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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - EL SALVADOR

PLEASE NOTE: EFAI has a new address from 22 November. Following are their new details: 17, rue du Pont-aux-Choux, 75003 PARIS. Tel: +331 44 59 29 89, Fax: + 331 44 59 29 80, Mac 44 59 29 86, PC 44 59 29 87. Katie Rickards, in the Secretary General's Office at the IS has the full list of individuals' direct numbers, so please contact her if you need it.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Iran - 17 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138/148

Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137

India - 15 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Egypt - 11 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 149

Portugal - 15 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 149

****CORRECTION: Papua New Guinea - 19 November**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138/148

End of 9th paragraph (beginning "Even more disturbing..."), delete "continues to provide military aid to Papua New Guinea" and replace with the phrase, "has since supplied a further helicopter to the Papua New Guinea security forces."

****South Africa - 1 December****

A news service item on AI's recommendations in the period running up to the election, which will be sent to international media by IS press office.

Human Rights Day Speech - 9 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES 1994

Tunisia - 12 January

South Africa - 19 January

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56+57/93

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EI SALVADOR: POLITICAL KILLINGS AND DEATH THREATS ESCALATE IN BUILD UP TO ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by the alarming spate of political killings that have taken place leading up to the electoral campaign beginning on 20 November in El Salvador. These are the latest in a series of unclarified killings, attacks and death threats since the beginning of the year, targeting in particular members of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) - the former armed opposition group which became a political party earlier this year.

The corpse of one of the most recent victims, Manuel de Jesus Acevedo, husband of the FMLN's electoral affairs secretary, was discovered on 8 November in a rubbish dump in the capital San Salvador. He had been shot twice in the head, his hands were bound with barbed wire and his body showed signs of torture.

Like dozens of other murders reported this year, Manuel Acevedo's bore the hallmarks of the so-called "death squads" - clandestine forces inextricably linked to state structures which systematically carried out killings and "disappearances" of suspected FMLN members and others during the war. Opposition figures, including the FMLN's vice-presidential candidate and numerous members of non-governmental organizations, have received death threats, some in the name of shadowy groups like the Secret Anti-communist Army notorious as covert government "death squads" in the past.

Amnesty International is concerned by the protected environment inhabited by the forces involved: in most cases this year no thorough investigations into "death squad"-style killings and threats have been carried out, and the amnesty law passed in March has allowed those who committed similar abuses in the past to remain free.

As the recent violence shows, the El Salvador Government has ignored the commitment it made in the Peace Accords to end impunity for human rights violators and to address the problem of "death squads" as recommended by the United Nations' Truth Commission. Amnesty International welcomes the government's pledge to investigate two of the recent killings, but urges it to clarify all the other cases of apparent political killings, attacks and death threats.

The pattern of recent killings and the coming to light of further evidence linked "death squad" activities to senior government officials merit a special inquiry into the phenomenon of the "death squads". Amnesty International urges prompt measures to be taken to guarantee the security of the population throughout the electoral campaign. Such measures should include swift implementation of the recommendations of the Truth Commission, the UN Observer Mission and the UN Independent Expert, regarding the effective investigation of human rights abuses.

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