

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 40/94 "Disappearance"

7 February 1994

COLOMBIA: Julio César PAYÁN DE LA ROCHE, doctor and community leader, aged 52

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the "disappearance" of Julio César Payán de la Roche from near his home close to Popayán, Cauca Department on 20 January 1994. According to neighbours, at 6.00am he was taking his customary exercise before work, when he was forced into a jeep by unidentified men and driven away. His whereabouts remain unknown.

Julio César Payán de la Roche is a widely known and respected public figure in Popayán. He is a doctor and taught medicine at the University of Cauca for 7 years. He is involved with various medical and environmental organizations, as well as being president of an association of victims of the 1983 Popayán earthquake. He is President of the Popayán Municipal Council and a member of the left-wing opposition political party the M-19 Democratic Alliance (*Alianza Democrática Movimiento 19 de Abril*). He also presented a daily radio programme on alternative medicine. (A journalist working for the same radio station was killed only 4 months ago). Since Julio César Payán de la Roche's abduction, people in Popayán have organized daily marches and other shows of public concern about his "disappearance".

Although it is uncertain who precisely is responsible, Amnesty International believes there is a strong likelihood that the reason behind Julio César Payán de la Roche's "disappearance" is his standing in the community and his membership of AD M-19. A number of members of the AD M-19 have been killed or "disappeared" since its formation in 1990. Two years ago, when standing as a AD M-19 candidate for the Municipal council, an attempt was made on Julio César Payán de la Roche's life by an unidentified gunman.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution.

Particular targets have been members of left-wing parties, community and trade union leaders. The majority of such abuses have been attributed by the Colombian authorities to armed opposition groups or to civilian "death squads" which it claims it is unable to control. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each individual "disappearance", as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, on the basis of available evidence, the organization concludes that many such abuses are carried out by members of the Colombian security forces or civilians working under their command or with their support.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Julio César Payán de la Roche, who has not been seen since being abducted from near his house in Popayán, Cauca department on 20 January 1994;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into his whereabouts;
- urging that the government take every possible measure to locate Julio César Payán de la Roche and to ensure his safety and that of his family, and to return him to continue his work for the community of Popayán.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

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

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324/7434/287 7937

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Gaviria

2) Procurator General:

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

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Avenida 39, No. 16-42
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo Bogota, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 232 4640

Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/Dear Dr. Triviño

4) Governor of Department of Cauca:

Señor Temístocles Ortega Narváez
 Gobernador del Departamento del Cauca
 Gobernación del Cauca
 Carrera 7, Calle 4^a, esquina
 Popayán, Cauca, Colombia

Telegrams: Gobernador del Departamento de Cauca, Cauca, Colombia

Faxes: +57 28 243527

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:1) Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared":

ASFADDES
 AA 011446
 Santa Fé 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 March 1994.