

PUBLIC

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UA 281/98 Fear for safety/Possible extrajudicial execution 30 October 1998

COLOMBIA Rosalba de Indauro (f)

Members of *Comité de Derechos Humanos del Municipio de Curumaní*, the Curumaní
Human
Rights
Committee

Donaldo Quiroz Veleño, human rights defender, killed

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of members of the *Comité de Derechos Humanos del Municipio de Curumaní*, Curumaní Human Rights Committee, following the killing of its secretary, Donaldo Quiroz Veleño. There are also concerns for his friend Rosalba de Indauro.

On 17 October 1998, members of a paramilitary group calling itself the *Autodefensas Campesinas del Cesar*, Cesar Peasant Self-Defence Groups, tried to stop Donaldo Quiroz Veleño as he cycled to Rosalba de Indauro's house in the community of San Roque, Curumaní municipality, department of Cesar. Donaldo Quiroz then fled on foot to his friend's house.

Soon after, members of the paramilitary group forced their way into Rosalba de Indauro's house. They found Donaldo Quiroz Veleño hiding in one of the rooms and killed him with several shots to the head.

Amnesty International is concerned that a paramilitary group could carry such an attack despite the municipal police station being situated nearby.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The armed forces and their paramilitary allies have frequently accused human rights activists of being guerrilla sympathizers. Such accusations are often followed by serious human rights violations.

Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Over the past five years, several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups throughout the country.

The Colombian Government has suspended the legal basis for the formation of paramilitary organizations and, in 1989, it issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups. Yet paramilitary groups continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country. No effective steps have, as yet, been taken by the authorities to control their actions or to hold members accountable for serious and widespread human rights violations. In addition, President Andrés Pastrana, who took office on 8 August this year, has yet to take effective steps to tackle the country's long-running human rights crisis.

According to the Attorney General, more than 200 outstanding arrest warrants, issued to alleged paramilitary members responsible for human rights violations, have still not been acted upon by the security forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Rosalba de Indauro and members of the Human Rights Committee of the Municipality of Curumaní following the killing

of Donaldo Quiroz Veleño on 17 October 1998, reportedly by members of a paramilitary group;

- calling for measures deemed appropriate by those under threat, to be taken to protect their safety;
- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the killing of Donaldo Quiroz Veleño, that the results of the investigation be made public, and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the area and urging that those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities 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."

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

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 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

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 2017

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 11 December 1998.

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

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>