

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "disappearance"

15 January 1991

COLOMBIA : Euclides BLANDON, aged 36  
Alvaro VASQUEZ GOMEZ

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Euclides Blandón and Alvaro Vásquez Gómez who were last seen at the beginning of January 1991 in or near Cali, Valle del Cauca department.

According to reports, Euclides Blandón was seized by three hooded men as he was travelling by bus from Buenaventura to Cali. The other passengers on the bus saw Euclides Blandón being driven away by car in the direction of Buenaventura by the three men. Euclides Blandón is a 36-year-old member of the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19), April 19 Movement, a political party. Despite efforts to locate Euclides Blandón in police and military establishments, his whereabouts remain unknown. Local human rights activists have denounced his possible "disappearance" to the regional procurator, who has a human rights monitoring role.

Alvaro Vásquez Gómez was last seen on the morning of 4 January 1991 when he left his home in Cali for work. Alvaro Vásquez, who works at the La Carmela sugar factory, is a member of its union. He is a sympathizer of M-19. Local human rights activists have denounced his possible "disappearance" to the regional procurator.

On 8 March 1990, after 16 years of armed opposition, the M-19 became the first armed opposition group in Colombia to disarm voluntarily. It is now a legal political party with ministerial representation under the government of President César Gaviria Trujillo.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including "disappearances". Local human rights groups estimate that over 1,800 people have "disappeared" and remain unaccounted for since 1980. Principal targets have been people associated with trade unions, civic and community movements and legal left-wing parties, as well as alleged members of or sympathizers with armed opposition groups. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each individual "disappearance", as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, on the basis of available evidence the organization concludes that many such abuses are carried out by members of the Colombia security forces or civilians working under their command. Cali has been particularly affected by "disappearances" in recent months.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of Euclides Blandón and Alvaro Vásquez Gómez;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation to establish their whereabouts;

- urging that if in detention, their legal situation be clarified and they be immediately released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence and also allowed access to a lawyer and relatives;
- urging that they be humanely treated while in detention.

**APPEALS TO:**

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**  
**Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324**  
**+ 57 1 287 7937**  
**+ 57 1 283 3066**

General Oscar Botero Restrepo  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO or 44561 CFAC CO**  
**Faxes: +57 1 222 1874**

Dr. Gustavo Arrieta  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Edificio Banco Ganadero  
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO**  
**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

**COPIES TO:**

Dra Zylia Márquez  
 Calle 2, 38 D, 37  
 Cali  
 Valle del Cauca  
 COLOMBIA

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 February 1991.