

**URGENT  
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**URGENT  
ACTION**

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Torture/"Disappearance"/Legal Concern

16 August 1982

EL SALVADOR: Maximiliano CASTRO NAVAS  
Héctor LOPEZ RIVAS  
Gabriel ARGUETA  
Jorge Benjamín RODRIGUEZ DUENAS  
Marta Imelda DIMAS  
Alejandro MARTINEZ

=====

The six people above are all trade unionists and are members of the *Sindicato Nacional de la Industria del Transporte*, National Union of Transport Workers. They were arrested on 11 August 1982 in the headquarters of their trade union by members of the *Policía de Hacienda*, Treasury Police, who also searched the premises without a warrant. The present whereabouts of the six is unknown and there is considerable concern for their safety.

#### Background

Amnesty International has been following the human rights situation in El Salvador closely for a number of years, and has concluded that the security forces have been regularly involved in a systematic and widespread program of torture, "disappearance", and individual and mass killings of men, women and children. The victims have included not only people suspected of opposition to the authorities, but thousands who were simply resident in areas targeted for security operations, whose murder or mutilation seems to have been completely arbitrary. Victims of arbitrary detention, "disappearance" and murder have included priests, trade unionists, church workers, teachers, academics, peasant families, community workers and medical personnel, as well as patients abducted from their sickbeds or murdered in hospital by security agents.

Following the elections for a constituent assembly held on 28 March 1982, reports of human rights violations involving the official security forces have continued unabated. The violations are occurring in a context of continued conflict between the government and opposition forces, but reports received by Amnesty International indicate that non-combatants from all sectors of Salvadorian society continue to be the victims of such violations, including arbitrary detention, "disappearance", and extrajudicial executions at the hands of the official military and police services, who act on occasion in conjunction with clandestine paramilitary squads who have their explicit or implicit warrant. As in previous years, in no single instance since the elections have the Salvadorian authorities issued a satisfactory response to enquiries concerning these violations.

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the *release* of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used or advocated violence. These are termed *prisoners of conscience*. It works for *fair and prompt trials* for all *political prisoners* and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the *death penalty* and *torture* or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of *all prisoners* without reservation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Telegrams/express letters/letters expressing grave concern about the abduction of the six trade unionists above and urging that their physical integrity be guaranteed. Request clarification of their whereabouts and legal situation.

*Appeals from TRADE UNIONISTS are especially urged.*

APPEALS TO:

S.E. Alvaro Magaña Borja  
Presidente de la República  
Casa Presidencial  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*Telegrams to: Alvaro Magaña Borja,  
Presidente, San Salvador, El Salvador*

Coronel Francisco Morán  
Jefe de la Policía de Hacienda  
Calle Concepción  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*Telegrams to: Francisco Morán, Jefe,  
Policía de Hacienda, San Salvador,  
El Salvador*

COPIES TO:

Dr Julio Alfredo Samayoa  
Ministro de Trabajo  
Ministerio de Trabajo  
2 Avenida Norte  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
(Minister of Labour)

CDHES  
Av. las Américas y Calle San José  
Urb. Isidro Menéndez, Edif. ACUS  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
(El Salvador human rights commission)

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat if sending appeals after 27 September 1982.

Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action. If possible, send a telegram or express letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.

- Telegrams and letters should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to 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 may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity are often more effective.

Copies of appeals should be sent to relevant diplomatic representatives in your country.

In Urgent Action cases, Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when Amnesty International believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new information.

Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your national section Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the International Secretariat. If appropriate, thank the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case.