

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 385/93 (AMR 29/18/93, 1 November 1993) - Apparent political killings / fear for safety

EL SALVADOR:Eleno* Hernán CASTRO, opposition politician

* NOTE CORRECT SPELLING

Recent statements made by President Alfredo Cristiani and other government officials have indicated that the case of Eleno Hernán Castro, a leader of the opposition *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN), Farabundo Martí Liberation Front, killed on 30 October 1993, has been resolved.

President Cristiani claimed that investigations had concluded and had revealed that it was not a politically motivated killing.

However ONUSAL, the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador has confirmed to Amnesty International that the judicial investigation is still open and that no conclusion can yet be drawn about the motive for the killing; the only valid witnesses to the crime were minors and no suspect has so far been detained.

In several recent cases of killings of opposition activists, the government has suggested the crimes were not politically motivated and did not involve government forces. However, few cases have been exhaustively investigated and the pattern and circumstances of the killings indicate the possibility of government forces operating clandestinely. Some of the killings bear the characteristics of government "death squads" which have been so notorious in the past.

There has been national and international pressure on the government to create a commission of inquiry into the so-called "death squads", as recommended by the Truth Commission, appointed last year by the United Nations to investigate past human rights abuses in El Salvador. Official documents recently released in the United States implicating senior Salvadorean government officials in past "death squad" activity make the need for an inquiry all the more urgent. The government has announced that such a commission will be created, with the assistance of ONUSAL and the governmental *Procurador Nacional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos* (National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights).

However, its creation has reportedly been delayed due to disagreement as to its composition.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that government statements imply that the Eleno Hernán Castro case is resolved and that it has been established that the motive was not political;
- saying that ONUSAL has confirmed that the case is still open, that a motive for the killing cannot be determined and that no suspect has been arrested;
- calling for rigorous investigation into this case so that the truth is clarified and those responsible are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to proceed immediately with the commission of inquiry into the "death squads", which should clarify all "death squad"-style killings since the end of the war, bring to justice those responsible and dismantle "death squad" structures; the commission should also undertake exhaustive examination of all evidence which has come to light both during and since the

end of the war regarding the operation of "death squads" and their links to state structures;

- stating that the eradication of "death squads" is necessary to ensure the security of the Peace Accords and forthcoming elections and to guarantee human rights in the future.

APPEALS TO:

President

Lic. Alfredo Cristiani
 Presidente de la República de El Salvador
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: President Cristiani, San Salvador, El Salvador

Faxes: + 503 81 0018

Telexes: 20245 RS SAL or 20522 PRES SAL

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Dr. José Manuel Pacas Castro
 Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
 Boulevard Manuel Enrique Araujo Km. 6
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, San Salvador, El Salvador

Faxes: + 503 98 0334/98 0314

Telexes: 20179 RREE SAL

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights

Dr. Carlos Molina Fonseca
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 Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos
 9^a Avda. Norte y 5^a Calle Pte.
 Edificio AMSA, N° 535
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Faxes: + 503 71 2886

Farabundo Martí Liberation Front

Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)
 Secretaría de Derechos Humanos
 calle Gabriela Mistral #209
 San Salvador, El Salvador

Diario Latino

6^a Avda. Norte 325
 San Salvador, El Salvador

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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 13 January 1994.