

**COLOMBIA Peasant community from "La Galleta" farm in Montebello municipality
, Department of Antioquia**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the peasant community of "La Galleta" farm worked by members of the political party *Corriente de Renovación Socialista* (CRS), Socialist Renovation Movement in Montebello Municipality, Antioquia Department, following an increasing number of attacks by army-backed paramilitaries. These attacks have resulted in the killing of 11 peasants from the community in recent months.

On 1 March, an army-backed paramilitary group reportedly raided houses close to "La Galleta" and abducted five peasants from the community. Two days later, the bodies of the five peasants were found. Marks on their bodies indicated that they had been tortured. On 17 March, another peasant from the community was reportedly killed.

During July, there were further attacks against the community. On 15 July four peasants were reportedly massacred. The most recent victim, Héctor de Jesús Ayala, whose family has been displaced from "La Galleta" because of death threats against them, was reportedly taken from his home on 16 July and the following day his body was found, showing signs of torture. Previous requests for protection measures for Héctor de Jesús Ayala had reportedly been ignored, despite the fact that he was an important witness in legal proceedings involving members of the armed forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"La Galleta" farm was given to families of the CRS, a breakaway faction of the armed opposition group *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), Army of National Liberation. The CRS became a legal movement after signing a peace agreement with the government in 1994. The security forces and their paramilitary allies have frequently accused former guerrillas, such as CRS members, of being guerrilla collaborators or sympathizers; accusations which have often led to "disappearances", killings and other serious human rights violations. In January 2000 paramilitaries abducted two CRS members in "La Galleta" farm, who subsequently "disappeared". (see UA 18/00, AMR 23/03/00, 25 January 2000 and follow-up, AMR 23/04/00, 2 February 2000)

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

- expressing concern for the safety of all CRS members on La Galleta farm and urging that all measures deemed appropriate by them be taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling on the authorities to immediately launch a comprehensive and impartial investigation into the deaths of the 11 peasants, to make public its results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the armed forces and illegal paramilitary groups in the department of Antioquia, for the results to be made public and for those 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 stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia

Sr. Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telex: 44281 PALP CO

Fax: + 57 1 566 2071

Salutation: Dear President Pastrana / Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente Pastrana

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Apartado Aéreo 29855, Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Fiscal General, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2022/2003 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio

Governor of Antioquia Department

Sr. Eugenio Preto Soto (e)
Governador del Department de Antioquia, Gobernación de Antioquia
Calle 42B, # 52-106,
Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Telegram: Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

Fax: + 57 4 381 1111

Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'
Apartado Aéreo 33035,
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 4 September 2002.