

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/13/98

This is a limited action. Please send up to 15 appeals per section.

UA 67/98

Fear for Safety

3 March 1998

COLOMBIA Alicia SUÁREZ GALVIS (f); Regulo Efraín SUÁREZ GALVIS; Luz Marina SUÁREZ GALVIS; Nelson David ESCOBAR SUÁREZ; Miryan del Carmen SUÁREZ GALVIS (f); Carolina CORREDOR GALVIS (f); Lina Marcela Yakelin SUÁREZ GALVIS (f); Tania Esperanza SUÁREZ CORONADO (f); Alcides GALVIS RODRÍGUEZ; Paulina VENEGAS MARÍN (f) (Alfonso Suárez's wife); Magali SUÁREZ VENEGAS (f); Carol Andrea SUÁREZ VENEGAS (f); Camilo Alfonso SUÁREZ VENEGAS; Davis Alexander SUÁREZ VENEGAS and other relatives of Alfonso SUÁREZ GALVIS living in Santafé de Bogotá.

There is concern for the above named members of the Suárez, Corredor and Galvis families, from Bogotá, who have been threatened with death unless they leave Colombia.

The death threats received by the members of the families are linked to the "disappearance" of Alfonso Suárez Galvis. Alfonso Suárez has not been seen since he left his house in the Vegas de Santana housing estate in the district of Bogotá on 15 August 1997. At the time of his "disappearance" he was reportedly under investigation by the security forces. On 20 August, Alfonso Suárez's sister, Olga Mercedes Suárez, received a telephone call from an anonymous caller, who told her that her husband was being held by the Colombian Army.

According to information just received by Amnesty International, Gonzalo Corredor, a relative of Alfonso Suárez, received a written death threat addressed to him at his workplace on 5 January 1998: "... members of the family of ALFONSO SUÁREZ GALVIS should leave the country urgently since the Office of the Attorney General, the Army and the Police know that you are relatives of members of a guerrilla movement. We wish to warn you so that you do not suffer the same fate as your brother-in-law ALFONSO... " (" ... miembros de la familia de ALFONSO SUÁREZ GALVIS deben irse URGENTE del país debido a que la Fiscalía, el Ejército y la Policía están enterados de que ustedes son familiares y miembros de un movimiento guerrillero. Queremos Advertirles para que no corran con la misma suerte de ALFONSO... "). A further death threat against Alfonso Suárez's relatives was received by Gonzalo Corredor on 7 January. The written death threats warned relatives to leave Colombia within 20 days, or they would be killed.

There is serious concern for safety of members of the family of Alfonso Suárez since in the past those accused of being guerrillas, or relatives of members of guerrilla groups, have been the target of serious human rights violations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. President Ernesto Samper Pizano has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights and to tackle impunity. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Trade unionists, popular leaders, civic activists and human rights workers are amongst those frequently the target of human rights violations by the security forces and their paramilitary allies.

Only exceptionally are perpetrators brought to justice; the vast majority of members of the armed forces responsible for gross human rights violations remain in active service.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of members of the family of Alfonso Suárez Galvis and urging that all measures deemed appropriate by the relatives themselves are taken to guarantee their safety;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into the possible forced "disappearance" of Alfonso Suárez on 15 August 1997, that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that full and impartial investigations into death threats against relatives of Alfonso Suárez be undertaken, that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 2186/289 3377/286 7434

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Samper

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez
Fiscal General de la Nación
Fiscalía General de la Nación
Diagonal 22B 5201
Apartado Aéreo 29855
Santafé de Bogotá
Colombia

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 571 570 2000 (Ask for the fax extension - 2017 - Me da la extensión 2017)

Salutation: Estimado Dr./Dear Dr.

Advocate for the People:

Dr. José Fernando Castro Caycedo
Defensor del Pueblo
Defensoría del Pueblo
Calle 55 No.10-32
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Defensor del Pueblo Castro, Defensoría del Pueblo, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 346 1225/285 6908

Salutation: Estimado Dr Castro/ Dear Dr. Castro

COPIES TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores
ASFADDES
AA 011446

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 14 April 1998.