

EXTERNAL

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Fear of "disappearance"

1 December 1995

COLOMBIA Juan Carlos Gómez Arango, taxi driver

Fabio Eduar Gómez Arango, taxi driver

There is serious concern for the safety of brothers Juan Carlos and Fabio Eduar Gómez Arango, whose whereabouts have been unknown since 19 November 1995 when they were detained in their homes in Antioquia department by groups of armed men.

At 10.15pm on 19 November, some 70 armed and uniformed men identifying themselves as members of the *Fiscalía*, the Attorney General's Office, entered the *urbanización Villa Campestre*, Villa Campestre housing estate, Estrella municipality, Antioquia department, where Juan Carlos Gómez lives. Juan Carlos Gómez, his wife and their 16-month-old child were taken away in a green Toyota.

Juan Carlos was shot and wounded during the operation. Two days later his wife and child were released and she was told "*que no le buscaran por que no le iban a encontrar*", "don't look for him, because you will not find him". She was not able to identify the place where she was held or the identity of her captors.

Meanwhile at 11pm on 19 November, Fabio Eduar Gómez, his wife and their child arrived home in the *urbanización La Navarra*, La Navarra housing estate, Copacabana municipality, Antioquia department, to find the door of their house destroyed. At that moment five cars appeared, out of which about 20 armed men in civilian clothes got out, identifying themselves as members of the *Fiscalía*. They beat Fabio Eduar Gómez, forced him into a car and drove away.

The families' lawyer has lodged a petition of *habeas corpus* on behalf of the two brothers, but their whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, has publicly stated that tackling the human rights situation will be a priority for his government. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces, together with their paramilitary allies, continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Only exceptionally are perpetrators brought to justice; the vast majority of members of the armed and security 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 concern for the safety of Juan Carlos and Fabio Eduar Gómez Arango and urging an immediate investigation to establish their whereabouts;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the "disappearance" of Juan Carlos and Fabio Eduar Gómez Arango, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging that, if they are in detention, they be treated humanely and allowed access to lawyers, relatives and medical treatment;
- asking that they be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately released.

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 1 286 7434 / 289 3377

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Samper

2) 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

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

Faxes:+ 57 1 286 6524 / 286 0053 / 286 0485

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Salutation:Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento
Fiscal General de la Nación
Fiscalía General de la Nación
Apartado Aéreo 29855
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

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

Faxes:+ 57 1 288 2828 (message, then fax tone); 245 5292

Salutation: Estimado Dr. Valdivieso / Dear Dr. Valdivieso

COPIES TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores
ASFADDES
AA 011446
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 15 January 1996.