

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/021/2001

19 February 2001

Further information on UA 30/01 (AMR 23/009/2001, 2 February 2001) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Internally displaced people at the *La Nohora* camp, city of Villavicencio, Meta department
New names: Internally displaced people at the *La Reliquia* camp, city of Villavicencio, Meta department
William CAMELO] community activists
Laura Johana ESQUIVEL]

Internally displaced people in the city of Villavicencio in central Colombia continue to be under threat after local government authorities have ordered the eviction of those sheltering in yet another camp. Local activists, who represent these communities, have received death threats.

The municipal mayor of Villavicencio has ordered more than 2000 internally displaced families sheltering at the *La Reliquia* camp in the Caños Negros district to be forcibly evicted by 22 February. This move comes only weeks after more than a thousand soldiers arrived to evict displaced families from the nearby *La Nohora* camp. The soldiers are apparently still waiting to evict the families.

Several board members with the *Asociación de Vivienda*, Community Association, have received death threats, and its president, William Camelo, has been forced to flee the area. Laura Johana Esquivel, the president of the *Asociación de Desplazados de La Reliquia*, Association for the Displaced of La Reliquia, has also fled the area after being threatened by armed men.

Displaced communities frequently suffer serious human rights violations at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitary allies, who try to silence them and prevent them from bringing their plight to international attention. In October 2000, paramilitary forces reportedly killed at least four displaced people, who had sought shelter in Villavicencio (see UA 325/00, AMR 23/084/00, 25 October 2000). Forcibly displaced people are often labeled as guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators, thereby providing the security forces and their paramilitary allies with an excuse for targeting them. Organizations working with the displaced communities have also been targeted.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of displaced people sheltering in Villavicencio, especially those at the *La Reliquia* and *La Nohora* camps, after local government authorities have threatened to forcibly evict them;
- continuing to express concern that over a thousand soldiers are reportedly waiting to evict those sheltering at the *La Nohora* camp;
- urging the authorities to taking all steps deemed appropriate by those under threat to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into death threats against community activists, who work with the displaced communities;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Meta, urging

that the results are made public, and that those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and decisive action to combat and dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with repeated government commitments and United Nations recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Fax: + 57 1 336 2109 / 337 1351

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr. Presidente

Minister of Interior

Señor Humberto De La Calle
Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o., Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 341 9583 / 334 3960

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Governor of Meta Department

Alan Jara Urzola
Gobernación de Meta
Carrera 33 N°38-45
Villavicencio, Meta, Colombia

Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador

COPIES TO:

National Advocate for the People

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes
Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo
Calle 55, No. 10-32/46, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para Refugiados (ACNUR)
Calle 114 No.9-01 Edificio Teleport Torre A Oficina 601
Santafé de Bogotá, 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 2 April 2001.