

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/101/2001

26 September 2001

Further information on UA 230/01 (AMR 23/088/2001, 12 September 2001) - Fear for safety

COLOMBIAMembers of the USO Oil Workers' trade union

New names: Julián Cote

Fredys Rueda

Rafael Jaime

A paramilitary group have apparently threatened to kill three members of the *Unión Sindical Obrera* (USO), Oil Workers' Trade Union, after the union called a one-day strike in Barrancabermeja, Santander department.

The USO staged the one-day stoppage in Barrancabermeja, where Colombia's main oil refinery is located, on 20 September, in a dispute over working conditions. At midday they received a phone call from a man who said, "Tell those sons-of-bitches Julián Cote, Fredys Rueda and Rafael Jaime that if they do not call off the strike we are going to kill them, this is an order". ("*Diganle a esos hijueputas de Julián Cote, Fredys Rueda y Rafael Jaime que si no levantan el paro los vamos a matar, es una orden*"). The caller identified himself as a member of the army-backed paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia.

The union did not call off the strike, and this threat has raised further concern for USO union leaders in Barrancabermeja and nationwide.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of USO leaders Fredys Rueda, Rafael Jaime, Julián Cote and of other USO members;
- asking the authorities what they will do to protect these men and other trade unionists at risk, and to bring to justice the people who have threatened them;
- asking the authorities to uphold the rights to freedom of expression and association, the right to form trade unions and the right to demonstrate in line with international human rights laws and standards;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

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 1 566 2071

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr. Presidente

Minister of the Interior

Señor Armando Estrada Villa

Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry

Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o., Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

2

Fax: + 57 1 562 5298/ 562 9890

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Governor of Santander Department
Gobernador del Departamento de Santander
Sr. Jorge Eliecer Gómez Villamizar
Gobernación de Santander
Calle 37, No. 10-30
Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 76 339889

Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental Human Rights Organization
NOMADESC
AA 18621
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 7 November 2001.