

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/"Disappearance"

5 March 1991

COLOMBIA: Nilson REYES TORRES

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Nilson Reyes Torres who was last seen on 1 March 1991 in Cali, department of Valle del Cauca.

According to reports, Nilson Reyes Torres was seized on the street in Cali's Aguablanca district by about three men, in civilian dress and armed with machine guns, who beat him and pushed him into a pale blue Mazda car. The assailants then drove Nilson Reyes to an unknown destination, followed by four other armed men in civilian clothes on two motor cycles. The children from his dance class witnessed his abduction. Nilson Reyes, identity card (C.C.) No. 16.951.755, teaches dance at the Centro de Desarrollo, Development Centre, in Aguablanca and is a member of the Asociación Cultural del Distrito de Aguablanca (ASOCUDA), Aguablanca District Cultural Association.

Despite their efforts, relatives and human rights workers have been unable to establish Nilson Reyes' whereabouts. His possible "disappearance" has been denounced to regional authorities including the human rights ombudsperson (personero), and the procurator (procurador).

Nilson Reyes was detained by members of the Metropolitan Police of Cali approximately one month ago and held at La Rivera police station in Cali for several hours before being released without charge.

On 15 May 1990 another member of ASOCUDA, a theatre teacher and community worker in Aguablanca, Carlos Hernán Ospina Parra, vanished in Cali. Carlos Ospina was last seen when he left his home in El Jardín suburb of Cali and his whereabouts remain unknown to date and it is feared he may have "disappeared" (see UA 226/90, AMR 23/27/90, 1 June). Since the "disappearance" of Carlos Ospina, men in plain clothes have reportedly asked questions about ASOCUDA members to the inhabitants of Aguablanca.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including "disappearances". Local human rights groups estimate that over 1,800 people have "disappeared" and remain unaccounted for since 1980. Principal targets have been people associated with trade unions, civic and community movements and legal left-wing parties, as well as alleged members of or sympathizers with armed opposition groups. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each individual "disappearance", as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, on the basis of available evidence the organization concludes that many such abuses are carried out by members of the Colombia security forces or civilians working under their command. Cali has been particularly affected by "disappearances" in recent months.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of Nilson Reyes Torres;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation to establish his whereabouts;
- urging that his legal situation be clarified and he be immediately released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence and also allowed access to a lawyer and relatives.

**APPEALS TO:**

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324**

**+ 57 1 287 7937**

**+ 57 1 283 3066**

General Oscar Botero Restrepo  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO or 44561 CFAC CO**

**Faxes: +57 1 222 1874**

Dr. Gustavo Arrieta  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Edificio Banco Ganadero  
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

**COPIES TO:**

Señores  
 CSPP  
 AA 4296  
 Cali  
 Valle del Cauca  
 Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 April 1991.