

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/35/98

UA 160/98 Fear for Safety

21 May 1998

COLOMBIA Luis Eduardo GARZÓN, president of the Trade Union Confederation
Jorge ORTEGA GARCÍA, vice-president of the Trade Union Confederation
Jesús Antonio GONZÁLEZ LUNA, director of the human rights department of the Trade Union Confederation
Domingo Rafael, director of the organizational department of the Trade Union Confederation

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|-----------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Oscar Arturo OROZCO |] | |
| Hernán de Jesús ORTIZ |] | |
| Wilson GARCÍA QUICENO |] | regional trade union leaders |
| Henry OCAMPO |] | |
| Sergio DÍAZ |] | |
| Fernando CARDONA |] | |

María Clara VAQUERO SARMIENTO (f), President of the Trade Union Association of Civil Servants of the Ministry of Defence

Concern for the safety of a number of trade union leaders is heightened in the wake of a series of recent murders and attacks of trade unionists and after receiving information that many of their names (see above), appear on so-called "listas negras", "black lists".

"Black lists" are often circulated to those included on the list in order to intimidate them into abandoning their legitimate activities or to force them to flee. Many of those whose names have been listed in the past, some of which have been published in the national press, have subsequently been targeted for serious human rights violations by paramilitary organizations operating with the support of the armed forces.

An Urgent Action recently issued (UA 150/98, AMR 23/29/98, 13 May 1998) highlighted the case of members of SINTRAMUNICIPIO-CARTAGO, Union of Municipal Workers of the municipality of Cartago, department of Valle del Cauca, and other workers involved in industrial disputes for improved working conditions and wages, who had received death threats. Their names also appear on "black lists" circulating in the region.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The announcement by the Confederacion Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), Trade Union Confederation, of the existence of "black lists" comes in the wake of a series of killings of trade unionists in recent weeks:

On 18 April 1998 Jorge Boada Palencia, leader of the *Asociación del Instituto Nacional Penitenciario*, (ASOINPEC), Association of the National Penitentiary, was reportedly killed by members of a paramilitary group in the capital Bogotá.

Also on 18 April, Dr Eduardo Umaña Mendoza, a prominent human rights lawyer leading the defence for a number of members of the oil worker's union, USO, was killed by unidentified gunmen (see UA 122/98, AMR 23/22/98, 20 April 1998).

On 9 May Jorge Duarte Chavez, a member of USO, was killed by presumed paramilitary members in Barrancabermeja, department of Santander.

On 10 May USO member Carlos Rodríguez Márquez was killed by paramilitary gunmen in the city of Barranquilla, department of Atlántico.

On 11 May president of the Tibú branch of USO, Norte de Santander department, and his wife were reportedly shot by members of a paramilitary group and seriously wounded.

Human rights workers, members of legal opposition groups, popular activists and trade unionists have frequently been accused of being guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators by the security and armed forces, accusations which have frequently been followed by serious human rights violations often perpetrated by the security forces' paramilitary allies. Human rights lawyers who have defended trade unionists charged with being guerrillas have themselves also been threatened or become victim to serious human rights violations.

Guerrilla organizations are likewise responsible for committing serious human rights abuses, including deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians and the holding of hostages.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the trade unionists named on the "black lists";
- urging that all measures, deemed appropriate by those under threat, be undertaken to guarantee their security;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into the "black lists", that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 carrera 8 No. 7-26
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 2186 / 289 3377 / 286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Samper

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez
 Fiscal General de la Nación
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 571 570 2000 (when answer phone picks up dial 2017 for fax)

Salutation: Estimado Dr. / Dear Dr.

Minister of Defence

Dr.Gilberto Echeverri Mejía

Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Trade Union Confederation
CUT, AA 221, 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 July 1998.