

UA 118/00

Fea.

COLOMBIA Alirio Uribe Muñoz, human rights lawyer
Other members of the Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'

Dr. Alirio Uribe Muñoz, member of a lawyers' collective that works on human rights cases, is named on a paramilitary death list being circulated in the capital, Bogotá. Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of this prominent defender of human rights and of other members of the organisation he works with.

The list appears in a leaflet threatening an imminent paramilitary offensive in Bogotá, distributed on 5 May. Before the list appeared Alirio Uribe had reportedly been described as a "guerrilla collaborator" in a Colombian Army Intelligence report.

The same list was circulated in August 1999 by a group calling themselves the 'Ejército Rebelde de Colombia', Rebel Army of Colombia. (See UA 221/99, AMR 23/61/99, 26 August 1999.)

Alirio Uribe works with the *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'*, the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective, in Bogotá. He has faced continuous harassment for some time, which has increased markedly in the past few months. He has been followed several times by men on motorbikes without numberplates. After the *Colectivo de Abogados* published a book denouncing strong links between the security forces and paramilitaries in Barrancabermeja, he began receiving suspicious phone calls: in December 1999 one caller asked for his address, saying he had a present for him, and left a false name and phone number.

Alirio Uribe lectures at a university, where leaflets threatening several teachers and mentioning the *Colectivo de Abogados* have been circulated.

The *Colectivo de Abogados* has asked the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States to ensure that Alirio Uribe is protected by the Colombian government.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many human rights lawyers have been killed in Colombia, and others have been forced into exile in fear for their lives. Human rights defenders who have sought to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations, and sought to expose the links between the security forces and paramilitary forces have frequently themselves become victims of human rights violations.

Paramilitary groups backed by the army have killed several thousand civilians over the past five years alone, and continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity.

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

- urging the Colombian authorities to thoroughly investigate the threats to kill Dr. Alirio Uribe Muñoz and to bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take effective and appropriate action to ensure that Alirio Uribe and other members of the *Colectivo de Abogados* can carry out their legitimate and important work for the defence of human rights in safety;

- 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;

- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups in line with stated government commitments and UN recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

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

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939/284 2186/289 3377

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr Presidente

Vice-President of the Republic

Señor Vicepresidente Gustavo Bell Lemus
 Alto Consejero Presidencial para asuntos de Derechos Humanos y lucha Contra la Corrupción
 Cra. 8 #7-26,
 Palacio de Nariño,
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 337 1351

Salutation: Dear Vice-President / Excmo. Sr. Vicepresidente

Minister of Interior

Señor Humberto De La Calle
 Ministro del Interior
 Ministerio del Interior
 Palacio Echeverry
 Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 286 8025

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

COPIES TO:

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'
 Oficina 2506
 Piso 25 Edificio de Avianca
 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 26 June 2000.