

PUBLIC

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UA 196/08 Fear for Safety/Killings/Disappearances

COLOMBIA Francisco Hurtado (m)
"El Pipe" (m, real name not known)
Other members of Afro-descendant communities living in Olaya Herrera, Nariño Department

Killed: Willinton Riascos (m)
Tailor Ortiz (m)

Two men have been subjected to enforced disappearance and two others have been killed by paramilitaries in the municipality of Olaya Herrera in Nariño department, southwestern Colombia. Inhabitants from the area, mostly from Afro-descendant communities, are fleeing from their homes in fear for their lives because of an upsurge of paramilitary violence.

On 14 June, members of the paramilitary group, the Peasant Self-Defence Forces of Nariño (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Nariño*, ACN), entered the hamlet of San José de la Turbia, in Olaya Herrera Municipality. They segregated all the men and women in the community, and forced both groups to stand in front of the church. They warned them that the Colombian navy was nearby and that they were working together. They then called out the name of one community member, Tailor Ortiz. When he raised his hand, the paramilitaries said, "We're going to kill this one right away" (*a este lo matamos ya*). They tied him up and after telling all the women to go back to their houses, including Tailor Ortiz's wife, they shot him in the head three times. They then told those present: "This is so that you learn that we aren't fooling with anyone, we are being serious. Each time we come, we'll come for someone else" (*Esto es para que aprendan que no estamos jugando con nadie, hablamos en serio. Cada vez que vengamos vendremos por alguien mas*"). This is the latest in a series of killings and abductions by the ACN, which has been operating in the area since April. On 15 June, the day after the latest killing, the majority of the 111 families living in San José de la Turbia left the area fearing for their safety. None of these families has been able to return to their homes. Families are continuing to leave other hamlets in the municipality because of paramilitary activity in the area.

On 5 June, members of the ACN, some wearing masks, entered San José de la Turbia, announcing that they had come for those with connections with the guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC). They forced all the men to stand outside the church and told them that if anyone tried to "collaborate [or] betray us and we will take them away... Don't even think about calling the army because we know them, we cooperate with them and they tell us who the snitches are, we work together... those who flee do it because they owe something and have connections with the guerrilla" (*Colaboren, delaten y nosotros nos lo llevamos... No se les ocurra llamar al ejército porque nosotros cooperamos con ellos y ellos nos dicen quiénes son los sapos, trabajamos juntos... el que se desplaza es porque debe algo y tiene vínculos con la guerrilla*). Members of the ACN then grabbed Francisco Hurtado from the group and accused him of supporting guerrilla forces. They forced him to leave with them later that day, and he has not been seen since.

On 26 May, members of the ACN shot and killed Willinton Riascos in the nearby hamlet of Bocas del Canal, after he failed to obey their order of "Nobody run, all to the floor" (*Nadie corra, todos al piso*) when they entered the village. They then started to hit his companion, a man known as "El Pipe", with the butts of their guns. The paramilitaries took "El Pipe" away by boat, in the direction of a paramilitary encampment located a

five-minute journey from a permanent military post operated by the 70th Marine Infantry (*Infantería Marina 70*). Despite this, there has been no further news of the whereabouts of “El Pipe”.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1985, between three and four million people have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the violent actions of all parties to Colombia’s long-running internal conflict. All parties – the armed forces, paramilitaries, often acting in coordination with, or with the acquiescence of the security forces, and guerrilla groups – have been responsible for the forcible displacement of civilians. The FARC has been present in Nariño Department in recent years and there have been numerous incidents reported of the FARC targeting members of Afro-descendent communities.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Francisco Hurtado and “El Pipe” following their enforced disappearance, and for the safety of inhabitants of Olaya Herrera Municipality;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all measures deemed appropriate by the individuals and communities at risk are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the enforced disappearance of Francisco Hurtado and “El Pipe” and the killing of Willinton Riascos and Tailor Ortiz, with the results of the investigation made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region and to break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations;
- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of those displaced in the region;
- calling for them to be given all necessary support while they are living away from their homes and for assurances that they will not be forced to return to their homes if they feel it is not safe to do so.

APPEALS TO:

President

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 337 5890

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

Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Manuel Santos

Avenida El Dorado, Carrera 52 OFI. 217, Centro Administrativo Nacional (CAN), Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 266 0351

Salutation: Dear Dr. Santos/Estimado Dr. Santos

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: +57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Dear Mr Iguarán/ Estimado Sr. Fiscal

COPIES TO:

Non- governmental human rights organization

Justicia y Paz Intereclesial

Calle 61 A, No. 17-26, 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 19 August 2008.