

**URGENT  
ACTION**

HISTORICAL FILE

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EXTERNAL (for International Secretariat, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF) **Index: AMR 29/42/80**  
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*Amnesty International opposes by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons. Fear of Torture be used or advocated violence Fear of extra-judicial killing*

27 August 1980

EL SALVADOR: Members of Electricity Workers Union

COUNTRY ACTION  
DOSSIER

AI has received reports that on 22 August 1980 almost the entire leadership of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Electricidad de la Central Eléctrica del Río Lempa* (STECCEL - Union of Electricity Workers at the Río Lempa power station) were arrested and detained by military forces. The arrests have been acknowledged by the military authorities who have also stated that these trade unionists will be tried before a military tribunal on unspecified charges.

Following a 24-hour strike by electricity workers throughout El Salvador on 21 August 1980, all public services were placed under military administration with effect from 23 August, and all civilian public employees were declared to be military employees under military legal jurisdiction.

The following are known to be among those arrested:

- Emeterio AREVALO - local leader of STECEL
- René AZAHAR - disputes sub-secretary of STECEL
- José FIGUEROA - local leader of STECEL
- José Arnulfo GRANDE - secretary general of STECEL
- Miguel GUEVARA - local leader of STECEL
- José Alberto HERNAN - local leader of STECEL
- Alfonso HERNANDEZ REPRESA - disputes secretary of STECEL
- Jorge HERNANDEZ - finance secretary of STECEL
- Mauricio HERRERA - publicity secretary of STECEL
- Alfredo MARTINEZ - welfare secretary of STECEL
- Arcadio RAUDA - local leader of STECEL
- Hector Bernabe RECINOS - secretary general of FENASTRAS\*
- Alcides RIVAS - disputes sub-secretary of STECEL
- Jorge RIVERA - local leader of STECEL
- Arturo VALENCIA - organization secretary of STECEL

(\*Federación Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Salvadoreños - National Federation of Salvadorian Workers Unions)

The names of other trade unionists arrested at the same time are not yet known.

There is considerable fear for the safety of these trade unionists. At least 2,000 Salvadorians have been killed or have "disappeared" while in the hands of conventional and auxiliary security forces since early January 1980, when most of the government resigned partly because of human rights violations. Church sources in El Salvador have documented 2,065 cases of people summarily killed for association or presumed association with political opposition groups, peasant leagues or industrial trade unions. Many of the victims have been tortured and savagely mutilated.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/express letters/letters expressing concern at reports of the arrest of members of the Electricity Workers Union; urging that they be granted immediate access to lawyers of their choice and that they be either charged and brought before a civil court, if there is evidence against them, or released. Please also ask for assurances that they are being humanely treated while in detention, and ask that an independent doctor be allowed access to them.

.../...

TRADE UNIONISTS in particular are asked to take part in this Urgent Action.

APPEALS TO:      Ing. José Napoleón Duarte      Julio Alfredo Samayoa  
Junta Revolucionaria de Gobierno      Ministro de Trabajo  
Palacio Nacional      Ministerio de Trabajo  
San Salvador, El Salvador      2 Avenida Norte  
San Salvador, El Salvador

COPIES TO:      Consejo Permanente de las Fuerzas Armadas  
(COPEFA)  
Segunda Brigada d'Artillería  
Cuartel San Carlos  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
  
Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador  
Avenida España 928  
San Salvador, El Salvador

FINAL DATE FOR ACTION: 8 October 1980

- Please take immediate action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the Recommended Action.
- Letters and telegrams should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to the relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
  - Article 3, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person";
  - Article 5, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";
  - Article 9, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile".The name of Amnesty International can be used unless stated otherwise; although, letters written in a private or professional capacity may be more effective
- Information about the alleged connection of any person with an organization which is banned in their country is provided as background only and should not be included in appeals.
- In Urgent Action cases, where Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the possible ill-treatment of prisoners, appeals are issued when the circumstances of a person's arrest or disappearance make such treatment likely. Do not make direct accusations and, unless otherwise instructed, do not use the word "torture".
- Send at least one telegram or express letter immediately. Other letters can be sent afterwards to the addresses listed. Copies of letters should be sent to the relevant diplomatic representatives in your country. Copies of any replies received should be sent immediately to the International Secretariat, or to your national section or Urgent Action coordinator. Thank the official who has replied, requesting that you be kept informed about the case.