

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 250/92 Fear of Extrajudicial Execution

31 July 1992

COLOMBIA: Ligia Patricia CORTEZ, (female) community worker
 Parmenio RUIZ SUAREZ, trade union president
 Rene TAVERA, community worker and trade unionist

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of Ligia Patricia Cortez, Parmenio Ruíz Suárez and Rene Tavera on 30 July 1992 in Barrancabermeja, Santander department in circumstances suggesting they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution.

According to information received by the organization, Ligia Patricia Cortez, Parmenio Ruíz and Rene Tavera were in the restaurant "La Shanon" in Barrancabermeja when, at approximately 11.30 am, they were killed by unknown gunmen who fired at them from a motorbike and then escaped.

Ligia Patricia Cortez, a philosophy graduate, was working on an educational project with the Regional Human Rights Committee CREDHOS, Comité Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos. CREDHOS has increasingly been the victim of human rights violations, including possible extrajudicial executions, threats and harassment by state forces and paramilitary groups. (Please refer to UA 34/92 (AMR 23/03/92, 31 January 1992), UA 63/92 (AMR 23/10/92, 20 February 1992) and follow-up (AMR 23/33/92, 15 June 1992). Rene Tavera, member of the peasant farmer's association ANUC, Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos had been working at the local shelter for internal refugees, families displaced by counter-insurgency military operations in the region around Barrancabermeja. The shelter has recently been forced to close down as a result of reported threats and harassment of its staff and occupants. Parmenio Ruíz Suárez was president of a drivers' union, Sindicato de Choferes de la Empresa de Transportes San Silvestre. Only days before his death, Parmenio Ruíz had written to the Procurator General of Colombia, *Procurador General de la Nación*, denouncing reported human rights violations against transport union members and increasing death threats against himself and another work colleague.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Barrancabermeja is the centre of the largely rural area of the Magdalena Medio in central Colombia, which has been the centre of violence for several years following the emergence of guerrilla groups in the 1960s and subsequent militarization of the region during the 1980s. Amnesty International and local human rights groups have expressed grave concern about the recent escalation of human rights abuses, including torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution committed by the Colombian army, police and paramilitary organizations working with them, against members of the civilian population. Particular victims have been human rights defenders, community workers and trades unionists. The local human rights committee CREDHOS has denounced that so far this year 270 people have been killed in Barrancabermeja and the surrounding area.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Ligia Patricia Cortez, Parmenio Ruíz Suárez and

Rene Tavera on 30 July 1992 in Barrancabermeja, Santander department in circumstances suggesting they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution.

- urging that there be an immediate inquiry into the killings, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- requesting that the government take all possible measures to protect the lives of community workers and trades unionists, so that they can carry out their lawful activities without fear for their lives.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telex: 44281 PALP CO

Fax: + 57 1 286 3066

286 7324

287 7937

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

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

Fax: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

3) Commander of the Armed Forces

General Manuel Murillo González
Comandante del Ejército
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santa Fe de Bogotá
Colombia

**Telegrams: Comandante del Ejercito
Bogota, Colombia**

Telexes: 43401 COEJC

Salutation: Sr. Comandante/Dear Commander

4) Minister of Justice:

Fernando Carillo

Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Carrera 15, No 9-63
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

5) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla

Salutation: Sr. Procurador de la Nación

Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

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

**Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or
41213 PGNDP CO**

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

Dear Dr. Arrieta

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

CREDHOS
AA 505
Barrancabermeja
Santander
Colombia

Human Rights and Educational Organization

Señores

CINEP

AA 25916

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 11 September 1992.