

**MATERIAL SUPPORT
DURESS CASE EXAMPLES
November 2006**

AFRICA¹

1. Somali woman's home attacked by United Somali Congress (USC) members, paid ransom for son's release. They beat her husband, and when her daughter ran to her father pleading with the men to stop beating him, the men shot and killed both the woman's daughter and her husband. They blindfolded and handcuffed the woman's son, looted the house of valuables, and took her son away in a car. The woman's son was held for three months until she paid \$2,000 for his release. One week after her son was released, the attackers returned to her house, beat her and her son, raped her, and told them to leave their house. The woman and her son fled the country, but were denied resettlement in the US because of their material support (the valuables and the ransom) to terrorism.

2. Sierra Leonean man on hold for fixing rebels' cars to protect family. Sierra Leonean man was working as a mechanic when a group of heavily armed JUNTA men came to his house and demanded that he provide them with transportation support. He refused, but the men took over his garage and said they would kill his family if he did not help them. He worked for them for two weeks, fixing cars. After two weeks, the men took the man and some of his family to another location, but during the move, KAMAJOR men attacked and the refugee escaped with his family. The man's resettlement to the U.S. is on hold for material support (fixing cars).

3. Liberian woman attacked at home, forced to wash clothes. A Liberian single female head of household was referred to U.S. resettlement program by UNHCR as a particularly vulnerable single parent. During the war in Liberia, LURD rebels came to her home and beat her and her father. They shot and killed her father and gang-raped her before abducting her and holding her against her will. During the time she was held hostage, she was forced to perform tasks such as washing the rebels' clothing. The woman escaped from the rebels after several weeks of captivity and made her way to a refugee camp where she remains. DHS considered the tasks she had performed for the rebels (i.e. doing laundry) to be "material support" and the case was placed on hold.

4. Liberian family tortured, forced to house rebels. Approximately 50 JUNTA rebels attacked the family's house because they were one of the richest families in the area. The rebels took over the house and set up a base there for 10 days. They tied up the wife and raped her and her daughter. The husband was forced to perform tasks for the rebels. When one daughter escaped when she left to fetch water, the rebels threatened to kill everyone in the home. A nephew tried to escape but was caught, killed, and cut up with a machete. Rebels cut another daughter with a machete (she survived) and burned a son on the hands and feet. The case is on hold for the family's material support to the rebels when they seized the family's home.

5. Somali woman forced to make \$14 daily payments to stay alive. In 1996, the Abgal militia attacked the woman's home in Mogadishu and killed her father. She and her mother fled to a relative's home, but were forced to flee again in 1998. They sold tea in the local market to make money. At the market, local militia extorted around \$14 per day from them under threat of death. The woman and her mother returned to Mogadishu, but the woman was sexually harassed at the house where they were taken in, and she fled to another country, leaving her mother behind.

¹ These cases were all interviewed by DHS and subsequently deferred or denied.

She is on hold for material support because of the money she and her mother paid to the militia at the market.

COLOMBIANS²

6. Colombian youth forced to dig graves. A 22-year-old Colombian male arrived in Ecuador after fleeing from a paramilitary encampment after a death march. After the man's mother refused to sell family land to paramilitaries who planned to build a road through the property the man's mother and three younger siblings were "disappeared." The man was away attending high school at the time of the disappearances. He believes his family was killed for their resistance to the paramilitary plan. At the age of 16, he continued to refuse to sell the land. One night, four members of the paramilitary arrived at his mother's house where the man was living with his uncle and forced him to march to where the paramilitaries had amassed some of the local indigenous population. During a march that lasted several days, the paramilitaries shot and killed many of those who marched with him. The man dug graves for the dead. Because the paramilitary forces would sometimes shoot someone in the back when he had finished digging the grave, the man said, "I never knew when I would be digging my own grave." The man fled after a cousin convinced her paramilitary boyfriend to let the man escape. He ran straight to the nearby town and left the next day for Ecuador. Since his arrival in Ecuador, he has been followed to several different locations by two men who have been searching for him, and whom he presumes to be paramilitary. He also found out that his uncle, with whom he had been living after his mother's disappearance, was found dead in a lake. He is awaiting resettlement. The material support issue in his case: providing services for the paramilitaries – i.e. digging graves, including what could have been his own grave.

7. Repairman forced to repair appliances in guerilla encampment: A man was working as an appliance repairman. The man regularly traveled from his town to nearby rural areas to fix appliances on farms. One day, while working at a farm, guerrillas came to the farm, demanded money from those managing the farm, and took the man by force to a guerrilla encampment. They forced him to stay with them for several days to fix appliances. He eventually convinced the guerrillas to let him leave. As soon as he returned home, he and his family moved to Bogotá to protect themselves. After several months, the guerrillas found the man and tried to kill him while he was at a marketplace, attempting to drag him into a car where at least one of the men was armed; the man escaped fled with his family to Ecuador. In Ecuador, Colombian guerrillas have harassed the man, followed him, and threatened his family. In one instance, they demanded money and said that they would kill him if he did not provide it. He gave them \$150 out of fear and hoped that that would be enough to prevent them from coming after him or his family. It appears that the man, his wife, and three young daughters were originally slated for resettlement in US, until the material support bar was imposed (this has not been confirmed). The man provided "material support" when he was forced to serve as a repairman on a guerilla encampment and provided funds (\$150) to guerillas to prevent them from killing his family.

8. Woman imprisoned with her children in her home by the FARC after husband forcibly conscripted into FARC army. On October 23, 2005, after returning home with her husband and children after a day's work at a farm, three members of the FARC came to the house. They kidnapped the husband at gunpoint and took him away. The woman believes that he was taken because the guerrillas needed more men to fight with them in "Operation San Miguel" against the

² These individuals were interviewed in Ecuador by a team of law students from Georgetown University. DHS has not necessarily interviewed these refugees; UNHCR stopped referring cases with material support issues to the U.S. in late 2004 because of the high rate of deferrals/denials for material support.

Colombian army. The couple had never supported the FARC. An armed member of the FARC imprisoned the woman and her children in their home for three days. When they were finally allowed to leave, they fled across the border to Ecuador that same day, leaving behind everything they owned. The woman has not heard anything about her husband since the day he was taken. She does not think she will ever see him alive again. She is ineligible for resettlement to the U.S. because provided “material support” under duress in the form of shelter to a FARC member.

9. Taxi Driver Forced to Transport Armed Men. One day, armed soldiers appeared alongside the man’s taxi. They did not identify themselves, but were carrying rifles and machetes. They told him that he would be driving them through the mountains for a while. Everyone had heard stories of other drivers who had said no members of armed groups; they would just kill them and take the car. So he said yes, and drove them to several locations in the mountains. The men took the taxi driver’s name, picture and license plate number and told them they would call upon him again to do the same. They returned two more times, each time for the same purpose. Everyone also knew that drivers and others who “knew too much” were often taken away and killed because of their knowledge. Because of this, when his friends learned of the situation, they helped him to escape with his son, whose leg was lame, making the escape more difficult. The material support issue in this case: transporting members of an armed group under duress.

10. Colombian youth whose family sold items to FARC, ELN, and paramilitaries. This man is 27 years old, a devout Catholic, and aspires to become a doctor. He is a recognized refugee in Ecuador awaiting resettlement to a third-country. His family owned a small shop in their town that sold basic goods. People in town would shop there, and occasionally members of the guerillas or paramilitaries would come to the store. One afternoon, a group of militia from the ELN and also the FARC came to the store. These men boasted to his brother that they were going to massacre a bunch of people the next day in the town of La Chorrera, which was not very far away. The guerilla men said that people in that town were collaborating with other armed groups. The man’s brother protested. He pled with the guerillas not to kill those people. After the brother made these comments, they overheard the guerilla men discussing amongst themselves how the brother had protested their actions. The next day, their father never returned from work. The brother, who had just completed his military service, was assassinated and his mutilated body was found hanging in a tree near a waterfall. The FARC told the man and his remaining brother that they had two choices: 1) to join the FARC as combatants; or 2) flee. They fled to Ecuador. The day that his brother and father were assassinated, the FARC/ELN killed 15 people in La Chorrera. The material support issue: the man’s family’s general store sold items to members of guerilla and paramilitary groups.