

UA 266/00

Fear for**COLOMBIA Civilian inhabitants in El Queremal and neighbouring communities in the Dagua municipality, Valle del Cauca department.**

Several people have been killed by paramilitary groups in the Valle del Cauca department, raising concern for the safety of communities in this area. In particular, Amnesty International fears an imminent paramilitary attack on the community of El Queremal in the municipality of Dagua.

On 26 August 2000, Orlando Anguo Angulo, Pedro Viafara, Arlington Mosquera and Héctor Fabio Ortiz from the community of Triana in the Buenaventura municipality near Dagua were reportedly killed by paramilitaries belonging to the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*, United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia. The paramilitaries were in possession of a death list. Such lists are often drawn up by the security forces and their paramilitary allies, naming people they consider to be guerrilla supporters or collaborators. Those named on these lists have frequently suffered serious human rights violations, including "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions.

The same day, the AUC entered the neighbouring community of Zaragoza where they killed César Angulo Riascos, Azel Herrera Hurtado, Guillermo Rodríguez and Ricardo Calderón.

Also on 26 August, members of an armed opposition group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)*, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, reportedly killed Ferney Ordoñez Rodríguez in the nearby community of Sabaletas. FARC guerrillas have previously killed people they accused of being security force supporters or collaborators.

The recent spate of paramilitary killings heightens concerns for the safety of civilians in El Queremal, Dagua municipality. Paramilitaries have reportedly threatened to attack this community, which is situated on the road between Cali and Buenaventura. In recent months, paramilitary incursions against communities situated on or near this road have led to the forced displacement of many civilians in the area.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Members of the Colombian army and security forces, and their paramilitary allies, commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Over the past five years, several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups. The Colombian government suspended the constitutional legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups in 1989, yet they continue to work with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country.

Similarly, guerrilla forces and armed opposition groups have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, for example executing those they accuse of being security force or paramilitary collaborators and supporters.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of civilian inhabitants in the Valle del Cauca department following a number of killings attributed to paramilitary forces and armed opposition groups;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into these killings, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging that measures are taken to guarantee the safety of the civilian population in El Queremal and neighboring communities;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Valle del Cauca, urging that the results are made public and that those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and United Nations recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**President of Colombia:

Senor Presidente Andrus 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, + 57 1 284 2186 or + 57 1 337 1351**

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

Minister of Foreign Relations

Dr. Guillermo Fernández de Soto, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores  
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Palacio San Carlos  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams: Ministra Relaciones Exteriores Emma-Mejia, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telex: 45209 MRRE CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 282 5802**

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

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez,  
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Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes: + 57 1 570 2022** (If the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor" and wait for the signal.)

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

**COPIES TO:**Alternative Legal Association

MINGA, AA 40303  
Santafé 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 17 October 2000.