

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/042/2004

26 October 2004

Further Information on UA 358/02 (AMR 23/141/2002, 13 December 2002) - Fear for safety

COLOMBIA **María del Socorro Mosquera (f), President and Legal Representative of *La Asociación de Mujeres de las Independencias* (AMI), the Women's Association of the Las Independencias neighbourhood, Comuna 13 district, Medellín**
Mery del Socorro Naranjo Jiménez (f), President of the Community Action Board (Neighbourhood Council) of Las Independencias III
Human rights defenders in Comuna 13 district

Killed : Teresa Yarce (f), Treasurer of the Community Action Board of Las Independencias III

Teresa Yarce was shot dead on 6 October by a man believed to be a paramilitary. She had been threatened and detained without charge in November 2002, after she reported human rights violations, committed during a security forces operation in the Comuna 13 neighbourhood, in Medellín. Other members of her organization and other social activists have received death threats.

Teresa Yarce was killed near her home in the Comuna 13 district. A young man approached her and shot her three times in the head. He ran away and took a bus which was waiting for him. According to witnesses the man is a known paramilitary who lives in a neighbouring area. At the time Teresa Yarce was with one of her daughters, and her colleague Mery del Socorro Naranjo Jiménez.

Teresa Yarce and other social activists had played an active part in ensuring that paramilitary forces, which have been able to establish a firm foothold in other parts of Comuna 13 and elsewhere in Medellín, were not able to do so in the Las Independencias III area. They work at grassroots level to promote human rights and encourage people to report violations. A few weeks before she was killed she had reportedly escaped a paramilitary attempt to abduct and kill her as she walked on the street.

About three hours after Teresa Yarce was shot, a known member of a paramilitary group operating in Comuna 13 reportedly approached Mery del Socorro Naranjo when she was in her family's home in Las Independencias III and told her that the paramilitaries were celebrating Teresa's death and saying that they were now "going to kill the other two" ("*después van las otras dos*"), believed to mean both Mery del Socorro Naranjo and Socorro de Mosquera.

On 19 October a young woman went to the home of Mery Naranjo's family and told one of her daughters that because Mery had left the neighbourhood they would hit her where it would hurt her most, by killing one of her children.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Asociación de Mujeres de las Independencias*, (AMI), the Women's Association of the Las Independencias neighbourhood, is one of several women's organizations working in this area of Medellín. On 8 November 2002 women from this organization and other social activists filed a complaint with the Municipal Government Secretary (*Secretario de Gobierno*) about human rights violations in Comuna 13 during a security forces operation against armed opposition groups based in the area. María del Socorro Mosquera, Mery del Socorro Naranjo and Teresa Yarce were detained four days later. They were held for nine days.

The women have continued their work in the neighbourhood despite repeated threats to kill members of AMI and other community leaders. In 2003 another prominent member of AMI was forced to leave the area by paramilitary death threats.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mery del Socorro Naranjo Jiménez, María del Socorro Mosquera and other social activists and community leaders in the Comuna 13 district of Medellín.
- urging that all measures deemed appropriate by the women themselves are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Teresa Yarce, for the results to be made public and for those responsible brought to justice;
- asking the authorities to take immediate and effective action to ensure that members of AMI and other social organizations in Comuna 13 in Medellín 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.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 342 0592

+ 57 1 337 5890

Salutation: Dear President Uribe/ Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Mayor of Medellín

Señor Sergio Fajardo

Alcaldía de Medellín

Dirección Calle 44 No 52-165

Centro Administrativo Municipal

Medellín, Colombia

Fax: +57 4 381 18 52

Salutation: Dear Señor Fajardo/ Estimado Sr. Fajardo

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,

Fiscal General de la Nación

Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite)

Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2022

+ 57 1 570 2000 (A message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Ombudsman

Sr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz, Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,

Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 oficina 301,

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 December 2004.