

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Apparent Political Killing / Fear for Safety

27 May 1994

EL SALVADOR Members of the *Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres (MSM)* -
Salvadorian Women's Movement

Alexander Rodas ABARCA, aged 18, reserve member of the *Policia Nacional Civil (PNC)*, National Civilian Police

On 19 May 1994 the offices of the women's organization MSM were reportedly broken into, and the following day Alexander Rodas Abarca, a reserve member of the National Civilian Police, was killed as he was guarding the MSM offices. The identity of the attackers is not yet clear, but Amnesty International fears that the break-in and killing may be a continuation of a campaign of intimidation aimed at activists and supporters of opposition parties now extended to popular movements.

MSM members have denounced that their offices, which they share with the *Fundación de Derechos Humanos Madeleine Lagadec*, Human Rights Centre Madeleine Lagadec, were broken into and ransacked by unidentified people who damaged important documents. They dismiss burglary as the motive because although some money was taken, valuable office equipment was not stolen.

PNC reserve member Alexander Rodas Abarca was also a member of the security group for the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos (PRTC)*, Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers, a faction of the former armed opposition *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)*, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front. The PNC was set up under the terms of the 1992 Peace Accords and many former FMLN members were integrated into this new force.

Amnesty International understands that police investigations have been opened into the two incidents, but the organization remains concerned for the safety of members of the MSM.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 19 May 1994 opposition politician Nidia Díaz, suffered a second attempt on her life during which her bodyguard was injured. Nidia Díaz is a deputy of the Legislative Assembly for the PRTC-FMLN and President of the Justice and Human Rights Commission of the Legislative Assembly (see EXTRA 13/94, AMR 29/03/94, 28 February 1994 and follow-up AMR 29/06/94, 26 May 1994).

The former armed opposition group FMLN became a political party under the terms of the 1992 Peace Accords which ended 12 years of bitter armed conflict. The Accords included numerous human rights commitments and reforms; many of the most important, including an enquiry into "death squads" and key judicial reforms, have yet to be fully implemented.

Since the electoral campaign began in late 1993, many FMLN activists have been targets of apparently political killings, death threats and attacks. Most cases have not been properly investigated, but the pattern of incidents suggests they are the work of forces linked to the government or ruling party. A governmental commission known as the *Grupo Conjunto* (Joint Group) will report in May 1994 on apparently political killings by "illegal armed groups" since 1992.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the raid of the premises of the *Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres (MSM)* on 19 May 1994 and the killing on 20 May of the National Civilian Police guard Alexander Rodas Abarca;
- pointing out that these incidents have occurred in the context of a series of killings, threats and attacks against members and supporters of the FMLN;
- requesting that the investigation be carried out thoroughly and independently and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for measures to guarantee the safety of the members of the MSM;
- asking what steps the government intends to take to comply with human rights commitments made in the Peace Accords which are still outstanding.

APPEALS TO:

1. President of the Republic

S.E. Alfredo Cristiani Burkard
 Presidente de la República de El Salvador
 Casa Presidencial
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: Presidente Cristiani, San Salvador. El Salvador

Faxes + 503 810018/ 710950

Telexes: 30344 RS SAL

Salutation: Su Excelencia/ Your Excellency

(AFTER 1 JUNE please address your appeals to S.E. Armando Calderón Sol)

2. Minister for Foreign Affairs

Dr. Miguel Angel Salaverria
 Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
 Boulevard Manuel Enrique Araujo Km.6
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Telexes: 20179 RREE SAL

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, San Salvador, El Salvador

Faxes: + 503 98-0334 / 98-0314

Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

PLEASE NOTE: After 1 June a new Minister of Foreign Affairs will be appointed (updated information will be issued).

3. National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights

Dr. Carlos Molina Fonseca
 Procurador para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
 Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
 9ª Avda. Norte y 5ª Calle Pte.
 Edificio AMSA, N° 535
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: Procurador DDHH, San Salvador, El Salvador

Faxes: + 503 71 2886

Salutation: Señor Procurador / Dear Dr Molina

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Movimiento Salvadoreño de Mujeres (MSM)
 Colonia Universitaria Norte,
 Calle Universitaria No. 9 -Mejicanos

San Salvador, El Salvador

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 July 1994.