

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 63/92 (AMR 23/10/92, 20 February 1992) and follow-up AMR 23/33/92 of 15 June 1992 - Death Threats and new concern Possible Extrajudicial Execution

COLOMBIA:Members of Regional Human Rights Committe (CREDHOS) in Barrancabermeja

new name: Julio César BERRIO VILLEGAS - Human rights worker

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing Julio César Berrio Villegas on 28 June 1992 in Barrancabermeja, Santander department.

Julio César Berrio, was the third member of the Regional Human Rights Committee (CREDHOS), Comité Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, to have been killed in the last 16 months. Several other members have escaped attempts on their lives and have been repeatedly threatened by paramilitary groups.

Julio César Berrio had worked for CREDHOS for two years as a security guard protecting the Committee's offices. He had also recently been involved in investigating killings in Barrancabermeja attributed to paramilitary groups. At 5 pm on 28 June 1992 he was shot dead by two unidentified gunmen in an ice-cream parlour in Barrancabermeja. His wife witnessed the shooting.

In March 1991 CREDHOS worker Humberto Hernández was shot dead in Barrancabermeja by men in civilian clothes. In January 1992 CREDHOS' secretary Blanca Valero de Durán was killed outside the Committee's office by gunmen in civilian dress (see UA 34/92, AMR 23/03/92 of 31 January 1992). Three policemen who witnessed the attack reportedly ignored her cries for help and made no attempt to pursue her assailants, who remain at large.

Following statements by local military commanders in February 1992 linking CREDHOS to guerrilla organizations, threats from paramilitary forces increased. In June three CREDHOS members, including the President, lawyer Jorge Gómez Lizarazo, narrowly escaped injury when their cars came under sustained fire from several heavily armed men. Although the Colombian government has condemned the attacks on CREDHOS and has promised full investigations, those responsible have not yet been identified and brought to justice.

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

- expressing serious concern at the killing of Julio César Berrio Villegas and at the continued attacks against CREDHOS members;

- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into the death of Julio

César Berrio Villegas and other attacks against CREDHOS members, the results of which should be made public;

- urging that those responsible for the killings and threats against CREDHOS members be brought to justice;

- welcoming government statements condemning attacks against CREDHOS members and requesting the Colombian authorities to take measures to guarantee that human rights workers are able to carry out their lawful activities without fear of reprisal.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic:

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

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

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066, + 571 286 7324, + 57 1 287 7937

2) Minister of Defence:

Dr Rafael Pardo Rueda
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

3) 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 Procurator General**

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO; 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

4) Commander of the Vth Brigade:

Brigadier General Roberto Cifuentes
Comandante de la V Brigada
Calle 14, Carrera 33
Bucaramanga
Santander, Colombia

**Sr Brigadier General /
Dear Brigadier General**

Telegrams: Comandante 5 - Brigada, Bucaramanga, Colombia

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

CREDHOS
aa 505
Barrancabermeja

Santander
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 13 August 1992.