

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/52/98

14 July 1998

Further information on UA 156/98 (AMR 23/34/98, 19 May 1998) and follow-up (AMR 23/37/98, 18 May 1998) - "Disappearance", Fear for safety, Extrajudicial execution

COLOMBIA Members of human rights organization, CREDHOS, in the department of Santander

There is heightened concern for the safety of workers with the *Corporación Regional de Derechos Humanos* (CREDHOS), Regional Human Rights Corporation, after a paramilitary organization responsible for the mass killing of more than 25 residents in the town of Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, declared the human rights organization to be a military target.

In a communique issued by the *Autodefensas de Santander y Sur del Cesar* (AUSAC), Self-Defence Forces of Santander and Southern Cesar, the paramilitary group accuses CREDHOS of acting on behalf of the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), National Liberation Army, an armed opposition group, and states that the human organization will be targeted by its forces. The paramilitary organization goes on to accuse all non governmental organizations of working on behalf of the armed opposition.

CREDHOS workers played a prominent role in denouncing the attack of 16 May 1998 (see original UA) by the AUSAC on districts of Barrancabermeja and the subsequent abduction and extrajudicial execution of at least 25 residents. The human rights organization also publicly denounced the reported complicity of the regional military authorities in the attack.

In the past human rights workers have often been considered as guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators and have subsequently been the victim of human rights violations at the hands of the security forces or their paramilitary allies. Over the last 10 years six CREDHOS activists have been assassinated and several others have gone into exile.

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

- expressing concern for members of CREDHOS;
- calling for the authorities to undertake all measures deemed appropriated 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 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

Tx: 44281 PALP CO

Fax: + 57 1 284 2186/289 3377/286 7434/

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Alfonso López Caballero, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO

Fax: + 57 1 281 5884 / 286 6524 / 286 0405

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

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.

COPIES TO:

CREDHOS,

AA 505, Barrancabermeja, Santander, 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 August 1998.