

UA 52/02

Fear for

COLOMBIA William Enrique Camelo Vega (m),
Luz Edelmira Rodríguez Reina (f),
Marleny Coronado (f),
Camilo Ernesto Moreno (m),
Edgar Peña (m),
Victoria Valencia (f),
Libardo Mochola (m),
Fredy Pedraza (m),
Hector Fabio Duque (m),
Eliodoro Pardo (m),
Gonzalo García (m),

And other members of Asociación de ocupantes de hecho de la Reliquia (ASPROVIVIR), in La Reliquia camp, city of Villavicencio, Meta Department

killed: Luis Castro (m)

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the ASPROVIVIR members mentioned above, following the appearance of their names on a "death list" circulated in the city of Villavicencio, Meta Department, on 6 February by unknown individuals. According to reports, since then many of them have received death threats by telephone and Luis Castro whose name was also on the list has been killed.

Luis Castro was fatally shot by two unidentified gunmen on at 7.30pm on 5 February. He had been an active member of ASPROVIVIR and had been lobbying the Human Rights Unit of the Sectional Attorney General's Office to investigate the murder of Evert Encizo Sandoval, member of the *Comité de Impulso de la Asamblea por la Paz del Meta*, Meta Peace Assembly Pressure Group Meta, who was killed in August 2001. Two other people named on the list, Marley Coronado and Luz Edelmira Rodríguez, are also witnesses in the investigation.

Human Rights Defenders in Villavicencio, Meta Department have also received death threats. In the last few days three human rights defenders were forced to flee the area in fear for their safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

La Reliquia is a camp of approximately 3500 internally displaced families in the city of Villavicencio. Displaced communities frequently suffer serious human rights violations at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitary allies, who try to silence them and prevent them from bringing their plight to international attention. In October 2000, paramilitary forces reportedly killed at least four displaced people, who had sought shelter in Villavicencio (see UA 325/00, AMR 23/084/00, 25 October 2000). In August 2001 the displaced community in La Reliquia camp was shaken when six of its members were killed in several attacks. Evert Encizo Sandoval, whose case is still pending investigation, was one of the victims. Forcibly displaced people are often labeled as guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators, thereby providing the security forces and their paramilitary allies with an excuse for targeting them. Organizations working with the displaced communities have also been targeted.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the ASPROVIVIR members named above, and other displaced people sheltering in Villavicencio, especially those at the *La Reliquia* camp;
- urging the authorities to taking all steps deemed appropriate by those under threat to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into death threats against ASPROVIVIR members and for the results to be made public;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Meta, urging that the results are made public, and that those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and decisive action to combat and dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with repeated government commitments and United Nations recommendations;
- urging the Colombian government to adhere to its obligations regarding human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted on 9 December 1998, the Organization of American States Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution adopted on 7 June 1999 [AG/RES. 1671 (XXIX-O/99)] and in line with repeated recommendations made by the UN to the Colombian government to take measures to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telex: 44281 PALP CO

Fax: + 57 1 566 20 71

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President

Minister of Interior

Dr. Armando Estrada Villa,
Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior,
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 562 5298/ 562 9890 / 286 0053 / 566 2477 / 566 3214

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Governor of Meta Department

Luis Carlos Torres Rueda,
Gobernador del Departamento del Meta, Gobernación del Meta,
Carrera 33 No. 38-45,
Villavicencio, Meta, Colombia

Telegrams: Gobernador Meta, Villavicencio, Colombia

Fax: + 57 986 625424

Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador

COPIES TO:

National Advocate for the People

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes

Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo
Calle 55, No. 10-32/46, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para Refugiados (ACNUR)
Calle 114 No.9-01 Edificio Teleport Torre A Oficina 601
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 29 March 2002.