

UA 221/99

Fear for

COLOMBIA Alfredo Molano, Alejandro Reyes Posada, Patricia Lara, Arturo Alape,
Fabricio López - journalists
Aliro Uribe, Javier Giraldo, Gabriel Izquierdo, Héctor Mondragón - human
rights defenders
Hernando Hernández - trade union leader
Jaime Caycedo - president of Communist party
Pablo Elías González - Head of human rights unit of Attorney General's Office
Alvaro Leyva Durán, Omar García, Libardo Ramces Pinilla Rueda, Jose Galvis,
Nolasco Presiga, Gregorio Oviedo Oviedo, Gilberto Medina and
Alfredo Colmenares Chia and Jairo Enrique Rojas Pulido

Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of those named above, whose names are on a *lista negra*, blacklist, circulated in central Bogotá on 23 August 1999. In the present human rights crisis in Colombia, such lists are public death threats and have frequently been followed by attacks on those named.

The people listed include politicians, journalists, writers, human rights defenders and a senior official with the Attorney General's Office. The majority have been active in recent months in trying to break the deadlock in the peace process between the Colombian government and the two main armed opposition groups. The list accuses them of worsening Colombia's armed conflict and of inciting hatred. It was signed by the *Ejército Rebelde Colombiano*, Rebel Army of Colombia. Some of those named on the list have already left the country after previous death threats.

On 13 August the nationally renowned satirist and journalist, Jaime Garzón, was gunned down on his way to work. He had recently joined a special commission whose task was to mediate between the government and the armed opposition group, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), National Liberation Army, in restarting peace talks. In the days before his death he had received a number of death threats accusing him of collaborating with the armed opposition. His killing caused national outrage and has led to widespread allegations that hardline elements within the military, particularly army intelligence, were involved in the murder and are intent on destroying the peace process. The army has denied any involvement.

Amnesty International is concerned that those responsible for the death of Jaime Garzón may be intending to carry out a campaign of terror against anyone associated with the peace process.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The spiralling conflict between the Colombian Armed Forces and their paramilitary allies and left-wing armed opposition groups has claimed the lives of over 30,000 civilians in the last 10 years. In 1998 Andrés Pastrana's government began peace processes with the two major armed opposition groups. However, in recent months these talks have stalled and violence continues to escalate alarmingly. The killing of Jaime Garzón and the appearance of the new *lista negra* appear to be part of a strategy of terror intended to frustrate efforts to restart the peace process.

There have been a number of high profile extrajudicial executions in recent years in which members of the armed forces, particularly army intelligence, have been implicated. Although some steps have been taken over the years to

purge military officials linked to paramilitary groups, there is still concern that hardline elements remain within or close to the armed forces.

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

- expressing grave concern at the appearance in Bogotá on 23 August 1999 of a death list threatening those named above;
- urging the government to take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of those people named on the list who have not already left the country, as well as all other people who have publicly worked to advance the peace process;
- calling for an immediate investigation into the death threats, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice;
- deploring the killing of Jaime Garzón and calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into his killing, for the results to be made public and for all those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia
Telex: 44281 PALP CO
Fax: + 57 1 286 7434/ 284 2186/ 337 1351
Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Néstor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA
Telegrams: Ministerio del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes:45406 MINGO CO
Fax:+ 57 1 286 8025 / 281 5884 / 342 3201
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Commander of the Army

General Jorge Enrique Mora Rangel
Comandante del Ejército Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Comandante del Ejercito, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes:43401 COEJC
Fax:+ 57 1 315 1570
Salutation: Sr. Comandante/Dear Commander

COPIES TO:

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez,
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes:+ 571 570 2022

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 7 October 1999.