

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety

1 February 1995

COLOMBIA

Jorge Enrique ILLERA DODINO, human rights activist
Oscar BECERRA, community leader
and others

Jorge Enrique Illera Dodino, Oscar Becerra and about 10 other civic and community leaders working in the municipalities of Convención and El Carmen, department of Norte de Santander, are reported to be on a "death list".

The "death list" is alleged to have been drawn up by the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad* (DAS), Civilian Security Department, at its regional headquarters in the city of Bucaramanga, department of Santander, and then supplied to a paramilitary group operating in the region so that it could carry out a series of killings in the municipalities of Convención and Carmen. The DAS is an official state security body.

Jorge Enrique Illera Dodino is a member of the *Equipo Regional para la defensa de los Derechos Humanos de la Provincia de Ocaña y El Catatumbo*, Regional Human Rights Team for the Defense of Human Rights in the Province of Ocaña and El Catatumbo and also works as a civic action promoter in the municipality of El Carmen. Oscar Becerra is a well-known community leader in the village of Guamalito in the municipality of El Carmen.

Between 1984 and 1985, Jorge Enrique Illera Dodino was detained on several occasions by members of the armed forces and subjected to torture and threats. He made several denunciations of the violations he had suffered to the *Personería de El Carmen*, the Office of the Ombudsman of El Carmen and the *Procuraduría de Ocaña*, Office of the Procurator-General of Ocaña.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Jorge Enrique Illera Dodino and Oscar Becerra and the other community leaders, given that in the past individuals whose names have appeared on "death lists" have subsequently become victims of human rights violations. This concern is further heightened by the series of extrajudicial executions in recent months carried out by paramilitary forces operating in the region. Those killed have included peasant leaders, civic activists, human rights workers and peasant farmers (for example see UA 386/94, AMR 23/82/94, 26 October 1994 and follow-up to UA 204/94, AMR 23/84/94, 27 October 1994).

A denunciation of the "death list" has been presented to the Office of the Ombudsman (*Personería*), the Office of the Procurator General (*Procuraduría General de la Nación*) and the Office of the Attorney General (*Fiscalía General de la Nación*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Despite repeated government pledges to protect human rights, members of the Colombian and security forces together with their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious violations with virtually total impunity. Civilians, including community leaders, human rights activists and political activists, have frequently been the victim of violations. Many paramilitary forces have been set up and trained by the armed forces, and continue to play a central role in the Colombian army's counterinsurgency strategy, a strategy characterized by the systematic violation of human rights. The commitments

made by the government of President Ernesto Samper Pizano include a commitment to eradicate paramilitary groups, to end impunity and to guarantee the protection of human rights workers.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jorge Enrique Illera Dodino, Oscar Becerra and other community leaders in the municipalities of Convención and El Carmen, department of Norte de Santander, whose names are reported to appear on a "death list", and urging that all measures necessary to guarantee their safety are undertaken;
- urging that full and impartial investigations into the "death list" are undertaken, the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the reported collusion between the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS)* who allegedly drew up the list and paramilitary forces to whom the list was reportedly submitted;
- urging immediate action to eradicate paramilitary forces operating in the region and to guarantee the safety of human rights workers, in line with governmental commitments.

APPEALS TO

President of Colombia:

Señor Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939/284 7186

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

Minister of Defence

Dr. Fernando Botero Zea
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Botero Zea, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
 Ministro de Gobierno
 Ministerio de Gobierno
 Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7^o
 Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 281 5884

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Organization

MINGA

Calle 19 No. 4-88

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 19 March 1995.