

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/67/96

29 November 1996

Further information (5) on UA 387/94 (AMR 23/83/94, 27 October 1994) and follow-up (AMR 23/86/4, 11 November 1994; AMR 23/96/94, 20 December 1994; AMR 23/05/95, 14 February 1995) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Pedro Julio MAHECHA AVILA

Since October 1996, Pedro Julio Mahecha and his family have been subjected to intimidation and harassment by persons believed to be members of the Colombian security forces. Amnesty international is seriously concerned for their safety.

Pedro Julio Mahecha works on cases of human rights violations perpetrated by the Colombian security forces, for the lawyers' collective, *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo* (CCA). The CCA reports a series of intimidatory incidents directed against Pedro Julio Mahecha and his family since October 1996. Pedro Julio Mahecha reported that he and his family were being followed by unidentified individuals and that colleagues were receiving anonymous telephone calls attempting to establish their whereabouts.

The CCA is working on numerous important cases of human rights violations in Colombia in which members of the police and army are implicated and its lawyers have in the past been subjected to death threats and harassment because of their work (see UA 297/93, AMR 23/51/93, and UA 108/94, AMR 23/28/94, and previous UAs relating to this case).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights defenders in Colombia have in recent years been facing increasing harassment and intimidation which in some cases has been followed by attacks on their lives. On 13 October 1996 Josué Giraldo Cardona, President of the *Comité Cívico por los Derechos Humanos del Meta*, Meta Civic Human Rights Committee, was shot dead outside his home after receiving numerous death threats (see follow-up to UA 68/95, AMR 23/52/96, 15 October 1996).

On 9 September 1994 President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who took office on 7 August, declared in a speech that his government "would seek to have constructive relations with human rights organizations with the aim of suppressing human rights violations and would do everything necessary to protect the lives and integrity of human rights workers. [*Buscará sostener con los organismos de derechos humanos relaciones constructivas en procura de suprimir las violaciones de tales derechos y pondrá de su parte cuanto sea necesario para proteger la vida y la integridad de sus miembros.*"] Amnesty International calls upon President Samper to stand by his commitment and ensure that the members of the CCA and all other human rights workers can carry out their lawful activities without fear for their own lives or those of their families.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of human rights lawyers working for the *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo* (CCA), in particular Pedro Julio Mahecha, following reports that he is again being intimidated, allegedly by members of the Colombian security forces;
- urging that these reports be investigated, the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- urging that concrete measures, deemed appropriate by those concerned, be taken to protect their lives and those working for the CCA and their families in line with the commitment made by President Samper to ensure the safety of human rights workers.

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, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377/286 7434/287 7939

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento
Fiscal General de la Nación
Fiscalia General de la Nación
Calle 35 No. 4-31
Apartado Aéreo 29855
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Fiscal General Valdivieso, Fiscalia General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 287 0939 / 288 2828

Salutation: Estimado Dr. Valdivieso/Dear Dr. Valdivieso

3) 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

4) Advocate for the People

Dr. José Fernando Castro Caycedo
Defensor del Pueblo
Defensoría del Pueblo
Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 285 6908

Salutation: Estimado Dr Caycedo/Dear Dr Caycedo

COPIES TO:

Lawyers' Collective

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados
AA 44456, 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 3 January 1996.