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Further information on EXTRA 31/93 (AMR 29/04/93, 17 March 1993) and follow ups AMR 29/05/93, 19 March 1993, AMR 29/06/93, 22 March 1993 and AMR 29/07/93, 23 March 1993 - Legal Concern

**EL SALVADOR: Amnesty Law for human rights violators  
signed by President**

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Amnesty International has learned that the amnesty law approved by the Salvadorian Legislative Assembly on 20 March 1993 was ratified (signed) by President Cristiani on 22 March, contrary to reports last week that the law was still awaiting ratification.

News that the President had signed the General Amnesty Law for the Consolidation of Peace only emerged on Friday 26 March, when government sources revealed that the law had been signed on Monday 22 March. In a message broadcast in the national media on Monday 22 March, President Cristiani had stated that he would be subjecting the law to detailed study before signing it.

Salvadorian human rights sources interpreted the apparent secrecy surrounding the signing of the law as a reaction to the international criticism which followed the law's approval by the Legislative Assembly. On 24 March the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, expressed concern that the amnesty law went against the recommendations recently presented by the Truth Commission, a UN-appointed body which investigated abuses by government and FMLN forces during the country's armed conflict.

The *Ley de Amnistía General para la Consolidación de la Paz* grants "broad, absolute and unconditional amnesty" to those involved in ordering, committing or covering up human rights abuses, including those named in the Truth Commission's report. Among those who will benefit from the amnesty are the senior military officials who ordered the assassination of six prominent Jesuit priests in November 1989 and the soldiers responsible for the massacre of hundreds of civilians in the village of El Mozote in 1981.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes and faxes in Spanish, English or your own language:**

- expressing outrage at the news that the President signed the *Ley de Amnistía General para la Consolidación de la Paz* on 22 March 1993.

- reiterating that the amnesty law, by preventing human rights violators from being prosecuted, violates the principles set forth in the peace accords, the Salvadorian constitution and international law.

- stating your view that the amnesty law is an offence to the victims of human rights violations and their relatives, denying them the right to see justice

done.

- urging that the amnesty law be repealed, so as to allow full investigations into human rights abuses and the bringing to justice of those responsible, as a crucial step in the process of national reconciliation.

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**APPEALS TO:**

1) President Cristiani

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**Salutation: Sr. Presidente**

2) Minister of the Presidency:

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3) National Communication Secretary:

Lic. Ernesto Altschul

Secretario Nacional de Comunicaciones

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**Telegrams: Secretario Nacional de Comunicaciones, San Salvador, El Salvador**

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Diario El Mundo

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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 19 April 1993.