

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## Colombia: Bishop must be released immediately

Kidnapping and hostage-taking are flagrant breaches of international humanitarian law, said Amnesty International as the Bishop of Yopal was kidnapped this weekend in Morcote, on the border of Boyacá and Casanare departments.

Press reports claim that the guerrilla group, the Ejército the Liberación Nacional (ELN), National Liberation Army, was responsible for kidnapping of Monsignor Misael Vacca Ramírez, as well as two other priests, who were later released.

"The kidnapping of the bishop is only the latest example of the blatant disregard that the armed actors in Colombia's conflict have for civilians."

Amnesty International is calling on the armed actors to desist from this practice and to immediately release all hostages.

"The use of human lives to further political objectives is completely unacceptable," Amnesty International said, urging the armed groups to respect the right to life and physical integrity of those held in their power.

### Background Information

In 2003, around 2,200 people were kidnapped in Colombia, more than half by guerrilla groups and army-backed paramilitaries. Guerrilla groups, especially the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, accounted for most of these kidnappings.

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