

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 239/93 Extrajudicial Execution/Fear for Safety

21 July 1993

COLOMBIA: Victor ZAMBRANO, *campesino*

Reyes FUENTES, *campesino*

José FUENTES, *campesino*

and one other *campesino* whose name is not known to Amnesty International  
and other civilians from Socha and the surrounding communities

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Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of four *campesinos*, peasant farmers from the municipality of Socha, Boyacá department, on 13 July 1993, reportedly by members of the Colombian armed forces. There is concern also for the safety of witnesses and of other civilians from Socha and surrounding communities, where the army is carrying out intensive counter-insurgency operations.

According to local witnesses, on 6 July 1993 an area in the central north-eastern zone of Boyacá, including Socha, was heavily militarized by troops, including the "Casanare Guides unit "Unidad Guías de Casanare" from the army's XVIth Brigade, XVI Brigada and the 1st Brigade's Tarqui Battalion, Batallón Tarqui de la 1 Brigada. On 13 July, four *campesinos*, Victor Zambrano, Reyes Fuentes and José Fuentes and another whose name is not at present known to Amnesty International, were reportedly detained by soldiers from the Unidad Guías de Casanare unit at a place known as Capillal and later killed. After five days their bodies were handed over to relatives for burial.

Civilians from communities within the militarized area report that in addition to the killing of the above men, soldiers have been responsible for human rights abuses including intimidation, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment. They state that many families have been forced to leave their homes as a result of aerial bombardments which have destroyed property and houses. Access to the zone has been restricted by the military.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In early 1992, peace talks between guerrilla groups and the Colombian government broke down. Since then there has been an increase in guerrilla activity and the army's counter-guerrilla operations, culminating in a national state of emergency being declared by the government in November 1992. Areas where guerrilla forces are active are frequently militarized and placed under tight supervisory control by the armed forces. The civilian population in these areas is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution.

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

- expressing concern at reports of the extrajudicial execution of Victor Zambrano, Reyes Fuentes, José Fuentes and one other *campesino* on 13 July 1993 by soldiers from the army's 1st Brigade;

- urging that there be an immediate and thorough investigation into their deaths, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the fundamental human rights of civilians living in areas, such as Boyacá, which are undergoing counter-insurgency operations.

**APPEALS TO**

1) 1st Brigade Commander:

Brigadier General Rafael Hernández López  
Comandante de la 1 Brigada  
Calle 22 No. 8-56  
Tunja  
Boyacá  
Colombia

**Telegrams: Comandante I Brigada, Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia**

**Salutation: Sr. Comandante / Dear Sir**

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

**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Attorney General:

Dr. Gustavo de Greiff  
Fiscal General de la Nación  
Fiscalia General de la Nación  
Apartado Aéreo 29855  
Santa Fe de Bogotá  
Colombia

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalia General, Bogota, Colombia**

**Faxes: + 57 1 287 0939**

**Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Greiff / Dear Dr. de Greiff**

4) President of Colombia:

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

**Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324, + 57 1 287 7937**

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

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) 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

2) Alternative Legal Centre:

ILSA

AA 077844

Santa Fe 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 1 September 1993.