

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance" / Fear for Safety

12 May 1995

COLOMBIA

Jorge Ivan Alarcón Sánchez, student

Edgar Monsalve

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Jorge Ivan Alarcón Sánchez and Edgar Monsalve whose whereabouts have been unknown since they were last seen on 6 May 1995, being driven away in a vehicle with eight soldiers. The incident was witnessed in San Antonio de Prado, department of Antioquia.

On 6 May Jorge Ivan Alarcón Sánchez left his home in the Andalucía district of the municipality of Envigado, department of Antioquia, to go to the University of Antioquia where he is a student of mechanical engineering. He left the university at 9am and went to the municipality of Itagui where he met Edgar Monsalve. Both caught a bus to El Morro de San Antonio de Prado, also known as El Valle del Silencio. They were seen on the bus by a female friend.

Both Jorge Ivan Alarcón Sánchez and Edgar Monsalve were seen by inhabitants of the area that same day. Inhabitants recognized photographs they were shown of the two men by relatives who had travelled to the vicinity.

On 4 May an armed confrontation reportedly took place between guerrillas operating in the region and the army during which five people were killed. The area was subsequently heavily militarized.

A member of the San Antonio de Prado police force told the relatives: "*digamosle la verdad a esta gente los muchachos parecen ser buena gente, que el superintendente del ejército le dijo [a] los dos jóvenes [que] los llevaba en el carro para Angelopolis*" - "let's tell these people the truth, the lads seem to be good people, let's tell them that the army commander told them (the two men) that he would take them to Angelopolis by car". Witnesses saw the two men being driven off in a military vehicle with eight soldiers.

The *Procuraduría* - Office of the Procurator-General, has questioned the commander of the military base of Angelopolis and yet the whereabouts of the two men is still unknown. The *Juzgado Primero Penal del Circuito de Medellín* - First Penal Court of the Medellín Circuit, has issued an *habeas corpus* on behalf of the two men.

In areas in which armed confrontations between the armed forces and guerrillas have taken place members of the civilian population have frequently been the target of human rights violations carried out by the security forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, made several promises, both during his election campaign and subsequently, to improve the human rights situation. However, members of the

Colombian armed and security forces with their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtually total impunity. Civilians in areas of conflict are among those who have been the target of human rights violations. President Samper's promises include a commitment to end the impunity which benefits members of the security and paramilitary forces responsible for human rights violations.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jorge Ivan Alarcón Sánchez and Edgar Monsalve and urging an immediate investigation to establish their whereabouts;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the "disappearance" of Jorge Ivan Alarcón Sánchez and Edgar Monsalve, the results of which should be made public and those responsible be brought to justice
- urging that if they are in detention, that they be treated humanely and allowed access to lawyers and relatives; asking that they be charged immediately with a recognizable criminal offence or released.

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Minister of Defence

Dr. Fernando Botero Zea
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Botero, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

3) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
 Ministro de Gobierno
 Ministerio de Gobierno
 Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7
 Santafé de Bogotá

COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Serpa, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Commander of the Armed Forces

General Ramón Emilio Gil Bermúdez
 Comandante de las Fuerzas Militares

Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá
Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante Fuerzas Militares, Bogota, Colombia

Salutation: Sr. Comandante/Dear Commander

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 23 June 1995.