

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/Arbitrary Arrest

14 September 1990

COLOMBIA:

Gabriel FLOREZ

Amnesty International is concerned about reports of the detention and ill-treatment of peasant leader Gabriel Florez during army counter insurgency operations. There is further concern that since his release from custody, Gabriel Flórez' freedom of movement has been restricted.

Gabriel Flórez, a regional leader of the Colombian National Peasants' Association, Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos, was detained on 8 September 1990 by members of an army patrol in the community of Montebello, municipality of Betulia, Santander department. On 6 September the region of Montebello was reportedly subjected to aerial bombardments as part of the Colombian armed forces' offensive against guerrilla groups believed to be operating in the area. Gabriel Flórez was held by the army for three days, during which time reports indicate that he was severely tortured. Although he was released from custody on the 10 September, the army is reportedly not allowing him to leave the community of Montebello - which is still under army control - to return to his home in San Vicente de Chucuri, Santander department.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent months Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations against non-combatant civilians in the context of armed forces counter-insurgency operations in rural areas of the country. During army offensives against guerrilla positions the local civilian population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by army personnel and civilians working with them. Members of left-wing opposition parties, community and peasant leaders appear to have been particularly targetted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/Telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported arbitrary detention and ill- treatment of Gabriel Flórez by Colombian army personnel;
- requesting a full and impartial investigation into the ill- treatment to which Gabriel Flórez was reportedly subjected while in the custody of army personnel;
- requesting that restrictions on his freedom of movement be lifted and that he be given adequate medical attention if required.

APPEALS TO:

President César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria,
Bogotá, Colombia
Telex: 44281 PALP CO
Fax: + 57 1 283 3066

Comandante
Brig-Gen Harold Bedoya
IV Brigada
Medellín
Antioquia, Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante IV
Brigada, Medellín,
Antioquia, Colombia

General Oscar Botero
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa,
Bogotá, Colombia
Telex: 42411 INPRE CO;
44561 CFAC CO
Fax: + 57 1 222 1874

Dr Alfonso Gómez Méndez
Procurador General de la Nación
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General
Gomez, Bogotá, Colombia
Telex: 41224 PRGEN CO;
41213 PGNDP CO
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COPIES TO:

Señores
CINEP
AA 25916
Bogotá, Colombia (human rights organization)

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 October 1990.