

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/087/2001

7 September 2001

Further information on UA 22/01 (AMR 23/008/2001, 29 January 2001) and follow-ups (AMR 23/028/2001, 8 March; AMR 23/035/2001, 26 March; AMR 23/061/2001, 8 June) - Fear for safety

COLOMBIA Activists with the *Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)*, Popular Women's Organization in Santander department
Dany Rada Jimenez (f), aged 22

New names: Jackeline Rojas (f)

Yolanda Bezerra (f)

Patricia Ramirez (f)

Other participants in the *Movilización Internacional de*

Mujeres

Army-backed paramilitaries have reportedly threatened to kill OFP members, after they helped organise three days of events and marches in Barrancabermeja, calling on both sides in Colombia's civil conflict to respect the human rights of civilians. They have declared 11 families who took part in the 14-17 August event to be "military targets". These families and human rights workers in the region are in grave danger.

The *Movilización Internacional de Mujeres*, International Mobilization of Women, was organised by the OFP and other national and international women's NGOs. The event took place with the support of local and national government, and the knowledge of the military authorities.

The event began with a march through the city. Paramilitary gunmen reportedly went to women's homes and told them not to go to the march, and set up roadblocks to stop the event taking place. They reportedly set up road blocks outside the city, near where busloads of women from around the country were going to meet to prepare for the march. The paramilitaries were able to operate these illegal checkpoints despite the fact that the army has a strong presence in the city.

At the end of the march the women gathered in the city's football stadium to hear speeches. OFP members Jackeline Rojas and Yolanda Becerra were on the podium preparing to begin the event when a man approached and threatened them.

On 24 August the OFP were told that paramilitaries had decided to assassinate their members, beginning with one of their leaders, Patricia Ramírez. On 26 August the OFP were reportedly told that the paramilitaries had been waiting for her and "the job wasn't done because on that day she didn't pass by," "*el trabajo no lo habían hecho porque ella no había pasado ese día.*"

The paramilitaries have declared 11 families from the *Nueva Esperanza* barrio district of Barrancabermeja to be "military targets", because they took part in the event.

There have been no further reports of death threats against Dany Rada Jimenez.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern that army-backed paramilitaries have again threatened to kill women working for the *Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)*, and urging

the authorities to take action to protect all OFP activists, in line with formal requests by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights;

- asking them to order an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the threats, and bring those responsible to justice;
- reminding the government of its obligations to human rights defenders, as laid out in United Nations (UN) and Organization of American States declarations, and urging it to follow repeated UN recommendations to take measures to protect human rights defenders;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Barrancabermeja and the surrounding area, 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 and UN recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

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

Fax: + 57 1 336 2109 / 337 1351

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr. Presidente

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Armando Estrada Villa
Ministerio del Interior
Palacio Echeverry
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Fax: +57 1 562 5298/ 562 9890

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro

Commander of the V Birgade of the Army

General Martín Orlando Carreño Sandoval
Comandante de la V Brigada
Calle 14, Carrera 33
Bucaramanga, Santander, COLOMBIA

Fax: +57 76 455051 / 76 351493 / 359189 / 334390

Salutation: Dear General / Sr. General

COPIES TO:

Women's grassroots organization

Organización Femenina Popular
Cra 22 No 52B - 36
Barrancabermeja, Santander, 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 19 October 2001.