

UA 95/00

"Disappea**COLOMBIAN Nelson RESTREPO**

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Nelson Restrepo was reportedly abducted by paramilitaries in the Puerto Gaitán municipality of Meta department on 21 April, and his whereabouts are now unknown. He had recently accused the mayor of the municipality of corruption.

The mayor is reportedly suspected of links with paramilitary groups operating in the area, and Nelson Restrepo had feared for his life for several months.

He was apparently abducted from his home in the Villa Ortiz district of Puerto Gaitán at around 7.30pm.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Several thousand civilians have been killed or "disappeared" at the hands of paramilitary groups over the past five years. Others have been forced to flee after guerrilla forces have threatened or killed those they consider to be army or paramilitary collaborators.

The Colombian government suspended the legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups in 1989, yet they continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country. The authorities have taken no effective steps to control their actions and to hold members accountable for serious and widespread human rights violations. The Attorney General recently stated that the security forces have yet to act on more than 200 outstanding warrants for the arrest of alleged paramilitary members responsible for widespread human rights violations. Colombia's President, Andrés Pastrana, took office on 8 August 1998. So far, he and his government have not taken effective steps to tackle the country's long running human rights crisis.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Nelson Restrepo who was reportedly abducted by paramilitaries in the municipality of Puerto Gaitán, Meta Department on 21 April 2000;
- calling on the authorities to open an immediate and comprehensive investigation into his "disappearance", to establish his whereabouts and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging that the results of the investigation be made public;
- asking that all measures are taken to guarantee his safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups in the department of Meta, for the results to be made public and for those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice;
- asking the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and UN recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia

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 1 286 7434/ 284 2186/ 337 1351**  
**Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana**

Minister of the Interior  
Dr. Néstor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA  
Telegrams: Ministerio del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia  
Telexes:45406 MINGO CO  
Fax:+ 57 1 286 8025 / 281 5884 / 342 3201  
**Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister**

Minister of Defence  
Dr. Luis Fernando Ramírez Acuña  
Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**  
**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**  
**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Intercongregational Commission for Justice and Peace  
Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz  
AA 31861  
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 7 June 2000.