

PUBLIC

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UA 219/98

COLOMBIA

10 August 1998

"DISAPPEARANCES"/FEAR FOR SAFETY

"Disappeared": Juan Manuel CIRO VALENCIA

Alberto GIRALDO

Liliana HENAO (f)

Leonel GARCÍA

Carlos Arturo ARIAS SOTO

Argiro MORALES SOTO

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the civilian population of the municipalities of San Francisco and Granada, department of Antioquia, and neighbouring municipalities, following an incursion, on 2 August 1998, by armed men identifying themselves as members of a paramilitary group. During the attack the six people named above were forcibly abducted.

At 8pm on 2 August, heavily armed men reportedly entered the municipality of San Francisco. They were dressed in military issue uniforms and arm-bands with the initials of a paramilitary group, the *Autodefensas Campesinas Magdalena Medio* (ACMM), Peasant Farmer Self-Defence Groups of the Magdalena Medio.

The armed men identified themselves to the National Police posted in San Francisco as members of a paramilitary group and asked the police not to confront them. Paramilitary groups often operate with the support and acquiescence of the security forces.

The paramilitary group members were reportedly in possession of a "*lista negra*", "black list". "Black lists" include the names of civilians considered by paramilitary forces to be guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators. Those whose names appear on such lists are frequently killed. The paramilitary forcibly abducted six people, who have not been seen since. Clothes belonging to the six were found by relatives in the nearby hamlet of Los Guacales between 3 and 4 August.

The paramilitary group threatened to carry out further incursions in the municipality of San Francisco, and the village of Santa Ana, municipality of Granada. This threat has resulted in approximately 100 people abandoning their homes in San Francisco, and 1000 inhabitants of the municipality of Granada leaving their homes and seeking protection in the municipal capital, Granada.

Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action in June 1998 denouncing paramilitary activity in the municipality of Granada and neighbouring municipalities. The latest incursions underline the failure of the authorities to ensure that decisive action is undertaken to dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region (see UA 183/98, AMR 23/47/98, 24 June 1998).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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. No effective steps have been taken as yet by the authorities to control their actions and to hold members accountable for serious and widespread human rights violations. The

Attorney General recently stated that more than 200 outstanding arrest warrants issued against alleged paramilitary members responsible for widespread human rights violations 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 inhabitants of the municipalities of San Francisco, Granada and neighbouring municipalities in the department of Antioquia;
- urging for full and impartial investigations into the reported forced disappearance of six civilians, 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;
- reminding Colombia's new government of the country's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia, Señor Presidente Señor Presidente Dr. Andrés Pastrana Arango, 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 Pastrana

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

Minister of Defence

Dr. Rodrigo Lloreda Caicedo, 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

COPIES TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"
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and to diplomatic representatives of "Disappearances"/Fear for Safety accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 September 1998.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."