

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible extrajudicial execution/Fear for safety

EL SALVADOR

David Faustino Merino Ramírez (killed)

Carlos Cortez Hernández (injured)

Pablo Parada Andino ( " )

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Amnesty International is concerned at the killing of opposition activist David Faustino Merino Ramírez in an attack on 11 November which left two others wounded.

David Faustino Merino Ramírez was on the Central Committee of the **Fuerzas Populares de Liberación (FPL)** and a member organization of the **Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)**, the former armed opposition group which became a political party following the 1992 Peace Accords.

At around 2.30 that afternoon, he was having lunch in a restaurant outside the capital, San Salvador, with Carlos Cortés Hernández, member of the Tecoluca town council, and Pablo Parada Andino, the FPL's coordinator in San Vicente. The three men regularly went for lunch there. Two men sitting at another table near the entrance approached them and immediately opened fire. A third man sitting with them had left moments earlier to prepare their escape in a waiting vehicle, reported to have Guatemalan number plates. David Merino died from six bullet wounds, the others survived with minor gunshot wounds.

Although little is known at this stage about the identity of the attackers and their motive, the killing has the characteristics of the politically-motivated "death squad" operations of the recent past.

David Merino was the FPL-FMLN's coordinator for the land transfer program in the eastern department of Usulután. The transfer of land to ex-combatants was agreed to in the Peace Accords, but has suffered numerous setbacks, allegedly due to government incomppliance. Carlos Cortés Hernández has also been involved in the land transfer process in San Vicente. David Merino had survived a previous attack by unknown individuals who shot at him from a car in mid-1994.

Pablo Parada Andino was seriously injured in an armed attack in October 1992. One of his attackers was found to be a member of the Fifth Infantry Brigade.

The circumstances of this latest attack raise fears for the safety of the injured men and of other opposition figures who may be targeted because of their involvement in implementing the peace accord reforms.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the end of the war, dozens of FMLN members and other opposition figures have been killed or received death threats, particularly around the elections earlier this year which established the FMLN as the main opposition force.

A report published in July 1994 by a UN-appointed commission known as **Grupo Conjunto** concluded that "illegal armed groups with political motivation",

reminiscent of the "death squads" during the armed conflict, had continued to carry out killings since the peace accords. The report refers to a clandestine structure in Usulután carrying out threats and harassment of local opposition figures with the aim of blocking the peace accords and, in particular, the land transfer program.

The new administration which took office in June 1994 pledged to continue with the reforms agreed to in the accords, including the investigation and prevention of human rights violations. However, practically all those responsible for the massive violations committed during and since the armed conflict remain free.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of David Faustino Merino Ramírez and the wounding of Carlos Cortez Hernández and Pablo Parada Andino; calling for a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation which results in the perpetrators being brought to justice;
- requesting that measures be taken to guarantee the safety of Carlos Cortez Hernández and Pablo Parada Andino and other opposition activists, especially those involved in the land transfer program and other peace accord reforms;
- asking what steps have been taken to initiate judicial investigations into the findings of the Grupo Conjunto, and stressing the importance of this to prevent such abuses from recurring.
- urging the government to prioritize the outstanding peace accord reforms which have implications for human rights; particularly the evaluation of the judicial system, the land transfer program and reparation for victims of human rights violations during the conflict.

**APPEALS TO**

1. President of the Republic

S.E. Dr Armando Calderón Sol  
 Presidente de la República, Casa Presidencial

San Salvador, El Salvador

**Telegrams: Presidente Calderón Sol/S. Salvador/El Salvador**  
**Faxes: +5032 71-0950 / Telexes: 30344 RS SAL**

2. President of the Supreme Court of Justice

Dr. José Domingo Méndez  
 Presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia  
 Centro de Gobierno "José Simeon Cañas"  
 San Salvador, El Salvador

**Faxes: +5032 71-4932**  
**Telegrams: Presidente Corte Suprema/S. Salvador/El Salvador**

3. National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights

Dr. Carlos M. Molina Fonseca  
 Procurador para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos  
 Procuraduría para la defensa de los Derechos Humanos

9ª Avda. Norte y 5º Calle Pte. Edificio AMSA N° 535

San Salvador, EL Salvador

**Telegrams: Procurador DDHH, San Salvador, El Salvador**

**Faxes: +5032 71-2886**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

<u>FMLN Human Rights Office</u>	<u>Human Right Commision</u>
Secretaría de DDHH del FMLN	CDHES (ng)
1ª Av. Norte 1013	Urb. La Esperanza
Barrio San Miguelito	Pasaje 1, 117
San Salvador, El Salvador	San Salvador, El Salvador

National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace

COPAZ - Asamblea Legislativa  
6ª Planta, Edificio Centro de Gobierno  
San Salvador, El Salvador

**Faxes: +5032 71-3588**

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 28 December 1994