

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 29/11/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 243/94

Apparent Political killing / Fear for Safety 22 June 1994

EL SALVADOR Luis Antonio MÉNDEZ, member of the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)*, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front

Monsignor Arturo RIVERA Y DAMAS, Archbishop of San Salvador

Monsignor Gregorio ROSA CHÁVEZ, Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador

The killing of yet another FMLN member and death threats against the Archbishop and auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador have heightened Amnesty International's fears for the safety of opposition party members and members of the Catholic church who have been outspoken in their condemnation of human rights violations in El Salvador.

On 12 June 1994 Luis Antonio Méndez, coordinator of the *FMLN* in the municipality of Zacacoyo, department of La Libertad, was killed. He was in the area of Joya Colonia Escalante when he was shot at short range in the head and back by unidentified masked gunmen. Allegedly the gunmen were robbing a nearby shop. However, Amnesty International fears that the killing may be a continuation of an intimidation campaign by elements linked to the military and civilian authorities, aimed at activists and supporters of the *FMLN*, now a legal political party.

On 10 June, both Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas, Archbishop of San Salvador and the Auxiliary Bishop Monsignor Gregorio Rosa Chávez, received telephone death threats by a caller who identified himself as a member of the *Comando Domingo Monterrosa* (named after a military official killed in the 1980s). According to reports, Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas made a reference to the death threats in his homily of 12 June, indicating that "*these acts are proof that the structures of the death squads have not been touched and it would seem that they enjoy greater impunity every day*". Members of the Catholic church have recently been subjected to death threats by the *Comando Domingo Monterrosa* (See UA 220/94, AMR 29/08/94, 8 June 1994).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.

The vast majority of recent political killings, attacks and death threats remain uninvestigated. In March 1993 the Truth Commission, appointed as a result of the 1992 peace accords, concluded that "death squads" linked to state structures were an instrument of terror and called for urgent investigations into these groups as they posed a threat to society. In early December 1993 the government set up a commission known as the *Grupo Conjunto* (Joint Group) to investigate "illegal armed groups". Its findings were to be published in May 1994 but publication has been postponed until the end of July.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Luis Antonio Méndez and the death threats to Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas, and Monsignor Gregorio Rosa Chávez;

- pointing out that the killing of Luis Antonio Méndez has occurred in the context of a series of killings, threats and attacks against members and supporters of the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)*;
- requesting that the investigation be carried out thoroughly and independently into these incidents and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for immediate measures to be taken to guarantee the safety of Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas, and Monsignor Gregorio Rosa Chávez;
- 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. Armando Calderón Sol
 Presidente de la República de El Salvador
 Casa Presidencial
 San Salvador, El Salvador
Telegrams: Presidente Calderón Sol, San Salvador. El Salvador
Faxes + 503 710950
Telexes: 20245 RS SAL
Salutation: Su Excelencia/ Your Excellency

2. Minister for Foreign Affairs

Dr. Oscar Alfredo Santamaria
 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

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:

FMLN Human Rights Office

Secretaría de Derechos Humanos
 FMLN
 1a. Avenida Norte 1013
 Barrio San Miguelito
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador

Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado
 Comisión Arquidiocesana de Justicia y Paz

Apartado Postal 2253
Urbanización Isidro Menéndez
Calle San José y Ave. Las Américas
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 3 August 1994.