

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/05/98

UA 23/98 Fear for safety / Possible extrajudicial  
executions

23 January 1998

COLOMBIA Carlos Vera Correa

Marleny Taborba (f)

Arcadyo Ferney Bolivar

All other Inhabitants of municipal capital of Carmen de  
Atrato, department of Chocó

Killed: Ruben Dario Maya, 35, miner  
Jhon Fredy Alvarez Valderrama, 17  
Jaime Ramírez Palacio, 27  
Gildardo Taborda

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According to reports received by Amnesty International, four men from the town of Carmen de Atrato, department of Chocó, were killed by paramilitary gunmen during December 1997 and the first days of January 1998. Inhabitants of the town have been warned by paramilitary groups active in the area that up to 70 new graves need to be prepared in the local cemetery as there is going to be a "cleansing" operation in the area. There have also been reports that many young people have been warned by paramilitary gunmen that they will be killed if they do not leave the town.

Paramilitary gunmen were reportedly responsible for killing Ruben Dario Maya on 5 December 1997 and Jhon Fredy Alvarez Valderrama on 30 December. The following day they reportedly attacked and injured Jaime Ramírez Palacio, whom they later killed while he was being treated in hospital. They are also believed to be responsible for killing Gildardo Taborda on 3 January 1998, who was shot dead in front of his family at his home.

Carlos Vera Correa, Marleny Taborba and Arcadyo Ferney Bolivar, who are believed to have witnessed the killings, have reportedly received death threats from the paramilitary groups responsible.

In July 1997, Jaime Ramírez Palacio's name appeared on a list of people condemned to death by the paramilitary group, *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá* (ACCU), Peasant Self-Defence Force of Córdoba and Urabá.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has issued a number of Urgent Actions on behalf of communities in the municipality of Carmen de Atrato [see UA 146/96, AMR 23/34/96, 17 June 1996 and follow up AMR 23/09/97, 18 February 1997 as well as UA 322/97, AMR 23/72/97, 14 October 1997]. The civilian population in the area has been systematically targeted for extrajudicial executions by paramilitary groups working in alliance with the armed forces.

Despite international appeals calling on the Colombian authorities to dismantle paramilitary organizations operating in the department of Chocó, and bring those members responsible for human rights violations to justice, no effective action has been taken to stem paramilitary violence in the region. Failure to take decisive action against paramilitary groups will lead to further human rights violations in the region.

In December 1997 President Samper announced action against paramilitary groups responsible for widespread human rights violations in many areas of the country. However, little action has been taken.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- calling for all necessary measures to be taken to guarantee the safety of all inhabitants of the town of Carmen de Atrato, particularly Carlos Vera Correa, Marleny Taborba and Arcadyo Ferney Bolivar, and calling for the threats made against them to be investigated and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling for thorough investigations into the killings of Ruben Dario Maya, Jhon Fredy Alvarez Valderrama, Jaime Ramirez Palacio and Gildardo Taborda, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Chocó, and for members of the security forces responsible for supporting such groups to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated governmental commitments.

**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 the Interior

Dr. Alonso López Caballero  
 Mnistro del Interior  
 Ministerio del Interior  
 Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2  
 Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 65 24/281 5884/286 0405**

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

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**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Organization:  
Corporación Jurídica Libertad  
AA 47, Medellín, 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 8 March 1998.