

PUBLIC

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UA 271/00

Fear for

**COLOMBIA** Onaldo FLORES, aged 30, tradesman  
ACVC members and other social activists in the Magdalena Medio region

**Killed: Orlando MONCADA, ACVC leader**

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Paramilitaries backed by the army are reported to have killed a peasant farmers' leader, and abducted another man, in the Magdalena Medio region of central Colombia. Amnesty International fears the abducted man's life is in grave danger, and that other popular activists in the region are at risk.

Tradesman Onaldo Flores was reportedly abducted by paramilitaries on 31 August, in the port of Morales, on the Magdalena river. Many other tradesmen have been killed by guerrilla groups and army-backed paramilitaries, who frequently accuse them of collaborating with their enemies.

Peasant farmers' leader Orlando Moncada was killed the next day, about 150km south of Morales, reportedly by paramilitaries. He was five minutes' drive from an army base at the time, in the community of El Tigre, municipality of Yondó. Orlando Moncada was one of the leaders of the *Asociación Campesina del Valle del Río Cimitarra* (ACVC), Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley.

Another ACVC leader, Diomedes Playonero Ortiz, was killed on 31 March, reportedly by paramilitaries. Some 50 members of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, apparently surrounded his farm. They accused him of being a guerrilla and guerrilla collaborator, and shot him in the head. (See UA 81/00, AMR 23/19/00, 10 April 2000.)

Until the authorities take action against paramilitary forces in the region, civilians, peasant farmers and community leaders will remain at risk of further attacks.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Colombian armed forces and their paramilitary allies commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. In the last five years several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups. The government made it illegal to set up 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.

Guerrilla forces have also committed serious human rights abuses, including executions of people they accuse of collaborating with the security forces or paramilitaries.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish, English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Onaldo Flores, who was reportedly abducted on 31 August;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation to establish his whereabouts, and for those responsible for abducting him to be brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the killing of ACVC leader Orlando Moncada, reportedly by paramilitary forces, on 1 September, for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- expressing concern for the safety of tradesmen and social activists in the Magdalena Medio region, including members of ACVC, and asking the authorities what steps they are taking to ensure their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Magdalena Medio and the surrounding area, urging that the results are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and United Nations recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

Vice-President of the Republic

Señor Vicepresidente Gustavo Bell Lemus

Alto Consejero Presidencial para asuntos de Derechos Humanos y lucha Contra la Corrupción

Cra. 8 #7-26, Palacio de Nariño

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**Salutation: Dear Vice-President / Excmo. Sr Vicepresidente**

Minister of Interior

Dr. Humberto de la Calle

Ministro del Interior

Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry

Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 8025/284 0214**

**Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr Ministro**

Governor of Antioquia Department

Sr. Alberto Builes Ortega

Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia

Gobernación de Antioquia, Calle 42B, # 52-106

Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

**Faxes: +57 4 381 1521**

**Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr Gobernador**

Governor of Bolívar Department

Sr. Miguel Enrique Raad Hernández

Gobernador del Departamento de Bolívar

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**Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr Gobernador**

**COPIES TO:**

Non governmental organisation

*Sembrar*

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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 19 October 2000.