

URGENT ACTION



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15 April 2008

UA 97/08 Fear for safety/ Death threats

COLOMBIA **Members of the Magdalena Medio Peace and Development Programme ‘Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio’**
Members of the human rights organization, Corporación SEMBRAR
Members of the trade union organization, The Agro- mining Federation of the South of Bolívar department, FEDEAGROMISBOL (La Federación Agrominera del Sur de Bolívar)
Catholic priests working in the municipalities of Tiquisio, Arenal and Regidor, department of Bolívar

On 10 April, an e-mailed death threat signed by the paramilitary group ‘Black Eagles’ (*Aguilas Negras*) was received by those mentioned above. They were informed that they were considered to be military targets and so would be killed.

The death threat stated that their names are on a list of undesirables who must be eliminated, “*su nombre esta (sic.) en la lista de personas no deseadas ...que deben ser eliminados*”. It accuses those under threat of being guerrilla auxiliaries or guerrilla members and informs them that the aforementioned organizations and their members have been kept under surveillance in the municipalities of Tiquisio, Arenal, La Gloria and Regidor in the department of Bolívar as well as in Aguachica in the department of Cesar.

The e-mail continues by saying “Going down the list, you will be killed one by one for each criminal act that you organize against the ‘democratic security’ in these towns”, (*Por cada acto delincuencia en contra de la seguridad democratica (sic.) que ustedes organicen dentro de estos pueblos, serán exterminados uno a uno por orden de lista*). It concludes by saying “We won’t hesitate to kill you; start getting your loved ones ready so that they can bury you, (*No vamos en vacilar en asesinarlos y vallan preparando a sus allegados para que empiecen a enterrarlos*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The ‘Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio’ promotes economic, social, cultural and institutional development in the region, focusing on vulnerable and displaced communities. Corporación SEMBRAR is a human rights organization which in recent years has been monitoring the human rights situation in the region and which has repeatedly denounced human rights abuses.

FEDEAGROMISBOL is an organization which represents peasant farmers and the interests of artisanal gold miners in the South of Bolívar department. It has campaigned against the arrival of multinational gold mining companies in the area and in recent years, its members have regularly been threatened and labeled as subversive. On



Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

19 September 2006, Alejandro Uribe, a FEDEAGROMISBOL leader was killed by members of the *Batallón Nueva Granada* of the Colombian army. He was presented by the security forces as a guerrilla killed in combat.

Human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often been labeled as guerrilla collaborators or supporters by government officials, as well as by the security forces and paramilitaries. Such accusations have often been followed by threats or attacks against human rights activists. The conflict provides a useful cover for those seeking to expand and protect economic interests and human rights violations are often committed in areas of economic interest.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- expressing concern for the safety of members of FEDEAGROMISBOL, SEMBRAR, the '*Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio*' and Catholic priests working in the municipalities of Tiquisio, Arenal and Regidor in the department of Bolivar.
- urging the authorities to ensure that all measures deemed appropriate by the individuals and organizations named in the threat received on 10 April, are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the death threat received on 10 April, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups and investigate and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations;
- calling on the authorities to produce policy and plans, in conjunction with human rights defenders, to guarantee their safety according to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and to make these plans public.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño,
Carrera 8 No.7-2,
Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Fax: 011 57 1 337 5890

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

**Director of the Presidential Programme for
Human Rights and International Humanitarian
Law**

Dr. Carlos Franco Echevarría
Director del Programa Presidencial de Derechos
Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario
Vicepresidencia De La República De Colombia,
Calle 7 No 6-54,
Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Fax: 011 57 1 565 9797

**Salutation: Dear Dr. Franco Echevarría /
Estimado Dr. Franco Echevarría**

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana
Fiscal General de la Nación,
Fiscalía General de la Nación
Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01)
Bloque C, Piso 4,
Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Fax: 011 57 1 570 2000

**(a message in Spanish will ask you
to enter extension 2017)**

**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal /
Dear Mr Iguarán**

COPIES TO:

Corporación SEMBRAR
Calle 2 Sur No. 31B-28
Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Ambassador Maria Carolina Barco Isakson
Embassy of Colombia
2118 Leroy Pl. NW
Washington DC 20008

Fax: 1 202 232 8643

Email: emwas@colombiaemb.org

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 27 May 2008.