

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

6 February 2015

COLOMBIA: Henry DELGADO, peasant farmer
 Luis Antonio MEZA "
 Beatriz Elena MENDEZ "

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Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killings of Henry Delgado, Luis Antonio Meza and his wife Beatriz Elena Méndez in circumstances suggesting they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution.

According to an eye-witness report, at 6.30 am on 4 September 1990, Henry Delgado and Luis Antonio Meza were riding on a motorcycle towards the community of Tienda Nueva, Yondo municipality, in the Magdalena Medio region of Santander department. They passed by a military post near a bank, Fondo Ganadero, and Luis Antonio Meza stopped the motorcycle about ten metres further on after shots were fired. Both men were questioned by the military regarding their past political activities and then Luis Antonio Meza was allowed to go. Henry Delgado was led away by the military to a hill opposite the military post. Luis Antonio Meza is believed to have been the only witness to the arrest of Henry Delgado. According to the report, later that morning, at 11.55 am, gunshots and grenade detonations were heard coming from the direction of the hill. The body of Henry Delgado was later taken to the town of Barrancabermeja by the military, who reportedly claimed that he had been killed in a confrontation with the guerrillas. Witnesses say that his body showed signs of torture.

On 10 September 1990 at 11.00 am the bodies of Luis Antonio Meza and his wife Beatriz Elena Méndez were reportedly left in the morgue in Barrancabermeja by members of the armed forces. No further information is currently available about the circumstances of their killing but Amnesty International is concerned that they may have been the victims of extrajudicial execution.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The largely rural area of Magdalena Medio has been the focus of political violence for several years following the emergence of guerrilla groups in the 1960s and subsequent militarization of the region during the 1980s. Despite some progress having been made in peace talks between several guerrilla groups and the government in 1989 and 1990, there has been a continuation of political violence. Principal victims of violence in the Magdalena Medio have been community leaders, trade unionists and members of legal left-wing political organizations. In areas where guerrilla forces are active 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 paramilitary forces.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Henry Delgado, Luis Antonio Meza and Beatriz Elena Méndez in circumstances suggesting they were victims of extrajudicial execution by the armed forces;

- urging that an investigation be opened into their deaths, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Presidente César Gaviria
de la República
Palacio del Narino
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Colombia

General Oscar Botero Presidente
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
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Bogotá, Colombia

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COPIES TO:

Señores
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Bogotá, Colombia

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 22 October 1990.