

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/105/00

UA 388/00

Fear for

COLOMBIA Dr Fernando CRUZ PEÑA, human rights lawyer with the *Asociación de Juristas Demócratas*

Human rights lawyer Fernando Cruz Peña was abducted in the city of Cali on 13 December, and his whereabouts are now unknown.

He and a relative were apparently in a taxi that was stopped by gunmen in police uniform at about 6pm. When they got out, another car pulled up, and three men in plain clothes got out and ordered Fernando Cruz to get in. His relatives reported this to the authorities, but have been given no information.

There is serious concern for Fernando Cruz's safety: the security forces and their paramilitary allies have frequently accused human rights lawyers of being guerrilla collaborators or sympathizers. These accusations have frequently been followed by serious human rights violations, including "disappearances".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights defenders have suffered continuous threats and harassment for carrying out their legitimate work to promote and protect internationally recognized human rights. In the past they have suffered death threats, killings and "disappearances" at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitary allies. Many have been killed and others have been forced to leave the region in fear for their lives.

The Colombian authorities have so far failed to take action against paramilitary groups operating in the region.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Dr Fernando Cruz Peña, who has not been seen since 13 December, and urging the authorities to do everything necessary to find out what has happened to him;
- urging the authorities to ensure that there is a full and impartial investigation into his "disappearance", for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to protect human rights defenders in Cali, as deemed appropriate by those at risk;
- urging the government to adhere to its obligations to protect human rights defenders, as set out by the United Nations and Organization of American States.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic
Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939/284 2186/289 3377

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr Presidente

Vice-President of the Republic

Señor Vicepresidente Gustavo Bell Lemus
Alto Consejero Presidencial para asuntos de Derechos Humanos y lucha Contra
la Corrupción
Cra. 8 #7-26,
Palacio de Nariño,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 337 1351

Salutation: Dear Vice-President / Excmo. Sr. Vicepresidente

Governor of Valle del Cauca Department,

Juan Fernando Bonilla
Gobernador del Departamento de Valle del Cauca, Gobernación de Valle del Cauca
Carrera 6ª, Calles 9ª y 10ª, Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Fax: + 57 2 885 8813

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/ Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization
CSPP
AA 22803
Bogota
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 1 February 2001.