

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 144/94 Fear of "disappearance"

12 April 1994

COLOMBIA Alvaro José CAUSADO MARQUEZ, aged 41, peasant leader

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Alvaro José Causado Márquez, who was abducted from his home in the community of El Pinal, Los Palmitos municipality, Sucre department on 10 April 1994 by armed men. He has not been seen since.

According to sources, at 1.45 am on 10 April, 12 masked and heavily armed men in civilian dress arrived at Alvaro Causado's home in two vehicles. After breaking down the front door and firing at a youth who was in the front room, they broke down the door into Alvaro Causado's room. All inhabitants were forced to lie face down on the floor. Alvaro Causado was beaten and then taken out and forced into one of the vehicles. The armed men threatened neighbours not to leave their homes or try to interfere. The vehicles reportedly then drove off in the direction of the departmental capital, Sincelejo.

Alvaro Causado is a peasant leader working with the National Peasants' Association ANUC, *Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos*, and a local left-wing political leader. He had previously reported being the victim of threats and persecution by the security forces. Three years ago, when he and a colleague were detained by the police in the town of Ovejas, Sincelejo for unknown reasons the Police commander reportedly threatened Alvaro Causado, saying "Watch out! We know who you are now" "*Ojo! Que ya sabemos quien es Usted.*"

The security forces deny that they are holding Alvaro Causado. A formal complaint has been made by Alvaro Causado's family to the Department of State Security, *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS)* and to the local office of the Judicial and Investigative Police *Sección de Policía Judicial y Investigación (SIJIN)*.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. Particular targets have been members of left-wing parties, community and trade union leaders. The majority of such abuses have been attributed by the Colombian forces to civilian "death squads" which it claims it is unable to control. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each "disappearance" as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, independent investigations have concluded that many such groups operate under the command or with the support of the Colombian armed and security forces. There is also evidence to suggest that members of the national police are members of these "death squads".

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Alvaro José Causado Márquez who has not been seen since 10 April 1994 when he was abducted from his home in Los Palmitos, Sucre department by 12 masked and heavily-armed men;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into his whereabouts;
- urging that if he is in detention, that he be humanely treated and allowed access to relatives and to a lawyer;

- urging that if he is in detention, that he be immediately charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released;

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of Colombia:

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

**Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939**

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

2) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Procuraduría General  
 Edificio Banco Ganadero  
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472**

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

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño  
 Defensor del Pueblo  
 Defensoría del Pueblo  
 Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 288 6683**

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

4) Director General of the Police

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

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

**Salutation:Sr. Director General/Dear sir**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights and Educational Organization

Señores  
 CINEP  
 AA 25916  
 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 24 May 1994.