

UA 182/98

19 June 1998

Fear for safety/ "Disappearance"/ Extrajudicial execution

COLOMBIA Civilian population of the municipality of Murindó, Antioquia Department, including:

Residents of the El Bartolo hamlet: "Disappeared": María Esperanza Ayala, Wilson Golzález, Gabriel Marriaga, Luis Mendoza, Juan Regyes, José González, Ever González. Killed: Aurelio Borja, Remberto Tovar, Yomar Morelo, Walter Mendoza.

Residents of Indigenous *Embera* community of Gauguas: "Disappeared": Casilda Sapia, Fidel Pernía, Alirio Sapia, Jesús Majoré, Albeiro Jumí, Atencio Sinigüi, Trina Carupia, Francia Carupia, Celia Pipicay, Reiniero Sapia

Residents of Indigenous *Embera* community of La Isla: "Disappeared": Gloria Domicó, Carlos Domicó, Olga Domicó, Emiro Domicó, Evelio Baikarín, Belarmina Bailarín, Lina Domicó, Emilio Bailarín, Gilma Domicó. Killed: Otoniel Bailarín

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There is serious concern for the safety of the civilian population in the municipality of Murindó, Antioquia Department, particularly the 26 "disappeared" named above who have not been seen since paramilitary forces attacked their communities at the end of May 1998. The whereabouts of all the "disappeared" remain unknown. According to reports, paramilitary forces were also responsible for killing the five people named above.

On 28 May 1998 a paramilitary force attacked the black community of El Bartolo in Murindó municipality in the northwestern region of Urabá, reportedly killing four residents. The seven others named above have not been seen since the paramilitary incursion. This attack was followed by eight days of intense fighting between paramilitary and guerrilla forces in the area, forcing much of the local population to flee and seek safety in the village of La Isla.

The fighting also forced 200 residents of the *Embera* indigenous community of the hamlet of Guaguas to flee their homes and seek refuge in La Isla. In light of the paramilitary operations in the area and the attack on El Bartolo, there is grave concern for the 10 members of the community named above whose whereabouts have remained unknown since they were forced to flee their homes. It is not clear if they were abducted by paramilitary forces or if they fled into the forest to seek refuge.

The governor of La Isla, another *Embera* indigenous community, has reported that at least 300 people have sought refuge there. On 28 May Otoniel Bailarín, a resident of La Isla, was reportedly killed by paramilitary forces when he passed through El Bartolo on his way to Murindó. An independent commission made up of state officials and representatives of human rights and indigenous non-governmental organizations, which travelled to the area to confirm details of the situation, has also confirmed that the nine members of La Isla community named above are still missing and are presumed "disappeared".

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Peasant communities, including black and indigenous communities, in disputed zones in Colombia's long running civil conflict have frequently suffered attacks. Neither the left wing armed opposition groups nor the armed forces and their paramilitary allies recognize the civilian population's neutrality in the conflict.

Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Over the past five years several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups throughout the country. The Colombian Government suspended the constitutional legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband

such groups in 1989, yet they continue to work with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country. President Ernesto Samper Pizano has repeatedly promised to improve the human rights situation and to dismantle paramilitary forces, but no steps have been taken to control their actions and to hold members accountable for serious and widespread human rights violations. The Attorney General recently stated that over 200 outstanding arrest warrants issued against alleged paramilitary members have still not been acted upon by the security forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of 26 people who remain "disappeared" from the black and indigenous communities of El Bartolo, Guaguas and La Isla;
- urging the authorities to take all appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of the civilian population in Murindó;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the reported killings of five people and the "disappearance" of another 26 (name some of them), that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the area and urging that those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia, Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano, Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

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

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 2186 / 289 3377 / 286 7434**

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

Minister of Defence, Dr. Gilberto Echeverri Mejía, Ministro de Defensa Nacional, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO / 44561 CFAC CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

Attorney General, Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación, Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

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

**Faxes: + 571 570 2000 (when ansaphone picks up dial 2017 for fax)**

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

Governor of the Department of Antioquia

Dr. Alberto Builes Ortega, Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia Gobernación de Antioquia, Calle 42B, # 52-106, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

**Telegrams: Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia**

**Fax: + 574 381 1342**

**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Organization

Grupo de Apoyo a Organizaciones de Desplazados (GAD)

Calle 61# 13-54, piso 4, 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 1 August 1998.