

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/113/2001

12 November 2001

Further information on UA 22/01 (AMR 23/008/01, 29 January 2001) and follow-up (AMR 23/028/2001, 8 March; AMR 23/035/2001, 26 March; AMR 23/061/2001, 8 June; AMR 23/087/2001, 7 September) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Activists with the *Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)*, Popular Women's Organization in Santander department

Jackeline Rojas (f)

Yolanda Becerra (f)

Patricia Ramírez (f)

Other participants in the *Movilización Internacional de Mujeres*, International Mobilization of Women.

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Amnesty International fears for the safety of human rights activists belonging to the women's grass roots organization the *Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)*, Popular Women's Organization, after their community centre in the Barrio La Virgen, Barrancabermeja, department of Santander was destroyed.

According to reports, after 9:00pm on 10 November, a group of armed men forcibly entered the OFP centre and began to demolish it. The centre was totally levelled and the men were reportedly seen leaving the scene, in a red truck containing the doors, windows, toilet and all other building materials, including the debris following the centre's destruction.

Threats against the OFP centre reportedly began in March this year, when armed men, believed to be members of the paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*, United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia, began to pressure activists to close the centre. The OFP temporarily suspended their activities until the local civil, military and police authorities were able to guarantee their safety. An intergovernmental authorities' commission (*Comisión Intersectorial por la vida en la ciudad*) was established several months ago to maintain and defend the work of civil society in the face of paramilitary activity. This enabled the OFP to resume its work providing economic help, food, education and women's health initiatives.

There have been no further reports of death threats against participants in the *Movilización Internacional de Mujeres*, International Mobilization of Women.

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

- urging the Colombian authorities to take appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of members of the *Organización Femenina Popular* so they can continue their legitimate work for the defence and promotion of human rights;
- calling for an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the destruction of OFP property, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the Colombian government to adhere to its obligations regarding human rights defenders as laid out in United Nation and Organization of American States declarations, and in line with repeated recommendations made by the UN to the Colombian government to take measures to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders;
- expressing concern that the government has taken no effective action against paramilitary groups in the Barrancabermeja area, despite their own commitments and UN recommendations to combat and dismantle these groups;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Santander, urging that the results are made public, and that those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Armando Estrada Villa,

Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior,  
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.,  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia****Fax: + 57 1 562 5298/ 562 9890**

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

Minister of Defence

Dr. Gustavo Bell

Ministro de Defensa Nacional, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52, Oficina 217, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telex: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 222 00 59**

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

Governor of Santander Department

Sr. Jorge Eliecer Gómez Villamizar, Gobernador del Departamento de Santander,  
Gobernación de Santander,

Calle 37, No. 10-30,

Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia

**Telegram: Gobernador Santander, Bucaramanga, Colombia**

**Fax: +57 76 339889**

**Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador**

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**

**Telex: 44281 PALP CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 566 20 71**

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

**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 17 December 2001