
amnesty international

COLOMBIA

“Enough is enough!”

repression of

human rights defenders

February 1999

UPDATE

AI INDEX: AMR 23/21/99

DISTR: SC/CO/GR/HRD

Following an international and national outcry, Jorge Salazar and Jairo Bedoya, the two Colombian human rights defenders held hostage by paramilitary forces were released on 18 February 1999. They had been held, along with Claudia Tamayo and Olga Rodas, by the national paramilitary organization *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia. Claudia Tamayo and Olga Rodas were released on 8 February. Paramilitary forces -although declared illegal in 1989- continue to commit widespread human rights violations with the support or acquiescence of Colombian armed forces.

While their release is welcome news, the spate of recent killings and death threats against human rights defenders signifies that the lives of many remain in serious jeopardy. In light of reiterated allegations by the AUC that some human rights defenders are members of guerrilla organizations and in light of ineffective official protection, at least two human rights organizations have, in order to protect their workers, closed their offices and ceased activities. Increasing numbers of Colombian human rights defenders have been forced to leave their communities and seek safety elsewhere.

This document updates *Colombia: “Enough is enough”* (AI Index 23/16/99) examining the crisis facing Colombian human rights defenders and providing recommendations for the Colombian authorities and the international community.

KEYWORDS: RELEASE / HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS /
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

This report updates a 12-page document (4,413 words), : COLOMBIA “Enough is enough!” repression of human rights defenders (AI Index: AMR/23/16/99) issued by Amnesty International in February 1999. Anyone wishing further details or to take action on this issue should consult the full document.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 8DJ, UNITED KINGDOM