

## WORLD EVENTS

# Girl, Trapped in Water for 55 Hours, Dies Despite Rescue Attempts



Rescue efforts to save Omaira Sanchez

by Julia Preston

Armero, Colombia—Omaira Sanchez, a 13-year-old girl trapped up to her neck for more than 55 hours in floodwaters, died yesterday morning despite rescuers' frantic efforts to free her. **B**

Omaira's legs were pinned in the ruins of what was once her home by a cement slab and by the body of an aunt who drowned in the avalanche

of mud that rolled over Armero Wednesday night.

Trapped in the chilly water the little girl shivered violently and her hands turned a deathly white.

Finally her blood pressure dropped so low she suffered a heart attack, according to Alejandro Jimenez, 23, a medical student volunteer at the disaster site who attended the child.

**A ANALYZE A NEWS ARTICLE**  
What do you learn from this photograph and its caption?

**B ANALYZE A NEWS ARTICLE**  
Which of the six journalistic questions are answered in the first paragraph of the article?

**C ANALYZE A NEWS ARTICLE**

What information does this photograph convey to you?

**C**



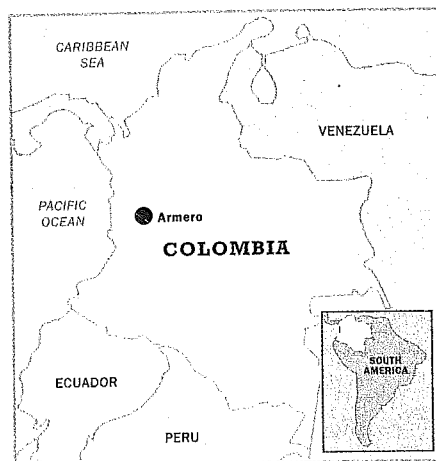
Mudflow covering the fields after the Nevado del Ruiz eruption

**D ANALYZE A NEWS ARTICLE**

How is Alejandro Jimenez involved in the events?

“You can imagine how I feel,” said Jimenez, looking drawn and exhausted yesterday morning. “We stayed up all night trying to save her.” **D**

About a dozen  
30 rescuers from the Colombian Air Force, the Red Cross, and fire departments of towns near Armero radioed increasingly desperate pleas since Thursday for an electric pump to keep the fetid waters from rising above the girl’s chin. They called for  
40 picks, shovels, and winches to clear away rubble trapping her.



At 2 p.m. yesterday, four hours after Omaira died, a Colombian radio station announced that 18 water pumps  
50 had just arrived in a town 45 miles from Armero. To the end, rescue workers dug with their bare hands

at the cement slab leaning on Omaira’s numb legs, and bailed the water with tin cans.

60 Someone stretched a dirty blue-and-white checkered tablecloth over the scene of tragedy, a scene that, displayed in newspapers around the world yesterday, came to represent the horror of the disaster.

**Language Coach**

**Etymology** A word’s **etymology** is its history. The Latin word *foetere* means “to stink.” Use this Latin root to figure out the meaning of a word in line 38.