

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

13 July 1994

COLOMBIA

Luis Alirio RODRIGUEZ PINEDA, Peasant Farmer, aged 29

Luis Alirio Rodríguez Pineda is reported to have "disappeared" after being abducted on 13 June 1994 from his home in the village of San Pablo, Municipio de Teorama, in the department of Norte de Santander. Amnesty International fears for his safety, particularly in view of the Colombian executive's recent failure to bring into force a law to criminalize forced "disappearance".

Reports indicate that at 5.30am on 13 June, a group of men knocked down the doors of Luis Rodríguez's house, beat him and ordered him to tell them "*todo lo que sabe*" - ("*everything you know*"). The men insulted his wife, Celina Franco, ordering her to tell them "*where she had the weapon*" ("*dónde tenía el arma*"). They threatened to kill her three-month-old baby and another of her children if she did not talk.

According to a witness currently in detention at the *Cárcel Modelo de Barranquilla* (Barranquilla Model Prison), he and Luis Rodríguez were tortured in the base of the *Segunda Brigada del Ejército* (Army Second Brigade) in Barranquilla until 24 June.

Celina Franco has denounced her husband's "disappearance" to the authorities, but his whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been widespread and systematic human rights violations in Colombia in recent years, including extrajudicial execution, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. Despite outgoing President César Gaviria Trujillo's repeated pledges as to his government's commitment to protect human rights, members of the Colombian armed and security forces together with paramilitary forces that often operate alongside them continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. "Disappearance" is seen as an integral part of counter-insurgency strategy by some members of the security forces and the recent failure to criminalize it risks ensuring that this violation will continue (see EXTRA 34/94, AMR 23/53/94, 7 July 1994 and AMR 23/55/94, 8 July).

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Luis Alirio Rodríguez Pineda who was detained on 13 June 1994 in San Pablo, department of Norte de Santander;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to establish his whereabouts;
- urging that, if in detention, he be humanely treated and allowed access to lawyers and relatives, expressing concern about reports of his torture at the base of the Army Second Brigade in Barranquilla;
- urging that, if in detention, he be charged with a recognizable offence or released immediately;
- urging that all measures necessary be taken to guarantee the safety of witnesses and that reports of death threats against Luis Alirio Rodríguez's children should be investigated, the findings made public and those responsible brought to trial;
- expressing dismay and concern at President César Gaviria's rejection on 7 July 1994 of the draft law against "disappearances" particularly in the context

of the Congress' approval of the draft text and the government's avowed commitment to human rights.

APPEALS TO

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Gaviria

2) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General
 Edificio Banco Ganadero
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723

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

3) Minister of Defence

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
 Santafé 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

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores
 ASFADDES
 AA 011446
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

2) President of the House of Senate

Dr Jorge Ramón Elías Nader
 Presidente
 H. Senado de la República
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: +57 1 284 5560

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 27 August 1994.