

2 April 2001

Further information on UA 382/00 (AMR 23/102/00, 19 December 2000) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Civilian inhabitants of the Buchely, La Espriella, Caunapí, Llorente, Kilómetros 58, 63 and 86, El Carmen, Pueblo Nuevo, Tangereal ICA, Cajapí, Chilví, Guayacana, El Diviso, Junín, Altaquer, Ricaurte, and Piedrancha districts of Tumaco, department of Nariño.

Members of the Catholic Church organization Pastoral Social in Tumaco.

In the early morning of 24 March a group of 250 army-backed paramilitaries raided Llorente, a district in the city of Tumaco, Nariño Department. The entire civilian population, which counts some 2000 people, was reportedly forced out of their homes. The elderly and children who didn't run fast enough were apparently shot at. Some civilians are believed to have "disappeared" or been killed or injured.

The paramilitaries reportedly forced local men to help build two camps, and said that they were there to stay. They also apparently tied some twenty people to trees in order to execute them. However, the executions were interrupted when the paramilitaries were confronted by a group of guerrillas belonging to the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. It is not known how many casualties resulted from the eight-hour confrontation, but a woman, who had recently given birth, and her two-year-old daughter were seriously injured when bullets hit their home.

The security forces reportedly took no action to protect the civilian population, although the attack took place during the day and although they had been warned that an attack was imminent. On the contrary, paramilitary forces have reportedly been able to establish a strong presence in Tumaco and to carry out frequent patrols, despite the fact that the Colombian armed forces maintain a heavy presence in the city.

The attack on Llorente raises concern for the safety of the civilian population of Tumaco and the over one hundred families who have been forced to flee their homes. It also heightens concerns for the neighboring communities listed above, whose inhabitants are predominantly Afro-Colombians and members of indigenous communities.

Amnesty International is further concerned for the safety of the civilian population following reports that FARC forces may also be targeting members of the civilian population, whom they accuse of collaborating with the paramilitary or security forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the civilian inhabitants of Llorente and the other districts of Tumaco listed above, after paramilitaries attacked Llorente;
- urging the authorities to do everything deemed appropriate by those under threat to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Tumaco, department of Nariño, urging that the results are made public and 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 stated government commitments and United Nations 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

Fax: + 57 1 336 2109 / 337 1351

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr. Presidente

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

Telegram: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telex: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Fax: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro

Commander of the Marine Infantry Training Base BEIM2

Lieutenant Colonel Luis Mauricio Gómez Vásquez
Commander of BEIM 2 (Base de Entrenamiento de Infantería de Marina
Apostadero Naval
Tumaco, Nariño

Telegrams: Comandante BEIM2, Tumaco, Colombia

Telefax: + 57 927 272 821

Salutation: Sr Comandante.

COPIES TO:

Alternative Legal Association

SEMBRAR
AA 34692
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 14 May 2001.