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Institution: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Title/Style of Cause: La Balsita Living and Working Community v. Colombia
Doc. Type: Decision on Precautionary Measures
Dated: 11 January 2002
Citation: La Balsita v. Colombia, Inter-Am. C.H.R., OEA/Ser.L/V/II.117, doc. 1 rev. 1, Ch. III, para. 22 (2002)

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22. On January 11, 2002 the IACHR granted precautionary measures on behalf of 110 members of the La Balsita Living and Working Community in Dabeiba, department of El Chocó. The request indicated that on December 31, 2001 a paramilitary group of approximately 100 men made an incursion into the Caracolón-La España farm—a community property given by the State to the aforementioned displaced community. The information indicated, inter alia, that “...many of the armed men were dressed in camouflage, some with military badges, with special forces emblems. Since then, the population has been intimidated and their provisional houses searched; and the armed men have used community goods and conducted lengthy interrogations of the campesinos and the Catholic monks and nuns who are with them on a permanent basis. [...] The Office of the Vice President [...] and the National Office of the Ombudsman have been informed of all these situations; the response the petitioners have received is that the Fourth Brigade is already apprised of the situation.” In response, the State confirmed the permanent presence of law enforcement in the region and an increase in manpower from the Sixth Army Brigade in the municipality. The municipal representative of Dabeiba reported that three complaints of forced disappearance were lodged and are in the preliminary investigation phase. The Social Solidarity Network, in turn, reported on different investments in productive projects, humanitarian assistance, and programs to return the displaced population.