

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

7 May 1992

COLOMBIA:

Hugo VARELA MONDRAGON, lawyer, journalist and
community leader

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of Hugo Varela Mondragon on 21 April 1992 in circumstances suggesting he was the victim of extrajudicial execution.

According to eye-witnesses, Hugo Varela was detained in Palmira, Valle department on 21 April by armed men who identified themselves as members of the police intelligence agency F-2. Witnesses say that he was forced into a vehicle and taken to an unknown destination. On 22 April his body was found close to the community of Puente Velez, municipality of Jamundí, reportedly showing signs of torture.

Hugo Varela was a lawyer and journalist, community leader and president of the National Body of Community Housing Organizations, Central Nacional de Organizaciones de Vivienda Popular, (CENPAVI). He had also been a member of the commission set up by ex-president Belisario Betancourt to negotiate peace with the armed opposition groups in Colombia.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In September 1991 the Procurator General's office produced an official report which stating that more than 2,300 complaints had been lodged against the army and police in the last two years for human rights violations. President César Gaviria Trujillo, on presenting the report, stated:

"No puede el Gobierno desconocer la gravedad de las acusaciones que se hacen en forma reiterada y masiva contra sus agentes, ni ignorar hasta que punto reina la impunidad por violación de derechos humanos."

"The government cannot fail to recognise the seriousness of the accusations made constantly and on a massive scale against its agents, nor ignore the extent of impunity in cases of human rights violations".

However, despite the government's declared commitment to uphold respect for human rights, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses, including torture, extrajudicial execution and "disappearance" with virtual impunity.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the killing of Hugo Varela Mondragon in circumstances

suggesting he may have extrajudicially executed by members of the army intelligence agency F-2;

- urging that there be an immediate and thorough investigation into the killing, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- urging that the government take all possible measures to protect the lives of community workers, to ensure that they are able to carry out their lawful activities without fear.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo **Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /**
Presidente de la República **Dear President Gaviria**
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 286 3066, + 57 1 286 7324, + 57 1 287 7937

2) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla **Sr. Procurador de la Nación /**
Procurador General de la Nación **Dear Dr. Arrieta**
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

3) Minister of Defence

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda **Sr. Ministro /**
Ministro de Defensa Nacional **Dear Minister**
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda, Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

4) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño **Estimado Dr Triviño /**
Defensor del Pueblo **Dear Dr. Triviño**
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Defensor del Pueblo Cordoba, c/o Procuraduria General, Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO
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COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights and Educational Organization:

Señores

CINEP

AA 25916

Santa Fe de Bogotá

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 18 June 1992.