

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/63/98

21 August 1998

Further information on UA 156/98 (AMR 23/34/98, 18 May 1998) and follow-ups (AMR 23/52/98, 14 July 1998; AMR 23/37/98, 5 June 1998) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Civilian population of Barrancabermeja, department of Santander

Concerns have intensified for the safety of the civilian population of Barrancabermeja following the leaking of an official police intelligence document which states that another massacre by paramilitaries is due to take place on 22 August 1998.

According to the document, dated 9 August 1998, the attack will be carried out by the paramilitary group *Autodefensas Campesinas de Santander y el Sur del Cesar*, (AUSAC), Peasant Self-Defence Groups of Santander and the south of Cesar. AUSAC claimed responsibility for the massacre and "disappearance" of over 30 people in Barrancabermeja on 16 May.

The document states that 80 heavily armed men are to enter the north-eastern sector of Barrancabermeja and block the roads with vehicles, supposedly to prevent police intervention.

The paramilitaries are to have a *lista negra*, black list, of people it considers to be guerrilla sympathizers. In the past, many of those named on such lists have been killed. The paramilitary group apparently also intends to enter the La Esperanza and Primero de Mayo districts and kill a number of selected individuals. There are also indications that the paramilitary group plans to plant a bomb to terrorize the civilian population.

The commander of AUSAC also stated in an interview with the *Vanguardia Liberal* newspaper on 17 August that the paramilitary offensive in Barrancabermeja would continue. In addition, AUSAC leaflets have appeared in Barrancabermeja in recent weeks, declaring any person "*que de manera directa o indirecta, colabore con la delincuencia narco-guerrillera*", "who collaborates directly or indirectly with the narco-guerrilla delinquents", to be a military target.

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 civilian population of Barrancabermeja in the light of a leaked document detailing a planned paramilitary attack on 22 August 1998;
- urging that all measures are taken to guarantee the safety of the civilian population, that immediate measures are taken to dismantle AUSAC and asking for information on the measures which are to be taken to prevent the attack;
- welcoming the progress made in the investigations into the mass killing and "disappearances" by a paramilitary group in Barrancabermeja in May 1998, which have uncovered evidence implicating members of the armed forces;
- calling for the prompt detention of those for whom the *Fiscalía General* has issued arrest warrants in relation to the above;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups and urging that all those found responsible for supporting and/or participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments;

- reminding Colombia's new government of the country's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

- **urging your own government and political representatives to immediately request that the Colombian authorities take instant action to prevent the planned paramilitary attack.**

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andres 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 1 284 2186/289 3377/286 7434/

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana

Minister of Defence

Dr. Rodrigo Lloreda,Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional,Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Nestor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Fax:+ 57 1 281 5884 / 286 6524 / 286 0405

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization:CREDHOS, AA 505,Barrancabermeja, Santander, Colombia

Attorney General

Dr.Alfonso Gómez Méndez, Fiscal General de la Nación,
Fiscalia General de la Nación, Diagonal 22B 5201,Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé
de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 571 570 2000 (when ansaphone picks up dial 2017 for fax)

Salutation: Estimado Dr./Dear Dr.

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 8 October 1998.

***"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."
Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

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