
amnesty international

KILLINGS OF WOMEN IN EL SALVADOR

APPEAL CASES



Marian Isabela Rivas Martínez

The body of 17-year-old Marian Isabela Rivas Martínez was found on 4 December 2002 in San Bartolo, municipality of Soyapango, San Salvador department. She had been raped, killed and dismembered.

In January 2003 a group of *mara* (gang) members were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Marian Isabela. However, it appears that the charges against them were brought on the basis of little or no evidence. Charges were dismissed in August 2004 for lack of evidence. No other lines of inquiry into the killing of Marian Isabela seem to have been pursued; all original evidence is thought to have been lost or destroyed and the case has been archived.

Amnesty International, along with local non-governmental human rights organizations is concerned by the influence that the government's campaign against criminal activity by *mara* members may have had on the investigations into the killing of women. In some instances evidence suggests that there was an assumption that the killing was *mara* related.

Background

Brutal killings of women and girls took place between the end of 2002 and the middle of 2004. In that period it is estimated that at least 20 women were killed, decapitated and their bodies mutilated. Some victims showed signs of having been raped prior to death. According to reports, only a few cases have been properly investigated and those responsible brought to justice. Investigations into the remaining cases appear to have been closed following deficiencies during preliminary stages or as a result of a lack of official activity on the case. It is Amnesty International's view that most of these cases have not been thoroughly investigated, and that El Salvador is failing in its duty to exercise due diligence by preventing, investigating, prosecuting and punishing sexual and gender-based violence, whether perpetrated by state officials or non-state actors.

Take action!

Help end impunity for violence against women in El Salvador

Write to the authorities below, preferably in Spanish, urging them to

- ensure that the murder of Marian Isabela Rivas Martínez is properly investigated;
- break the silence that has so far characterized state action on the murder of women;
- inform public opinion about those steps;
- provide support to the victims' relatives.

Publicize this case

Appeals to:

President of the Republic of El Salvador

Presidente de la República de El Salvador
S.E. Elías Antonio Saca
Casa Presidencial
Alameda Dr Manuel Enrique Araujo 5500
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR
Fax: +503 243-9947
Salutation: Exmo. Sr Presidente

Attorney General

Fiscal General
Sr. Belisario Amadeo Artiga
Fiscalía General de la República
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Tel/ Fax : +503 249 85 89
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Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General

Send copies to:

Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (CEMUJER)

Colonia Médica
Boulevard Dr. Héctor Silva Romero 144
Apdo. 3159, Correo Central
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR
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Human Rights Procurator's Office

Procuradora para la Defensa de los
Derechos Humanos
Dra. Beatrice de Carrillo
9ª Avenida Norte y 5ª calle Poniente
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San Salvador, EL SALVADOR
Fax: +503 222 0655

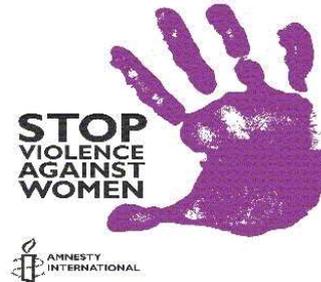
AI Index: AMR 29/005/2005

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Rosa N

Rosa N, was murdered and allegedly raped in December 2002. She was between 17 and 22 years-old at the time. Her decapitated head was found on 9 December in a rucksack in the Libertad Park, in San Salvador. Later on the same day a leg was found in a plastic bag in a bus station which the police said it could belong to the same person. This was confirmed some days later following DNA tests. Her full identity, however, has still not been established.

In January 2003 a group of *mara* (gang) members were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Rosa N. However, it appears that the charges against them were brought on the basis of little or no evidence. The case collapsed in August 2004 when the suspects were acquitted on the grounds that they had been imprisoned at the time of Rosa N's killing and failure by the prosecuting authorities to bring new evidence against them. No other lines of inquiry into the killing of Rosa N were subsequently pursued; all original evidence is thought to have been lost or destroyed and the case has been archived.

In press reports the day after the remains were found a police officer was reported as saying that according to the information the police had at that time, she could be a gang member, and that she had been killed, most likely, by member/s of a rival gang. At that time only her head and one leg, presumably from the same body, had been found.

Amnesty International, along with local non-governmental human rights organizations is concerned that the government's campaign against criminal activity by *mara* members may have had a negative impact on the investigations into the killing of women, including that of Rosa N.

Background

Brutal killings of women and girls took place between the end of 2002 and the middle of 2004. In that period it is estimated that at least 20 women were killed, decapitated and their bodies mutilated. Some victims showed signs of having been raped prior to death. According to reports, only a few cases have been properly investigated and those responsible brought to justice. Investigations into the remaining cases appear to have been closed following deficiencies during preliminary stages or as a result of a lack of official activity on the case. It is Amnesty International's view that most of these cases have not been thoroughly investigated, and that El Salvador is failing in its duty to exercise due diligence by preventing, investigating, prosecuting and punishing sexual and gender-based violence, whether perpetrated by state officials or non-state actors.

Take action!**Help end impunity for violence against women in El Salvador**

Write to the authorities below, preferably in Spanish, urging them to

- ensure that the murder of Rosa N is properly investigated;
- break the silence that has so far characterized state action on the murder of women;
- inform public opinion about those steps;
- provide support to the victims' relatives.

Publicize this case**Appeals to:****President of the Republic of El Salvador**

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