

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

28 February 1991

COLOMBIA: Alcides CASTRILLON, human rights worker

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of Alcides Castrillon on 25 February 1991, in circumstances suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution. According to reports, he died at 9.30pm after he was pursued by unknown gunmen, and shot on the patio of his own house in a poor neighbourhood of Bogotá. He leaves a wife and seven children.

Alcides Castrillon was originally from Meta department but left the region at the beginning of 1990 following persecution and threats, apparently as a result of his work with victims of the violence in Colombia. Whilst still in Meta, he reportedly survived an attempt on his life when he was taking a group of 12 peasant farmers down the river Guaviare in a motor launch. The launch was attacked by a helicopter allegedly belonging to the security forces and he was the only survivor.

Once in Bogotá, as a result of his work on behalf of victims of the internal violence in Colombia, Alcides Castrillon was made a member of the national executive committee of the Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, Damnificados y Refugiados de Colombia (CONADHEGS), National Coordinating Body for Human Rights, Victims of Violence and Refugees in Colombia. He had recently been chosen as the CONADHEGS delegate to the Commission of Human Rights set up by the Procurator General's office (which has a human rights monitoring role in Colombia). At a meeting with the Commission on 7 February 1991 he reportedly denounced alleged human rights abuses against non-combatant civilians in rural areas of eastern Colombia where the security forces are involved in counter-insurgency operations. During army offensives against guerrilla positions the local population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by army personnel and civilians working with them.

Alcides Castrillon's killing has been denounced to the Procurator General's office. Amnesty International is concerned that his killing may have been a result of his human rights work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions. Principal targets have been people associated with civic and community movements, trade unions and legal left-wing parties as well as human rights workers.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the killing of Alcides Castrillon in circumstances suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough enquiry into his death, the results of which should be made public;
- urging that all possible measures should be taken to protect the lives of human rights workers to ensure that they are able to carry out their lawful activities.

APPEALS TO:

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324

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Dr. Gustavo Arrieta
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Edificio Banco Ganadero
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80
 Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Gómez, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

COPIES TO:

Señores
 CINEP
 AA 25916
 Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 April 1991.