

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**UA 334/93 Legal Concern/Fear of Torture**

**21 September 1993**

**COLOMBIA: Héctor MUNERA LOPEZ  
Joaquín Guillermo VIDALES**

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Amnesty International is concerned that Héctor Munera López and Joaquín Guillermo Vidales, from the town of Segovia, Antioquia department, may be subjected to torture following their detention by members of the Colombian army.

According to reports Héctor Munera López and Joaquín Guillermo Vidales, both community leaders from the district of La Madre de Segovia, were arrested on 17 September 1993 by troops from the Bomboná Battalion (Batallón Bomboná), based on the outskirts of the Segovia in north east Antioquia. A further 140 people from that district, including women and children, are not able to circulate freely as the Army has sealed off the district.

On 13 September, the inhabitants of the towns of Segovia and Remedios, also in Antioquia department, staged a civic strike in protest at the poor road access and the worsening human rights situation in the region. The following day members of the Colombian army's 2nd Mobile Brigade, *Brigada Móvil N° 2*, detained approximately 240 people from Segovia and Remedios in order to "prevent a disturbance" ("*prevenir disturbios*"). According to reports they were held overnight for between 14 and 15 hours with no shelter from the rain. Members of the Colombian Red Cross and Human Rights Committee of Segovia (Comité de Derechos Humanos de Segovia) who were trying to provide assistance to the people were denied access.

Though the 240 people detained between the 14-15 September were later allowed to return home, Héctor Munera López and Joaquín Guillermo Vidales are still believed to be in detention and the free circulation of the 140 people of Barrio Madre de Segovia is still being restricted.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. President César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Civic leaders, trade unionists, human rights activists are amongst the groups frequently targeted by the security forces for arbitrary arrest and other forms of human rights abuse. Strike leaders are often accused of being guerrillas and strikes are perceived as a form of subversion.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail**

**letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Héctor Munera López and Joaquín Guillermo Vidales;

- urging that recognisable criminal charges should be brought to bear against the two detainees or otherwise that they should be released immediately;

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- urging the authorities to allow the Colombian Red Cross access to the Barrio Madre de Segovia, food supplies entry into the district and to guarantee the physical safety of the people of Segovia particularly of the people of the Barrio Madre de Segovia.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Commander of Bomboná Battallion:

Coronel Suárez

Batallón Bomboná

Segovia

Antioquia, Colombia

**Telegrams: Coronel Suárez, Batallón Bomboná, Segovia, Colombia**

**Salutation: Sr. Coronel**

2) Minister of Defence:

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda

Ministro de Defensa Nacional

Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda**

**Bogota, Colombia**

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

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

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

3) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla

Procurador General de la Nación

Procuraduría General

Edificio Banco Ganadero

Carrera 5, No. 15-80

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta,**

**Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

**Salutation: Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo"

Carrera 10 No. 15-39

Oficina 510

Santa Fe 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 2 November 1993.