

WA 05/2003 El Salvador

[TITLE]

El Salvador: Where are the “disappeared” children?

[EXTRACT]

Thousands of children “disappeared” during the armed conflict that shook El Salvador for over a decade. Their families have been searching for them ever since.

[APPEAL CASE]

Thousands of children “disappeared” during the armed conflict that shook El Salvador between 1980 and 1991. Many children were killed or taken by soldiers following army-backed massacres or “cleaning operations” against the civilian population. Some had seen their parents killed; others had simply become separated from them. They were taken to orphanages or held at military bases, or put up for adoption. They are the “disappeared” children of El Salvador.

Amnesty International believes that the Salvadorean authorities have failed in their duty to investigate and punish those responsible for these human rights violations. They have also failed to support efforts made by parents, relatives and NGOs to find the “disappeared” children, despite evidence that many of them are still alive.

Act now to urge President Flores to support the formation of a National Search Committee to clarify the circumstances of “disappearances”, and to do everything possible to find those children and help them to regain their identity and their past. The pleas of the families of the children must be answered.

[SAMPLE LETTER]

Dear President,

I am deeply concerned about the whereabouts of thousands of children who “disappeared” during the armed conflict in El Salvador between 1980 and 1991. The families of the children have been searching for them for many years, particularly since it has been proven that many of them are still alive.

I urge you and your government to do everything possible to seek out and find those children who were separated from their families to enable them to regain their identity and their past, and so that their families can at last find out what happened to them and find some peace.. I request that you and your government recognise the efforts made by the families and NGOs to support the formation of a National Search Committee by the Legislative Assembly in order to clarify the circumstances of the separation of the children from their parents during the armed conflict.

Furthermore, El Salvador must fulfil its obligation under the international human rights standards on reparation to victims of human rights violations by creating and contributing to a fund aimed at compensating the victims and their families.

Finally, I urge you to initiate thorough, impartial and independent investigations so that those responsible are brought to justice.

Yours sincerely,

[TARGET]

Please send appeals to:

S.E. Francisco Flores
Presidente de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
Avda. Los Diplomáticos, Calle México
Barrio San Jacinto
San Salvador, El Salvador
Fax: +503 243 99 47

[RELATED DOCUMENTS – doesn't need translation]
AMR 29/004/2003-July 2003 (main document)

[PHOTO CAPTION]
Ana Julia Mejía Ramirez, who "disappeared" in December 1981 with her sister Carmelina Mejía Ramirez in the Department of Morazán.

[El Salvador: Where are the "disappeared" children?]

[Note to translators – please do not translate the red comments in brackets, like this one. Thanks]

[Updated]

Updated 21 April 2004

[This action is now closed]

This action is now closed

[Summary]

Amnesty International continues to be concerned about the whereabouts of thousands of children who "disappeared" during the armed conflict in El Salvador between 1980 and 1991. There are ongoing concerns about the failure of the authorities to seek out and find those children who were separated from their families, particularly since it has been proven that many of them are still alive.

A new President was elected in March 2004. Although the web action is now ended Amnesty International will continue to put pressure on the authorities to do everything possible to find those children and to recognize the effort made by the families and NGOs to support the formation of a National Search Committee by the Legislative Assembly to clarify the circumstances of the separation of the children from their parents during the armed conflict.

Thank you to all those who took part in this action.

[Text of original appeal]

Text of original appeal

[Date of original appeal]

12 November 2003