

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/070/2003

06 November 2003

Further Information on UA 89/03 (AMR 23/027/2003, 31 March 2003) Fear for safety New concern:
Death threats

COLOMBIA Domingo Tovar Arrieta (m), Director of the Human Rights Department of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, (CUT), Colombian Trade Union Confederation
Ana Paulina Tovar González (f), student, his daughter

New names: Other members of the CUT

Domingo Tovar Arrieta, Director of the Human Rights Department of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, (CUT), Colombian Trade Union Confederation has reportedly received a renewed death threat. Amnesty International is concerned for his safety and that of other members of the CUT.

According to reports, on 30 October, Domingo Tovar Arrieta received an anonymous telephone call to his mobile phone. The caller allegedly said, "*Pagará con su vida la pérdida del referendo*" ("You will pay with your life for the loss of the referendum"). This apparently refers to the recent defeat by the government in a national referendum it had been promoting to secure popular support for a series of reforms. The CUT, and particularly Domingo Tovar Arrieta, had supported a campaign calling for voters to abstain from voting in the referendum. In recent months Amnesty International has received reports that army-backed paramilitaries have threatened several opponents of the referendum and those calling for abstention.

There is no further information of any new threats against Ana Paulina Tovar González, the daughter of Domingo Tovar Arrieta, who had previously been the victim of two attempted abductions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members of trade union organizations have repeatedly been labelled as subversives by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. These accusations have repeatedly been followed by serious human rights violations committed against trade unionists by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. So far in 2003, 58 trade unionists have been killed. In recent years army backed paramilitaries have been responsible for the majority of killings of trade unionists. Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for killing those they accuse of siding with their enemies.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Domingo Tovar Arrieta and other members of the CUT;
- asking the authorities what action they will take to guarantee the safety of those at risk;
- calling for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists to be adequately resourced in order to provide more effective protection to trade unionists;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the threats, with the results of the investigation made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, for the results to be made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with the recommendations made by the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 342 0592 / 337 58 90

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

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,

Ministro del Interior y de Justicia

Ministerio del Interior

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

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 566 4573

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,

Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),

Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say “me da tono de fax por favor por Dr Osorio”)

Salutation: Dear Dr Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio

COPIES TO:

Trade Union Confederation

Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia

Calle 35 N1 7-25, Piso 9 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 18 December 2003.