

EXTERNAL AI Index: AMR 23/01/98

7 January 1998

Further information on UA 393/97 (AMR 23/85/97, 16 December 1997) - "Disappearances"/Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Dario GEORGE, aged 33

Dayra Patricia ZÚÑIGA (f), aged 17, community leader.

New names: Antonio TUBERQUIA,

Blanca Libia GUZMÁN (f), wife of above

Edilberto USUGA

Residents of San José de Apartadó

Concern continues for the safety of the "peace community" of San José de Apartadó, municipality of Apartadó, in the northern Urabá region of the department of Antioquia, following another incident of harassment, detention, torture and threats involving three members of the community, and the continued "disappearance" of Dario George and Dayra Patricia Zúñiga.

According to information received Antonio Tuberquia, his wife Blanca Libia Guzmán and Edilberto Usuga were allegedly detained on 29 December 1997 by three armed men in military uniform, whilst collecting cocoa in the hamlet of La Unión. The military uniforms reportedly bore army insignia.

Antonio Tuberquia was interrogated as to the whereabouts of guerrilla forces and accused of being a commander of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, an armed opposition group. The men checked his identity papers and proceeded to tie him up and beat him. They reportedly then took him to a house for two-and-a-half-hours and again interrogated and tortured him. Blanca Libia Guzmán was reportedly accused of "looking like a guerrilla". Edilberto Usuga was accused of being a guerrilla, beaten and his identity documents confiscated. The men issued threats saying that they would go into San José de Apartadó to get him. In the past those accused of being guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators by the security forces or their paramilitary allies have frequently been victim to serious human rights violations.

Before being released the three peasant farmers were threatened with death if they reported what had happened to them: "*ya sabemos quiénes son y a dónde viven. Cuidense no diga nada a nadie, si dicen algo vamos a por usted y debajo de las patas de quien sea lo sacamos*", "we know who you are and where you live. Be careful don't say anything to anyone, if you say anything we will go after you and drag you out from wherever you are hiding".

In March 1997 San José de Apartadó declared itself to be a *Comunidad en Paz*, Peace Community, in an attempt to persuade the warring parties to respect their neutrality and right to life. Since the declaration over 30 inhabitants have been killed and two "disappeared", the majority by paramilitary groups and several others by members of the FARC.

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The three men told the peasant farmers that they considered all the members of the community of San José de Apartadó to be guerrillas: "*Dicen estar en una Comunidad de Pax pero nosotros no creemos en eso*", "You state that you are in a Peace Community but we do not believe that".

On 2 January 1998, 50 members of the Colombian Army entered the community of San José de Apartadó reportedly causing serious fear amongst the population.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please continue action as specified in original UA. If addition please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or in your own language:

- calling for full and impartial investigations into the detention and torture of Antonio Tuberquia, Blanca Libia Guzmán and Edilberto Usuga on 29 December 1997, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice;

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 2186/289 3377/286 7434

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Samper

Minister of Defence

Dr. Gilberto Echeverri Mejía

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

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Governor of Antioquia

Dr. Alberto Builes Ortega

Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia

Gobernación de Antioquia

Calle 42B, # 52-106

Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Telegrams: Gobernador Departamento, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 4 381 1342

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

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In appeals to the Governor of Antioquia, acknowledge that guerrilla forces in Colombian have violated international humanitarian law. Underline that such abuses can in no way justify human rights violations by the Colombian security forces and their paramilitary allies.

COPIES TO:

Intercongregational Commission for Justice and Peace

Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz

AA 31861, Santafé de Bogotá

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 18 February 1998.