of those believed to be guerrilla sympathizers and are frequently followed by attacks on those named.

According to information received, joint paramilitary and military forces have carried out numerous incursions in Batata in recent months. On 11 April 1999 one such group rounded up and threatened the community's inhabitants. They then killed Luis Pérez and abducted Vicente Salcedo, Juan Salcedo and Enidia Monterrosa, whose whereabouts remain unknown. On 25 July and 23 August joint paramilitary and military forces carried out similar incursions in the community, killing Carlos Cipriani, Eduardo Hoyos (25 July), Luis Pérez Arroyo and Carmel Pérez (23 August) and injuring others.

Soldiers of the 11th Brigade and their paramilitary allies have reportedly set up roadblocks on the main road into Batata. Civilians going to the local market have been accused of getting supplies for the guerrillas. On 10 October, soldiers told Francisco Martínez, a resident of Batata who they had accused of collaborating with the guerrillas, that they would kill "*hasta a los perros*" (even the dogs). On 11 October soldiers forced Ubaldo Martínez, another civilian, to strip and threatened to kill him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Peasant communities have often suffered human rights violations during the course of Colombia's long-running civil war. In the past five years paramilitary groups have killed several thousand civilians. Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Army-backed paramilitary groups extend their territorial control by killing community leaders and anyone else they consider to be guerrilla sympathizers, then using threats to forcibly displace the remaining population. Neither the armed forces and their paramilitary allies, nor the left-wing armed opposition groups, recognize the neutrality of the civilian population.

The Colombian Government suspended the constitutional legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups in 1989, yet they continue to work with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the civilian population in Batata, Córdoba department, where soldiers of the 11th Brigade and their paramilitary allies are threatening to kill civilians;
- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of inhabitants;

- calling for a full prompt and impartial investigation into the killings of Luis Pérez, Carlos Cipriani, Eduardo Hoyos, Luis Pérez Arroyo and Carmel Pérez, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling for a full prompt and impartial investigation into the abduction of Vicente Salcedo, Juan Salcedo and Enidia Monterrosa and urging that the authorities take all appropriate measures to establish their whereabouts;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Batata, Córdoba department, urging that the results are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments.

APPEALS TO:President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434 / 284 2186 / 337 1351

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez,
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 571 570 2022 (If the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor" and wait for the signal).

Salutation: Estimado Dr. / Dear Dr.

Commander of the Army

General Jorge Enrique Mora Rangel
Comandante del Ejército Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá
Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante del Ejercito, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes: 43401 COEJC

Faxes: + 57 1 315 1570

Salutation: Sr. Comandante / Dear Commander

Governor of Córdoba Department

Señor Angel Villadiego Hernández
Gobernador del Departamento de Córdoba, Gobernación de Córdoba
Palacio de Nain
Calle 27, No. 3-28, P-3
Montería, Córdoba, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 4 782 6060

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:Human Rights Organization

Grupo de Apoyo a Organizaciones de Desplazados (GAD)
Calle 61# 13-54, piso 4, 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 1999.