

UA 106/02

Fear for

COLOMBIAMaritze Trigos (f)

Danilo Rueda (m)

Clemencia Correa (f)

other members of *Comision Intercongregacional Justicia y Paz*,*Intercongregational Justice and Peace Commission*

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Members of the non-governmental human rights organization *Justicia y Paz* (Justice and Peace) have been followed, and army-backed paramilitaries have threatened to kill them. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

Justice and Peace has spent 14 years denouncing and supporting victims of human rights violations. Justice and Peace works with civilian communities under threat of human rights violations and communities forced to leave their homes by Colombia's long-running civil conflict. They have accompanied the return, resettlement of these communities in an attempt to ensure that the warring factions to respect these communities' right as civilians not to be drawn into the conflict, as well as their right to life.

On 5 March two men in a car kept watch over the Justice and Peace headquarters in the capital, Bogotá, taking note of people going in and out of the offices. The men were seen by several Justice and Peace members before they drove away.

Army-backed paramilitary groups with bases in Cacarica, Chocó Department, have reportedly threatened to kill Justice and Peace members working with displaced communities in the area. During a paramilitary incursion into Cacarica at the beginning of February, the paramilitaries told people in the communities, "...we have to shoot some of those monkeys accompanying the communities...those members of Justice and Peace are a problem, the thieves, and we want to kill one of their members." ("*...tenemos que fusilar a algunos de los que los acompañan o de los monos que están ahí...esos asesores de Justicia y Paz son un problema, ladrones, tenemos ganas de matar a uno de los asesores.*")

Individual members of Justice and Peace have been followed. On 13 February, Danilo Rueda was reportedly followed for more than eight city blocks, two men in a van driving on one side of his car and a man on a motorcycle on the other. The van and the motorcycle reportedly forced him to stop, and the man on the motorcycle showed Danilo a sub-machine gun and then sped away.

A man in civilian clothes followed Maritze Trigos on foot for several blocks on 27 February, and then approached her and said, "I have a heart, but I'm a soldier" ("*yo tengo corazón, pero soy militar*"), implying that he was prepared to kill her. These threats have raised concerns for the safety of all Justice and Peace workers including Clemencia Correa who was followed by unidentified individuals in a car for several city blocks on 21 October 2001.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The displaced communities and organisations like Justice and Peace that work with them are regularly victims of intimidation, abduction and murder, generally by army-backed paramilitary groups, but also by soldiers or the armed opposition group *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

The security forces and their paramilitary allies have a policy of labeling human rights organizations as guerrilla collaborators or supporters, so they can present them as legitimate targets in the counter-insurgency war. Over 25 human rights defenders have been killed or "disappeared" in the last three years.

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

- urging the Colombian authorities to take immediate and effective action to protect Maritze Trigos, Danilo Rueda, Clemencia Correa and other members of Justice and Peace;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the threats against Maritze Trigos, Danilo Rueda, Clemencia Correa and other members of Justice and Peace, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- asking them to take immediate and effective action to ensure that members Justice and Peace can carry out their legitimate and important work for the defence of human rights in safety;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to 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, the Organization of American States Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution and in repeated recommendations made to them by the UN;
- urging 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

**Telegram: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telex: 44281 PALP CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 566 2071**

**Salutation: Dear President Pastrana / Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente Pastrana**

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 Muñoz / Estimado Sr. Cifuentes Muñoz**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,  
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,  
Apartado Aéreo 29855, Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Fiscal General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 570 2000**

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

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organization

Comision Intercongregacional De Justicia y Paz  
AA 31.861  
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 20 May 2002.