

PUBLIC

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UA 60/00

Possible "Disappearance" / Reported excessive use of force by

the

COLOMBIAEleonor HERRERA (baby)
Luz Helena HERRERA
Wilson HERRERA
Gustavo DELGADO
Antonio DELGADO
Nelson DIAZ
Edgard DIAZ
Alfredo DIAZ
Wilson DIAZ

On 11 February 2000, three children from the U'wa indigenous population were killed, three others injured, including a young child, and nine others, including a four month old baby, went missing after the police and army reportedly violently evicted them from land they had occupied as part of a protest against an oil company.

Amnesty International is now very concerned for the safety of the nine missing people named above.

The organization is also concerned by reports that excessive force was used by the Police and Army in carrying out the eviction: Some 500 Army and Police (from the Regional Cúcuta Command) reportedly used tear gas, riot sticks and bulldozers to evict around 450 U'wa people from Las Canoas.

The U'wa had occupied the Saravena-Pamplona road at Las Canoas, in the rural area of Toledo, department of Santander, on 1 February to try to stop oil exploration machinery passing through into their ancestral lands.

A few days earlier they had been forcibly evicted from an occupation (an area outside their reservation) at Cedeño, where oil drilling is due to take place, after the Government gave authorization for petroleum exploration in the area.

Kenowuia Nury BOKOTA (4 months), Mauricio DIAZ (9 years) and Jorge ANIKUTA (10 years) were all killed and Maria Antonieta HIGUANITO, Chela HIGUANITO and Patricia HIGUANITO (12 years) were injured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For several years the Indigenous U'wa have been protesting against oil exploration by the Occidental Petroleum Corporation on what they claim to be their ancestral lands situated mainly in the Boyacá and Santander departments of northeast Colombia.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Eleonor Herrera (baby), Luz Helena Herrera, Wilson Herrera, Gustavo Delgado, Antonio Delgado, Nelson Diaz, Edgard Diaz, Alfredo Diaz and Wilson Diaz, all indigenous U'wa people forcibly evicted by police from Las Canoas, department of Norte de Santander, on 11 February 2000;
- expressing concern at reports that the police and army used excessive force to carry out the eviction;
- urging the authorities to initiate full and impartial investigations into their whereabouts and into the reported excessive use of force by police during

the eviction in which three U'wa children were killed, for the results be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice.

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 1 286 7434 / 284 2186 / 337 1351

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Néstor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministerio Interior, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 8025 / 281 5584 / 342 3201 / 341 9739

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Defence

Dr. Luis Fernando Ramírez Acuña
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Governor of Norte de Santander

Sr. Jorge Alberto García-Herreros
Gobernador del Departamento de Norte de Santander
Gobernación de Norte de Santander
Avenida 5 Calle 13 y 14
Cúcuta, Norte de Santander
COLOMBIA

Faxes: + 57 (75) 710510

Salutation: Estimado Dr. García

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental Organisation

Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)
Calle 13, No. 4-38
Apartado Aéreo 32395
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 21 April 2000.