

UA 272/00

Fear for**COLOMBIA Cesar Molina Consuegra and Luis Felipe Florez, human rights defenders. Other members of human rights groups and community leaders in Barranquilla**

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Armed men, believed to be paramilitaries, have threatened to kill all those working to defend human rights in the northern Colombian town of Barranquilla.

On 3 September, Cesar Molina, a worker for the *Corporación para la Educación y Autogestión Ciudadana* (CEAC), Corporation for Citizens' Education and Self-Initiative, was travelling in Barranquilla with his brother, Iván Molina, his brother's wife, Vilma Villanueva, and their 10 year old daughter Rut Molina Villanueva. At 8.30pm their car was stopped by two armed men riding a motorcycle without registration plates. The family were ordered out of the car at gun-point.

Turning to Cesar Molina they said, "Be careful because, in line with the plan for Barranquilla, we have already started the purging with the selective killing of all those supporting human rights work and denouncing killings. We have already started with the leaders of the displaced people in la Playa, Malambo and DIAN, and with Luis Mesa in the University of Atlántico who was working with the students to organize the sit-in protest at the University. Next time we won't warn you, you son of a bitch, next time we'll kill you if you keep annoying us, and give this message to Luis Felipe Florez."

*("Cuidate mucho por que en cumplimiento del plan trazado para barraquilla ya comenzamos el espulgue con los asesinatos selectivos contra todas las personas que están acompañando trabajo de derechos humanos y haciendo denuncias por muerte. Ya empezamos con los dirigentes de desplazados en la Playa, Malambo, DIAN y Luis Mesa en la Universidad del Atlántico que venia acompañando a los estudiantes en la toma de la Universidad. En la próxima no te avisamos Hijo de Puta la próxima te vamos a matar si sigues jodiendo y dale este mismo mensaje a Luis Felipe Florez.")*

Luis Mesa, ex-secretary of the University of Atlántico, was killed in Barranquilla on 26 August 2000 just outside the university. He had been active, together with students, in organising a sit-in protest at the university that day. The other references are to the killing in recent years of popular activists and people working with forcibly displaced communities.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Colombian army and security 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 Colombian government made it illegal to set up paramilitary groups and, in 1989, ordered the armed forces to combat and disband such groups, yet they continue to work with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country. Human rights defenders, witnesses and relatives of victims of human rights violations who denounce abuses and campaign for justice are frequently targeted by the security forces and their paramilitary allies and suffer serious human rights violations.

In spite of repeated promises and the establishment of a protection program for human rights defenders, the Colombian authorities have so far failed to take decisive action to put an end to paramilitary attacks against those working for the respect and promotion of human rights in Colombia.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Cesar Molina Consuegra and Luis Felipe Florez, following the threats made against them by armed men;
- urging a full and impartial investigation into the threats with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of members of human rights groups and leaders of displaced communities in Barranquilla, so they can continue their work of promoting and protecting human rights in accordance with international human rights standards;
- urging the government to adhere to its international obligations regarding human rights defenders, as set out by the United Nations and the Organization of American States;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Barranquilla and the surrounding area, urging that the results are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and UN recommendations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Carrera 8 No.7-26  
 Santafé de Bogotá  
 COLOMBIA

**Fax: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939/284 2186/289 3377/337 1351**

**Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr Presidente**

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,  
 Santafé de Bogotá

**Fax: + 57 1 337 1351**

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

Governor of the Department of Atlantico

Señor Roldolfo José Espinosa Meola  
 Gobernador del Departamento de Atlántico  
 Gobernación de Atlántico  
 Calle 40, No. 45-46  
 Barranquilla  
 Atlántico, COLOMBIA

**Fax: +57 53 410062**

**Salutation: Dear Mr Espinosa/Estimado Sr.Espinosa**

**COPIES TO:**

**Human Rights Organization**

CORPORACION CEAC  
 F- 19 Piso 5  
 Calle 34 No 42 - 28

Barranquilla

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 20 October 2000.