

PUBLIC

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Fear for

**COLOMBIA Martha Lucía Rentería, (f), Human Rights Defender in  
Valle del Cauca Department**

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Martha Lucía Rentería a human rights defender in the municipality of Jamundí, Valle del Cauca Department, after recent threats against her.

On 26 September 2002 at 1:00 pm two unidentified men entered the office of the Regional Human Rights Ombudsman, *Defensoría del Pueblo Regional*, in Valle del Cauca, and insisted on knowing the whereabouts of Martha Lucía Rentería. When they did not receive an answer from people in reception, they went to the desk of one of the employees and said in a threatening tone: "Don't worry, we will find where she is today" ("*no se preocupen que nosotros la encontraremos donde esté en el día de hoy*").

Martha Lucía Rentería is a member of the regional office of the non-governmental human rights organization *Sembrar*. As part of her work she usually accompanies displaced people to the Regional Human Rights Ombudsman Office in Valle del Cauca to report their situation.

As a human rights defender Martha Lucía Rentería has publicly denounced important cases of killings, "disappearances" and displacement. Because of her public declarations an attempt against Martha Lucía Rentería's life was made on 29 September 2000 when she was shot at after attending a meeting.

The seriousness of these threats has forced *Sembrar* to consider asking the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights for the same protection measures for the members of its regional office as those of the national office in Bogotá.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The displaced communities and organizations that work with them are regularly victims of intimidation, abduction and murder, generally by army-backed paramilitary groups, but also by soldiers or the armed opposition group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)*, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

*Sembrar* is a non-governmental human rights organization that has specialized in defending the legal rights of victims of human rights violations in various regions of Colombia documenting human rights violations in the regions, and supporting national and international solidarity initiatives with local communities.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Martha Lucía Rentería and urging the Colombian authorities to take immediate and effective action to guarantee her safety, in accordance with her wishes;
- asking them also to take immediate and effective action to ensure that Martha Lucía Rentería, other members of *Sembrar* and other human rights defenders in the Valle del Cauca Department can carry out their legitimate and important work for the defence of human rights in safety;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to human rights defenders, as laid out in the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution of the Organization of American States and in repeated recommendations made to them by the United Nations;

- urging the government to issue a public statement recognizing the legitimacy of work for respect of the human rights of the civilian population affected by the armed conflict;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with repeated United Nations recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez, Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: President Uribe, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telex: 44281 P-ALP CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 566 20 71/ 576 20 78**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President**

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,

Ministro del Interior y de Justicia, Ministerio del Interior,

Palacio Echaverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.,

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Ministro Interior, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 566 4573**

**Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,

Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Fiscal General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")**

**Salutation: Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio**

**COPIES TO:**

Seembrar

*Non-governmental Human Rights Organization*

Apartado Aéreo 18621, Santafé de 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 17 November 2002.