

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/023/2003

6 March 2003

Further Information on UA 187/02 (AMR 23/066/2002, 20 June 2002) Fear for safety

**COLOMBIA** Luis Enrique Imbachi (m), Acting President of *Sindicato de Trabajadores de las Empresas Municipales de Cali* (SINTRAEMCALI), Cali Municipal Service Workers Trade Union  
Other members of SINTRAEMCALI

**New Names:** Martha Cecilia Gómez Reyes, (f)  
Robinson Masso, (m)  
Martha Bibiana Giraldo, (f)

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Amnesty International continues to be seriously concerned for the safety of members belonging to the Sindicato de Trabajadores de las Empresas Municipales de Cali (SINTRAEMCALI), Cali Municipal Service Workers Trade Union in Valle del Cauca Department, following a marked increase in threatening phone calls they and their families have received.

Martha Cecilia Gómez Reyes, SINTRAEMCALI delegate and wife of Luis Enrique Imbachi, current vice-president of the trade union, has been the target of several of the phone calls. On 22 February 2003 she received a call on her mobile phone in which a man with a mocking laugh threatened her saying "You are going to die" (*Te vas a morir*). On 3 March a further call was made to her office. On this occasion, the man asked in a questioning tone: "Martha Cecilia Gómez Reyes?" When she then asked who was calling, the answer was: "you are going to die".

Robinson Masso, another SINTRAEMCALI leader, has been subjected to intimidating phone calls where the caller remains silent. On 3 March his wife, Martha Bibiana Giraldo, received a call saying: "anyway nobody will be saved" (*de todas maneras no se iba a salvar ninguno*).

The offices of SINTRAEMCALI have also received death threat phone calls. On 3 March up to three such calls were made to the main switchboard. One of the calls was particularly alarming as the caller said that if SINTRAEMCALI did not believe them they would be sent a little evidence. The caller repeated: "Listen, we are going to kill all of these leaders sons of bitches, and this time it is serious" (*Ve a vos y a todos esos hijos de putas directivos los vamos a matar y esta vez es en serio*).

#### **BACKGROUND**

This campaign of threats is taking place at a time when SINTRAEMCALI has been campaigning against the privatization of Cali's electricity, water, sewage and telecommunications utilities for the last year.

The security forces and their paramilitary allies have often accused trade unionists of being guerilla sympathizers which has led to trade unionists being frequently harassed, tortured and killed, often by paramilitaries. For example, on 16 June 2002 an attempt was made on the life of the then acting president of SINTRAEMCALI, Luis Enrique Imbachi, see UA 187/02 (AMR 23/066/2002, 20 June 2002).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of SINTRAEMCALI members in Valle del Cauca;
- asking the authorities what action they will take to guarantee the safety of those at risk, and calling for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists to be adequately resourced;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the death threats against SINTRAEMCALI members attempt, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Valle del Cauca Department, and asking that the results of the investigation are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,  
Ministro del Interior y de Justicia  
Ministerio del Interior  
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:      Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:             + 57 1 566 4573**

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

Minister of Social Protection

Sr. Diego Palacio Betancur  
Ministerio de Protección Social  
Carrera 13 No 32-76  
Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:      Ministro de Protección Social, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:             + 57 1 336 80 07**

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

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,  
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,  
Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),  
Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:             + 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say “me da tono de fax por favor por Dr. Osorio”)**

**Salutation:    Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organization

Nomadesc  
AA 18621, 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 17 April 2003.