

PUBLIC

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20 May 2005

UA 132/05

Fear for safety/ death threats

COLOMBIA

Hollman Morris (m)	]
Carlos Lozano (m)	] journalists
Daniel Coronell (m)	]

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On 16 May, three Colombian journalists based in the capital Bogotá received death threats in the form of funeral wreaths. Although the government has publicly condemned the threats against the three journalists and has provided them with extra security, Amnesty International is still concerned for their safety.

At 4pm, a wreath of funeral flowers was delivered to the office of the communist newspaper *La Voz*, whose editor is Carlos Lozano. The flowers arrived with a message saying they were for the “funeral of Carlos Lozano Guillen” and came from “the Montoya family”. It is not known who sent them.

At 7pm, another funeral wreath was sent to the home of journalist Hollman Morris, director of the investigative television programme CONTRAVIA. The wreath had a note attached expressing “most sincere condolences from the Henao family”. The name Henao, like Montoya, is a common name in Colombia and offers no clue as to the identity of the sender.

Also on 16 May, two other wreaths were sent to the former offices of the TV channel Canal Uno in Bogotá. One of the wreaths was addressed to the director of Canal Uno's news programme, Daniel Coronell; the other was addressed to his wife and his daughter. There was no note with the flowers, but Daniel Coronell had received two threatening phone calls at the Canal Uno office, on 24 April and again on 14 May, two days before the delivery of the flowers. In both cases an unidentified man threatened to kill him, his wife and daughter.

Carlos Lozano, Hollman Morris and Daniel Coronell have highlighted sensitive issues regarding human rights in Colombia. They have openly criticized government policies, such as the Justice and Peace legislative project's promotion of impunity for human rights violations, as well as the government's demobilization talks with army-backed paramilitaries. The three journalists also reported on the massacre of eight members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó which took place on 21 February 2005 (see UA 48/05, AMR 23/003/2005, 28 February 2005). A witness to the massacre claimed that the perpetrators had identified themselves as members of the armed forces. On 10 May, Hollman Morris's CONTRAVIA programme broadcast a special edition on this massacre.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Colombia is one of the countries with the highest levels of political related killings and threats against journalists. They are frequently threatened or killed by armed groups in Colombia's internal conflict, who accuse them of collaborating with their enemies.

Journalists and human rights defenders who have campaigned for justice in cases of human rights violations committed by the security forces or their paramilitary allies have often been subject to serious human rights violations themselves.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the three journalists Hollman Morris, Carlos Lozano and Daniel Coronell, after they reportedly received death threats;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the measures taken to guarantee the safety of the three journalists are in accordance with their wishes, and adequately provide them with protection, so they can continue their work as journalists;
- calling for an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the death threats against Hollman Morris, Carlos Lozano and Daniel Coronell, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:** + 57 1 337 5890

**Salutation:** Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe/ Dear President Uribe

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega,

Ministro del Interior y de Justicia

Ministerio del Interior

Av. Jiménez No 8-89

Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:** + 57 1 560 4630

**Salutation:** Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,

Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite), Bogotá, Colombia

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

**Salutation:** Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio

**COPIES 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 July 2005.