

Further information (1) on UA 260/95 (AMR 23/69/95, 22 November 1995) - apparent extrajudicial execution / fear for safety and new concern: torture

COLOMBIA Civilians in Pailitas and other municipalities in Cesar Department

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for the safety of the civilian population in the municipality of Pailitas, who face continuing paramilitary threats and attacks. These concerns have been heightened by the torture and killings, on 8 May 1996, of Luis Uribe and Luis Fuentes Marqués by a paramilitary group in the municipality of Pailitas, department of Cesar.

According to information just received by Amnesty International, at approximately 3pm on 8 May, one kilometre from the town of Pailitas on the bifurcation in the road from Pailitas, known as La Y, which then continues toward the communities of El Terror and Caño Arenas, a paramilitary group set up a road block. At the checkpoint, approximately 60 people travelling into and out of Pailitas were detained. Among them were two drivers of public hire vehicles, Luis Uribe and Luis Fuentes Marqués. Both men were reportedly beaten with a whip which had a bullet attached to its end. They were then taken aside and further tortured. At around 6pm, the two men were brought back to the place where the others detained were still being held. They were then forced to lie face down. Luis Uribe was shot in the head and died instantly. Luis Fuentes died shortly after being shot three times.

The paramilitary group reportedly stole money and valuables from the two men and threatened several of the people they detained. The men were reportedly beaten with a whip and kicked. Women were also beaten; one woman was wounded with a cut to the throat. Paramilitary group members told her that they were going to behead her six-month-old daughter. Members of the group reportedly threatened pregnant women with a knife and told them that they were going to take the "guerrillerito" (little guerrilla) out.

Following the killings, the paramilitary group has reportedly continued to harass and intimidate the civilian population in Pailitas and in other municipalities of the southern region of the department of Cesar. These recent killings suggest that paramilitary activity in the region continues to be strong, that the Colombian authorities have failed to take decisive action to dismantle paramilitary structures operating in the region and have heightened fears for the safety of the civilian population of the region.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the inhabitants of communities in the municipality of Pailitas and neighbouring municipalities in the department of Cesar following the killings, in circumstances suggesting extrajudicial executions, of Luis Fuentes Marqués and Luis Uribe on 8 May 1996 by a paramilitary group;
- urging that there be full and impartial investigations into these killings, that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing concern that, despite repeated calls for action by the Colombian authorities to dismantle paramilitary structures operating in the region, such groups continue to commit human rights violations against the civilian population;

- urging that the government immediately fulfil its commitment to disband paramilitary forces presently operating as auxiliaries of the armed forces or with the armed forces' complicity;
- urging further that members of such forces responsible for human rights violations, as well as members of the security forces supporting such groups, should be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia

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

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

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Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Attorney General

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Salutation: Estimado Dr. Valdivieso/Dear Dr. Valdivieso

3) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior Serpa, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 286 6524 / 286 0485

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Carlos Esguerra Portocarrero
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Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
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Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Alternative Legal Association

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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 12 August 1996.