

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearances"/Torture

12 November 1990

COLOMBIA : Hernando BARON, aged 35  
Wilson NOVA, aged 19  
José PENA, aged 40  
Hugo MACIAS  
Gustavo RUIZ

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Amnesty International is concerned for the physical integrity of the above-named peasant workers who were last seen at the beginning of November in the department of Santander.

According to reports, Hernando Barón, aged 35, Wilson Nova, aged 19, José Peña, aged 40, Hugo Macías and Gustavo Ruiz "disappeared" after they were seized by soldiers from the army's counter-insurgency Mobile Brigade, (Brigada Móvil), during the first week of November in the municipality of San Vicente de Chucurí, department of Santander in central Colombia's Magdalena Medio region.

Peasants from the region are urging for an investigation by the Procurator.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The largely rural area of Magdalena Medio has been the focus of political violence for several years following the emergence of guerrilla groups in the 1960s and subsequent militarization of the region during the 1980s. Despite some progress having been made in peace talks between several guerrilla groups and the government in 1989 and 1990, there has been a continuation of political violence. In areas where guerrilla forces are active the local civilian population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture and "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by army personnel and paramilitary forces.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of the above-named people and requesting an investigation into their whereabouts;
- urging that if in detention they be charged with a criminal offence and brought before a competent court, or released;
- urging that while in detention they be treated humanely, and provided full access to lawyers and relatives.

**APPEALS TO**

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño  
Bogotá  
COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia  
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO  
Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324

General Oscar Botero Restrepo  
Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia  
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO or 44561 CFAC CO  
Faxes: +57 1 222 1874

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez  
Procurador General de la Nación  
Edificio Banco Ganadero  
Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
Bogotá  
COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Procurador General Gómez, Bogotá, Colombia  
Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO

**COPIES TO:**

Señores  
CINEP  
AA 25916  
Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 December 1990.