

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/022/2003

28 February 2003

Further Information on UA 11/03(AMR 23/002/2003,10 January 2003,) Fear for safety /possible disappearance

COLOMBIA **Inhabitants of Puerto Lleras, Pueblo Nuevo and Nueva Esperanza Communities, Chocó Department**
Carlos Salinas Sánchez, (m)
Dora Luz Sánchez, (f)
Cristian Sánchez, (m)
Aidé Salinas Sánchez, (f)
Jhon Jairo Cuesta Becerra, (m)

New name: Anibal Salinas, (m)

Concerns continue for the safety of the civilian inhabitants of Puerto Lleras, in the Jiguamiandó River Basin, municipality of Carmen del Darién, Chocó Department. Following a reported incursion into the community by army-backed paramilitaries, Amnesty International is particularly concerned for Anibal Salinas who has not been seen since 26 February.

Anibal Salinas, a resident of the Afro-Colombian community, was last seen when he went in search of firewood. According to information received twenty gunmen in camouflage, thought to be paramilitaries, entered the community of Puerto Lleras and reportedly threatened the community for remaining in the area despite previous threats. The gunmen had reportedly entered the community via an area known as Jarapeté where community members subsequently found Anibal Salinas' upturned boat. There is serious concern that he may have been abducted by the paramilitaries.

This latest incursion follows several other reported incursions by paramilitaries allegedly operating in unison with the Colombian Army and raises serious concern for the safety of the inhabitants of Puerto Lleras and other communities living in the basin of the Jiguamiandó River. It follows the incursion reported in UA 11/03 (AMR 23/002/2003, 10 January 2002) when several gunmen, some reportedly wearing the insignia of the *Brigada XVII*, XVII Brigade of the Colombian Army threatened local inhabitants. On that occasion the above members of the Sánchez family were abducted. However, information received indicates that they were then released unharmed.

Since 21 February military aircraft have reportedly been patrolling the region but there have been no apparent attempts by the security forces to confront paramilitary units which have maintained a constant presence in the region over several years. They are reported to be operating from several nearby bases including Belén de Bajirá in the municipality of Carmen del Darién.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Anibal Salinas who has not been seen since 26 February after the reported incursion into the civilian community of Puerto Lleras;
- expressing concern for the safety of the inhabitants of Puerto Lleras and all the communities living along the Jiguamiandó River, in Chocó department;
- expressing concern about the increasing army-backed paramilitary presence in the region and urging the authorities to take action to protect the civilian population;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the region, urging that the results are made public and that those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with United Nations recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 342 0592**

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

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 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say “me da tono de fax por favor por Dr. Osorio”)**

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

Commander of the XVII Brigade of the Army

General Paucelino Latorre Gamboa
Comandante de la XVII Brigada
Carepa, Urabá, Colombia

Fax: **+57 4 823 6844 (if someone answers say “me da tono de fax por favor”)**

Salutation: **Dear General Latorre / Estimado General Latorre**

National Advocate for the people

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz,
Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,
Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 office 301,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **National Advocate, Bogotá, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 640 0491**

Salutation: **Dear Mr. Cifuentes / Estimado Sr. Cifuentes**

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental human rights organization

Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz
AA1029
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 11 April 2003.