

20 November 2002

Further information on UA 38/01 (AMR 23/017/2001, 9 February 2001) - Fear for safety

COLOMBIA Jackeline Rojas (f), human rights activist for the Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)
Other members of the OFP

Jackeline Rojas, coordinator of the *Organización Femenina Popular* (OFP), Popular Women's Organization for the municipality of Cantagallo, Bolívar department, has been declared a "military target" by army-backed paramilitary groups operating in the area. Amnesty International is concerned for her safety, and for the safety of other members of the OFP.

On 15 November, Jackeline Rojas was reportedly warned by a local official in Cantagallo about the declaration that she is a "military target". The official allegedly told Jackeline Rojas that the paramilitaries controlling the municipality saw the OFP as a threat. The same official later told other members of the OFP that he had been able to persuade army-backed paramilitaries not to attack Jackeline Rojas for now, but he could not guarantee that she would be safe for long. The OFP has not revealed the identity of the official, as he told them that doing so would lead to his death, the death of Jackeline Rojas and the death of both their families.

Amnesty International believes that this threat means that other members of the OFP may also be in danger. The OFP has been working to promote women's human rights in Barrancabermeja, department of Santander and surrounding areas including the municipality of Cantagallo for 29 years. They refuse to cooperate with army-backed paramilitary groups, and have therefore faced continual threats and harassment (see UA 22/01, AMR 23/008/2001, 29 January 2001).

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jackeline Rojas, who was declared a "military target" by paramilitary groups operating in Cantagallo, Bolívar department;
- calling on the Colombian authorities to investigate this threat fully and bring to justice those responsible;
- expressing continued concern for the safety of other members of the OFP, and noting that the OFP has been repeatedly threatened by paramilitaries in the past;
- urging the Colombian authorities to take steps, deemed appropriate by those under threat, to guarantee the safety of Jackeline Rojas and other members of the OFP, so that they can carry out their legitimate human rights work without fear of reprisal;
- calling on the Colombian government to initiate an ongoing and meaningful dialogue with human rights defenders to address issues of their protection and the prevention of attacks against them;
- 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;

-expressing concern at the continued large-scale presence of army-backed paramilitary forces in Cantagallo Municipality and surrounding areas despite the heavy military presence in the area;
- calling for immediate decisive action to confront and dismantle these groups in line with repeated UN recommendations and governmental commitments.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 342 0592/ 566 2071

Salutation: Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe / Dear President Uribe

Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia

Vicepresidente de la República de Colombia

Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón

Vicepresidencia

Carrera 8A No 5-57

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Vicepresidente/ Dear Vice-President

Telegram: Vice-Presidente Bell, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 334

Minister of Defence

Dra. Martha Lucía Ramírez

Ministra de Defensa Nacional, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: Dear Minister Ramírez / Sra. Ministra Ramírez

COPIES TO:

National Advocate for the people

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz,

Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,

Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 office 301,

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 640 0491

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Cifuentes Muñoz / Dear Mr. Cifuentes Muñoz

Women's grassroots organization

Organización Femenina Popular

Cra 22 No 52B B 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 1 January 2003.