

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/006/2008

19 February 2008

Further Information on UA 256/07 (AMR 23/036/2007, 5 October 2007) and follow-up (AMR 23/044/2007, 13 December 2007) - Death threats/ Fear for safety

COLOMBIA

Javier Correa (m), President of the National Union of Food Industry Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de Alimentos*, SINALTRAINAL)

José Domingo Florez (m), a leader of the Santander branch of SINALTRAINAL

Luis Eduardo García (m), leader of the Santander branch of SINALTRAINAL

Members of their families
Other members of SINALTRAINAL

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of SINALTRAINAL leaders, Javier Correa, José Domingo Florez and Luis Eduardo García following recent death threats made against them.

On 12 February a letter containing death threats signed by the paramilitary group, the Black Eagles Front (*Frente Aguilas Negras*) was reportedly received at the home of José Domingo Florez in the municipality of Bucaramanga, Santander Department.

The letter accused trade unionists of being terrorists and told them that because they had not obeyed a previous paramilitary order to leave the city, they would now have to bear the consequences which would be cruel, and would start with their families (*terroristas hijueputas como no obedecieron nuestra orden de salir de Santander ahora atenganse a las consecuencias que van hacer muy infrahumanas empezaremos con sus familias*). The threat also said that Javier Correa, Domingo Florez and Luis García were under surveillance by the paramilitary group.

At around 7:45 pm on the same day Luis Eduardo García was reportedly stopped near José Domingo Florez' home by two men on a motorbike. The men told him: "Now you are going to die trade unionist son-of-a-bitch" (*ahora si que te vas a morir sindicalista hijoeputa*).

On 13 February another death threat was received by José Domingo Florez. This time the letter was left in a neighbouring house with instructions that it be delivered to the owner of a green Mitsubitchi, the same car owned by José Domingo Florez. The letter gave José Domingo Florez a deadline of eight days to leave the area. The letter also mentioned his daughter saying that she was very nice and they would take her for a ride (*tiene 8 días de plazo para que se vaya, su hija esta buenona y le vamos a hacer la vuelta*).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- urging the authorities to protect José Domingo Florez, Luis García, Javier Correa, their families, and other members of SINALTRAINAL, in accordance with the wishes of those at risk;
- calling on them to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats against SINALTRAINAL members, to publish the results and bring all those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region and to break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations;
- calling on the government to fully implement recommendations made by the ILO to guarantee the safety of trade unionists, to take decisive action to end impunity in cases of human rights abuses against trade

unionists, and to ensure that the office of the ILO's permanent representative in Colombia is sufficiently resourced so that it can effectively fulfil its mandate;

- calling on the authorities to fully apply the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders (including trade unionists) and protects their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Vice-president of the Republic

Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón

Vicepresidencia, Carrera 8A No 7-27, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 444 2158 (ask for fax tone: me da tono de fax por favor)

Salutation: Dear Vice-president Santos/Estimado Sr. Vicepresidente Santos

Minister of Social Protection

Dr. Diego Palacio Betancourt

Ministerio de Protección Social

Ministerio de Protección Social, Carrera 13 No 32-76, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 330 5050

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Sir

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C, Piso 4

Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Mr Iguarán

COPIES TO:

SINALTRAINAL

Carrera 15# 35-18

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 1 April 2008.