

**URGENT
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EXTERNAL (for general distribution) International Secretariat, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England. AMR 29/04/80
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Amnesty International opposes by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons whether or not they have used or advocated violence.
(Amnesty International Statute, Article 1(c))

11 February 1980

- UA 18/80

Disappearance

EL SALVADOR: Recent detentions

AI has received news of the following detentions. The whereabouts of those detained are unknown and there are fears for their physical safety.

1. Dr Fernando ESPINOZA ALTAMIRANO, medical doctor, member of (legal) *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario*, arrested in San Salvador on 8 February.
2. María Emma AGUIRRE, Oscar Reciberto GARCIA, Manuel PEÑA MARIN, Rodolfo VASQUEZ, José Eduardo VASQUEZ, Héctor CANALES, all arrested by National Guard on 3 February in Department of La Unión.
3. Students: Francisco Arnulfo VENTURA and José Humberto MEJILLA, arrested by National Guard near United States Embassy in San Salvador on 22 January.
4. Peasants: Jesús Alfaro MENJIVAR and Silencio MEJIA, detained on 20 January.

Background

Since the coup of 15 October 1979 which overthrew President Carlos Humberto Romero, AI has continued to receive allegations of illegal detentions and torture by the official security forces and by unofficial groups, although not on the same scale as under the previous government. However, arrests, disappearances and murder of suspected members of the opposition appear to have intensified in the past two weeks.

The 20,000-strong National Teachers' Association of El Salvador (ANDES) declared a three-day strike from 4 February in protest at the double murder of two teachers on 31 January, reportedly by the unofficial, rightwing paramilitary group, the White Warriors' Union (*Unión Guerrera Blanca*). (It is estimated that 33 teachers were killed for political motives in 1979.)

There have been further attacks on journalists. On 8 February, the house of journalist Guillermo Galván Bonilla was machine-gunned. He is now seeking guarantees from the government for the safety of himself and his family. An engineer, Rene Marroquin, detained in San Salvador on the same day, was found dead a day later.

Catechists (lay preachers) have continued to be a principal target. On 29 January, two women catechists of the parish of Aguilares, María Urciela Martínez and Ana Quorelia Martínez were killed, allegedly by the security forces. It may be recalled that members of the Army shot dead the parish priest of Aguilares, Father Rutilio Grande, and two parishioners in March 1977.

See also "Update on El Salvador", AMR 29/19/79, 14 December 1979.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- Telegrams/express letters/letters, requesting clarification of the legal situation and whereabouts of those detained and assurances regarding their physical safety.
- *If possible*, we recommend that UA coordinators allocate the names numbered 1 to 4 for separate appeals (eg, health professionals may be asked to appeal on behalf of case 1 only; UA participants in the educational sector may be asked to appeal on behalf of case 3 only; trade unionists may be asked to appeal on behalf of case 4).

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Appeals to:

Sres Miembros de la Junta Revolucionaria de Gobierno,
Palacio Nacional, San Salvador, El Salvador.

Coronel José Guillermo García,
Ministro de Defensa,
Ministerio de Defensa, San Salvador, El Salvador.

In case 3 only:

Sr Comandante,
Comandancia de la Guardia Nacional,
6 Calle Oeste 2-1,
Ciudad de la Unión, Departamento de la Unión,
El Salvador.

Please send copies of appeals to the Salvadorean diplomatic representative to your country, and to:

CDHES,
Avda. España 928, (unofficial human
San Salvador, El Salvador. rights group)

- Please take immediate action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the Recommended Action.
- Letters and telegrams should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to the relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
 - Article 3, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person";
 - Article 5. "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";
 - Article 9, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile".
- The name of Amnesty International can be used unless stated otherwise; although, letters written in a private or professional capacity may be more effective.
- Information about the alleged connection of any person with an organization which is banned in their country is provided as background only and should not be included in appeals.
- In Urgent Action cases, where Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the possible ill-treatment of prisoners, appeals are issued when the circumstances of a person's arrest or disappearance make such treatment likely. Do not make direct accusations and, unless otherwise instructed, do not use the word "torture"
- Send at least one telegram or express letter immediately. Other letters can be sent afterwards to the addresses listed. Copies of letters should be sent to the relevant diplomatic representatives in your country. Copies of any replies received should be sent immediately to the International Secretariat, or to your national section or Urgent Action coordinator. Thank the official who has replied, requesting that you be kept informed about the case.