

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety

4 August 1994

COLOMBIA

Julio Ramón OLIVERA GRACIA, aged 55

Marina SALAS (f)

There is concern for the lives of Julio Ramón Olivera Gracia and Marina Salas, President and Secretary respectively of the *Movimiento Cívico Popular por la Defensa de Sampués*, Popular Civic Movement for the Defence of Sampués, whose treasurer, Tomás Vega, was killed on 16 March 1994. In recent weeks Julio Ramón Olivera has survived an attempt on his life and Marina Salas has received a written threat. Julio Ramón has since left Sampués and moved to another city. Amnesty International is concerned for his safety and that of his family and for the safety of Marina Salas and other members of the *Movimiento Cívico Popular por la Defensa de Sampués*.

According to reports, on 10 July 1994 an armed man approached Juan Ramón Olivera Gracia's home in the district of El Carmen in the municipality of Sampués, department of Sucre. As the man prepared to shoot at Juan Ramón Olivera one of his daughters and a neighbour stood in the gunman's way and alerted Juan Ramón and other neighbours. The neighbours shouted and the man fled on a motorcycle. Although the police appeared soon after, they were unable to capture the man.

Julio Ramón Olivera was a leader of the *Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos* - National Peasant Farmer's Association - ANUC, until 1991. He is a candidate for the *Asamblea Departamental*, Departmental Assembly of Sucre, for the *Movimiento Covergencia Cívica*, Civic Convergence Movement, and is an activist for the political movement, *Corriente de Renovación Socialista*, Current for Socialist Renewal. He is also a member of the *Comité de Usuarios Campesinos de Bocagrande* in Sampués.

Julio Ramón Olivera has led peasant farmer land struggles for 35 years and reports suggest that this failed attempt against his life was related to his political activism. Reports also indicate that he was singled out on a death list of peasant leaders allegedly drawn up by local landowners in 1987 when he was still an ANUC leader. He is married with four children.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. Outgoing President César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights. However, members of the armed and security forces and their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Popular leaders and political activists are amongst the groups frequently targeted by the security forces and their paramilitary allies for extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest and other forms of human rights violation. Peasant farmers campaigning for access to land or who own land disputed by powerful interest groups, such as landowners, are also often targeted. President-Elect Samper, who will assume the presidential office on 7 August 1994, made several promises during his election to improve the human rights situation in Colombia.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Julio Ramón Olivera Gracia in view of the attempt made against his life by an armed man on 10 July 1994, and urging that all measures are taken to guarantee his and his family's safety;
- urging that there be full and impartial investigations into this incident, that the findings should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of Marina Salas and other members of the *Movimiento Cívico Popular por la Defensa de Sampués*, and urging the authorities to take all the measures necessary to ensure that the organization can pursue its legal activities without fear of intimidation;
- urging that there be full and impartial investigations into threats received by Marina Salas, secretary of the *Movimiento Cívico Popular por la Defensa de Sampués* and the assassination of the organization's treasurer, Tomás Vega, on 16 March 1994, and that the findings be made public and those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) Outgoing/Incoming President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo

From 7 August 1994: Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Gaviria / Samper (from 7 August 1994)

2) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla

Procurador General de la Nación

Procuraduría General

Edificio Banco Ganadero

Carrera 5, No. 15-80

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 342 9723

Salutation: Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta

3) Attorney General

Dr. Gustavo de Greiff

Fiscal General de la Nación

Fiscalía General de la Nación

Apartado Aéreo 29855

Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 287 0939/288 2828

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

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Andean Commission of Jurists

Comisión Andina de Juristas

AA 58533, Santa Fé 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 15 September 1994.