

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 424/93

Harassment/Death Threats

2 December 1993

**COLOMBIA: 9 students: Juan Felipe VELASQUEZ
Carmina ZAPATA (f)
German Dario TABARES
Amy Janeth CALLE (f)
Hernan ALVAREZ
Mary Victoria COLORADO (f)
Alejandro PORRAS
Suleima ARISTIZABAL (f)
and Guillermo GÓMEZ CARMONA, aged 20**

Amnesty International is concerned by reports that the nine students named above have received repeated death threats, and that they and other students have been subjected to harassment. They are all from the University of Antioquia and are among those organizing peaceful protests at changes in the Colombian education system.

According to information received, the Student's General Assembly of the University of Antioquia in Medellín has been involved in an ongoing series of protests relating to the government's new higher education reform law, Law 30 (*Ley 30*), and to a dispute with the university authorities. Since September 1993 students from the university have increased their protests, which have included a hunger-strike (now ended) and a mass occupation ("*campamento permanente*") of a university building. On 7 November combined forces from the army, police and navy launched an operation to evict the students from the building and in the process conducted a complete registration of the personal details of all 99 students taking part.

According to reports, on 25 October a meeting was held where several student commissions were set up to study different aspects of Law 30 and other issues.

A woman, who subsequently participated in the eviction of the students' mass occupation by pointing out student leaders to the security forces, joined one of the commissions by pretending to be a student. As a result the woman acquired a list of eight names and telephone numbers of members of that commission (the first eight named above). Since that date, these students have received repeated telephone death threats.

A number of other students from the University of Antioquia report that they have been followed home by unidentified individuals. On 6 October, Guillermo Gómez Carmona's house was searched and ransacked by 8 heavily armed men dressed in civilian clothing with military jackets, who identified themselves to the housemaid as members of the police intelligence unit F-2. Since then Guillermo Gómez Carmona has reportedly been receiving telephone death threats.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. President César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses including extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" with virtual impunity.

Civic leaders, trade unionists and human rights activists are amongst the groups frequently targeted by the security forces for arbitrary arrest and other forms of human rights abuse.

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

- expressing concern for the students of the University of Antioquia named above, who have been receiving death threats and harassment since a list of their names was allegedly acquired by the Medellín security forces on 25 October 1993;
- urging that there be an immediate inquiry into allegations of death threats received by the students named above;
- urging that all possible measures be taken to guarantee the safety of these students and to allow them to continue their lawful activities without harassment.

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 Fé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

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

2) Minister of Education:

Sra. Maruja Pachón de Villamizar
 Ministra de Educación Nacional
 Ministerio de Educación, Of. 501
 Avenida Eldorado - CAN
 Santafé de Bogotá D.E., Colombia
Telegrams: Ministra de Educación Pachón de Villamizar, Bogotá, Colombia
Salutation: Sra. Ministra/Dear Minister

3) Governor of Antioquia:

Sr. Juan Gómez Martínez
 Gobernador de Antioquia
 Gobernación de Antioquia
 Carrera 51, No.52-03, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia
Telegrams: Gobernador de Antioquia, Sr. Gómez Martínez, Medellín, Colombia
Faxes: +57 4 251 8539 or 251 8559
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

4) Commander of IV Brigade:

Brigadier General Mario Hugo Galán Rodríguez
 Comandante de la IV Brigada
 Calle 50, No.76-126, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia
Telegrams: Comandante de la IV Brigada, Medellín, Colombia

Faxes: +57 4 260 3850

Salutation: Sr.Comandante/Dear Commander

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Local Human Rights and Educational Organization:

Instituto Popular de Capacitación, Apartado Aéreo 9690, Medellín, Colombia

2) Rector of the University of Antioquia:

Dr. Rafael Aubad, Rector, Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

Faxes: +57 4 263 8282

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño, Defensor del Pueblo

Defensoría del Pueblo, Avenida 39, No. 16-42

Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 232 4640

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 12 January 1994.