

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 456/91 (AMR 23/72/91, 20 December 1991) and follow-ups: AMR 23/02/92 of 30 January 1992 and AMR 23/13/92 of 19 March 1992 - Possible Extrajudicial Execution

COLOMBIA: Twenty members of the Paez Indian community of Caloto, Cauca Department

and Carlos Edgar TORRES APARICIO, lawyer
Rodolfo ALVAREZ, lawyer
Etnio VIDARDO, anthropologist

and new name: Oscar Elias LOPEZ, lawyer

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of Oscar Elias López on 29 May 1992 in circumstances suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution.

According to information received by the organization, Oscar Elias López was killed in the town of Santander de Quilichao, Cauca department by heavily armed gunmen on the evening of 29 May.

Oscar Elias López worked as the legal adviser of the Indigenous organization Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC), the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca department. He had reportedly received numerous death threats prior to his killing, as have other CRIC lawyers.

The CRIC has been involved in advisory work with the indigenous communities of the northern Cauca area, where many such communities are attempting to recover traditional lands which they claim were assigned and titled to them during the period of Spanish colonization. Some have occupied lands which they claim fall within their reservation, *resguardo*. Their claims have been disputed by landowners who, with the assistance of paramilitary groups and the support of army and police personnel have often reportedly used intimidatory measures against the Indians in an effort to dissuade the communities from pursuing their claims. Oscar Elias López had been acting as adviser to the communities affected by the massacre, on 16 December 1991, of at least 20 members of the Paez indigenous community. The Indians, who had been occupying a property called "El Nilo" near the town of Caloto, Cauca, were killed by some 60 armed and hooded gunmen who burst into a building where the Indians holding a meeting. Those killed included women and children.

On 8 January 1992 three men who were involved in an independent investigation of the massacre were killed or "disappeared". (Please refer to AMR 23/02/92 of 30 January). Lawyers Carlos Edgar Torres and Rodolfo Alvarez were shot dead at their homes in Cali, Valle department whilst anthropologist Etnio Vidardo "disappeared" from Cali the same night after attending the wake of one of his two friends. His whereabouts remain unknown. At this time the CRIC reported that five of its leaders

had been receiving death threats since the massacre occurred.

Amnesty International had received reports that official investigations initiated by the authorities found evidence that members of the Colombian National Police were implicated in the massacre of the Paez Indians, although the results of these investigations have not yet been made public.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Oscar Elias López in circumstances

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suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution;

- requesting an immediate and thorough investigation into the killing, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- continuing to express concern at the killing of Carlos Edgar Torres and Rodolfo Alvarez and the "disappearance" of Etnio Vidardo and asking what steps have been taken to find those responsible and bring them to justice;
- continuing to urge that the results of the official investigations into the killing of 20 Paez Indians from El Caloto on 16 December 1991 be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities take all possible measures to protect the lives of all those working with the Paez community and ensure that they are able to carry out their lawful activities without fear of reprisal.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

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

**Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/
Dear President Gaviria**

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
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Sr. Procurador de la Nación/
Dear Dr. Arrieta**

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

3) Director General of the Police:

Mayor Miguel Antonio Gómez Padilla
Director General de la Policía Nacional
Tr. 45, No. 40-11
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Sr. Director General/
Dear sir**

Telegrams: Dir.-Gen. Policia Nacional, Bogota, Colombia

4) Director of the Department of State Security:

Dr. Fernando Brito
Director

**Estimado Dr. Brito/
Dear Dr. Brito**

Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad

Carrera 28, No. 17A-00

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Director, Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, Santa Fe de Bogota,
Colombia**

Telexes: 43363 JEDAS

5) Minister of Justice:

Fernando Carillo

Ministro de Justicia

Ministerio de Justicia

Carrera 15, No 9-63

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

Sr. Ministro/

Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca:

Señores, CRIC, AA 516

Popayán, Cauca

Colombia

2) 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 17 July 1992.