

EXTERNAL

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UA 243/95

"Disappearance" / Fear for safety

24 October 1995

COLOMBIA Luis Ismael Tarazona Ortiz, civic leader
and his family

Luis Ismael Tarazona Ortiz has not been seen since he was abducted on 23 October 1995 by armed men in Barrio de Popa, Ocaña, Norte de Santander department.

On 23 October, eight heavily armed men, in plain clothes and with their faces covered, came to Luis Tarazona's house. The men identified themselves as being from the *Fiscalía*, Attorney General's Office, but when the family did not open the door to them, they broke it down. The armed group threatened and insulted the family, including threatening to shoot one of the children. The men ransacked the house before leaving on a motorcycle and in a white Toyota car, taking Luis Tarazona with them.

Witnesses point to Luis Tarazona having been abducted by one of the paramilitary groups operating in the province of Ocaña, which are thought to be acting in the region with the support of the security forces. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for Luis Tarazona's safety and that of his family.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Despite President Ernesto Samper Pizano's repeated pledges to protect human rights and to tackle impunity, members of the armed and security forces, together with their paramilitary allies, continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Trade unionists, popular leaders, civic activists and human rights workers are amongst those frequently targeted. Only exceptionally are perpetrators brought to justice; the vast majority of members of the armed forces responsible for gross human rights violations remain in active service.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Luis Ismael Tarazona Ortiz, abducted by armed paramilitaries on 23 October 1995;
- calling for an immediate investigation to establish his whereabouts, for the findings to be made public, and for those responsible for his abduction to be brought to justice;
- urging that, if in detention, he be treated humanely and allowed access to lawyers and relatives, and either charged with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately released;
- urging that all the necessary measures be taken to protect the safety of his family.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377/286 7434

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Carlos Esguerra Portocarrero
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa , Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

3) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Carrera 8a, No. 8-09, Piso 7
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA
Telegrams: Ministro del Interior Serpa, Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO
Faxes: + 57 1 286 65 24/ 286 00 53/ 286 04 85
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Procurator General:

Dr. Orlando Vásquez Velásquez
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Procurador General Vásquez, Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes: + 57 1 342 9723/281 7531
Salutation: Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez

COPIES TO:

Alternative Legal Association
MINGA
AA 40303
Santafé 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 12 December 1995.