

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/45/96

15 August 1996

Further information on UA 74/96 (AMR 23/17/96, 19 March 1996) and follow-ups (AMR 23/26/96, 9 May; AMR 23/43/96, 23 July) - Fear for Safety / Possible extrajudicial executions and new concern: "Disappearance"

COLOMBIA César DÍAZ, tradesman  
Jesús GALVÁN  
Jorge CÁCERES VILLEGAS  
and another four peasant farmers

---

Concern for the safety of peasant farmers forcibly displaced from the Bellacruz Ranch in the department of Cesar by a paramilitary group (see original UA and updates for details) continues following the "disappearance" on 3 August 1996 of Jesús Galván, Jorge Cáceres Villegas, another four peasant farmers whose identity has not been established, and César Díaz, who was subsequently found dead.

According to information received César Díaz, Jorge Cáceres Villegas and Jesús Galván were forced out of their homes by heavily armed members of the paramilitary group operating in the region. On the same day, another four peasant farmers were also reportedly forced out of their homes and abducted. The whereabouts of six of the individuals has not been known since their abduction. César Díaz's body has reportedly been located.

César Díaz was a tradesman who supplied the displaced families with meat. In recent months it has been reported that paramilitary groups operating in the region have threatened inhabitants of communities situated around the Bellacruz Ranch, warning them not to provide any support to the evicted families. Jesús Galván and Jorge Cáceres Villegas are peasant farmers living on land on the Bellacruz Ranch.

These recent "disappearances" and the fact that peasant farmers displaced from the Bellacruz Ranch, together with members of non-governmental organizations and other organizations working with them, continue to be labelled as subversives, have heightened concerns for the safety of peasant farmers displaced from the Bellacruz Ranch and members of organizations working with them. In the past those labelled as guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators have often become the target of human rights violations committed by the security forces or their paramilitary allies.

Serious concern exists for the safety of 50 families displaced from the Bellacruz Ranch who have been living in the *Casa Campesina*, Peasant Farmer's House, in the municipality of Pelaya. The families are due to be relocated, but to date this relocation has not been possible. The peasant farmers continue to face death threats made by the paramilitary group operating in the region to the extent that the peasant farmers are unable to move outside the building out of fear for their safety.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned that to date the authorities have still not taken any effective measures to dismantle paramilitary groups operating on the ranch and the neighbouring communities. According to the latest information Amnesty International has received the authorities have still reportedly made no attempt to carry out arrest warrants against 28 paramilitary leaders operating on the Bellacruz ranch.

**PLEASE CONTINUE ACTION AS SPECIFIED IN PREVIOUS UPDATE, AND ALSO: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or in your own language:**

- calling for full and impartial investigations into the "disappearance" of Jesús Galván, Jorge Cáceres Villegas and four other peasant farmers whose whereabouts have been unknown since they were reportedly abducted from the Bellacruz ranch on 3 August 1996 by members of a paramilitary group, and calling for the results to be made public and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice;
- urging that if they are in detention they be treated humanely, granted access to lawyers and relatives, and charged immediately with a recognizable offence or released;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the apparent extrajudicial execution of César Díaz following his abduction by the same paramilitary group on 3 August, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling for immediate measures to guarantee the safety of peasant farmer families forcibly evicted from land on the Bellacruz ranch, who are now living in the *Casa Campesina* and communities neighbouring the Bellacruz ranch and of those who have been supporting them;

**Also if possible:**

- urge the government to immediately fulfil its commitment to disband paramilitary forces presently operating as auxiliaries of the armed forces or with armed forces' complicity. Members of such forces responsible for human rights violations should be brought to justice;
- urge that outstanding arrest warrants issued against members of paramilitary groups responsible for human rights violations be carried out.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377 / 286 7434**

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

2) Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento  
 Fiscal General de la Nación  
 Fiscalía General de la Nación  
 Apartado Aéreo 29855  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Fiscal General Valdivieso, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 287 0939 or 288 2828**

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

3) Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Carlos Esguerra Portocarrero  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa , Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Alternative Legal Association

MINGA

AA 40303

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 25 September 1996.