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£CHILE

@Human rights lawyer charged with sedition: case reopened by the Supreme Court

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On 29 December 1994, the Third Chamber (*Tercera Sala*) of the Supreme Court reopened the case against human rights lawyer Héctor Salazar Ardiles, following an appeal by the Military Public Ministry (*Ministerio Público Militar*) against the closure of the case.

Héctor Salazar, a lawyer working with the *Fundación Social de las Iglesias Cristianas, FASIC*, Christian Churches Social Aid Fund, had been charged with "sedition and inducement to disorder causing the loss of commitment of troops [to the armed forces]" ("*sedición impropia, inducción al desorden y a tibieza en el servicio de las tropas*") in April 1994. The charges were brought by the *Segunda Fiscalía Militar*, Second Military Prosecutor's Office, following interviews in a newspaper and television channel, in which Héctor Salazar made critical remarks about the chief of *Carabineros*, General Rodolfo Stange. General Stange had been named as one of seven *Carabinero* officials involved in obstructing investigations into the assassination of three political activists and members of the Communist Party in 1985. The case against Héctor Salazar had been closed by the Military Appeals Court (*Corte Marcial*) on 27 October 1994, arguing that the investigation had been exhausted (see *Chile: Human rights lawyer charged with sedition*, AI Index: AMR 22/02/94, published in April 1994 and *Chile: Human rights lawyer charged with sedition - case closed by the Military Appeals Court*, AI Index: AMR 22/06/94, published in December 1994).

The reopening of the case against Héctor Salazar renews Amnesty International's concerns that restrictions to the freedom of expression in Chile continue to apply, especially in relation to investigations and trials for gross human rights violations.

Amnesty International believes that Héctor Salazar Ardiles has been charged solely on the basis of his public declarations and beliefs and that, if tried and convicted, the organization would adopt him as a prisoner of conscience. Amnesty International is calling for the charges against him to be dropped immediately.

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