

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

24 August 1984

EL SALVADOR:

Guillermo RAMOS, student leader
Luz de María ESCALANTE, aged 60, trade unión leader]

Amnesty International is concerned at reports of the abduction of the two people above in separate incidents.

On 9 August 1984 Guillermo Ramos, a leader of the *Asociación General de Estudiantes Universitarios Salvadoreños* (AGEUS, General Association of Salvadorian University Students), was seized by six men in civilian clothes in the centre of San Salvador. According to a press release issued by AGEUS, there was a struggle and Guillermo Ramos shouted "Help, help me, these men from the squads are going to kill me." Local press reports say that three members of the National Police, who witnessed the incident, ignored pleas from passers-by to intervene. The AGEUS communiqué blames the National Police for the detention.

On 12 August 1984 Luz de María Escalante, Secretary General of the *Sindicato de la Industria Textil*, Textile Industry Trade Union, was reportedly detained in San Salvador by uniformed members of the National Guard. There has been no further news of her whereabouts and, as far as Amnesty International is aware, her arrest has not been acknowledged.

Amnesty International has been closely following the human rights situation in El Salvador for a number of years and has concluded that the security forces have been regularly involved in a systematic and widespread program of torture, "disappearances" and individual and mass killings of men, women and children. Testimonies received by Amnesty International indicate all branches of the Salvadorian security forces have been implicated in human rights violations on a large scale. Victims are detained by uniformed or plain clothes members of the security forces and held incommunicado in police stations, army barracks or secret detention centres. It is during the period of incommunicado detention that prisoners are frequently subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Such incidents have in the past been attributed to so-called "death squads". However, available information strongly suggests that such squads are made up of members of the Salvadorian security and military forces acting under direct orders of higher-placed officers.

In his inaugural speech as President on 1 June 1984, Jos0233 Napoléon Duarte stated that he intended to "fight openly and tirelessly to control abuse of authority and the violence of the extreme, the death squads, and all the problems of injustice and power they represent." Since then, limited steps have been taken to restructure the security services: certain officers have been transferred to diplomatic posts abroad or have been withdrawn from active service, the intelligence units of the Treasury Police has reportedly been disbanded and the three security services have been placed under the control of the Vice- Minister of Defence. President Duarte has not, however, taken any steps to fulfil the pledge he made in a June meeting with the relatives of police prisoners, the "disappeared" and people subjected to extrajudicial executions to investigate these past abuses and bring their perpetrators to justice. Since he assumed office, Amnesty International has continued to receive further reports of such human rights abuses.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Telegrams/ express letters / airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported abduction of Guillermo Ramos and Luz de María Escalante and requesting clarification of their legal situation and present whereabouts;
- urging that, if detained, they be immediately brought before a competent court of law or released;
- seeking assurances that their physical safety will be guaranteed while in detention.

APPEALS TO:

Exmo. Sr, José Napoléon Duarte
Presidente de la República de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador

(President)

*Telegrams to: Presidente Duarte,
San Salvador, El Salvador*

Coronel Reynaldo López Nuila
Vice-Ministro de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública
Ministerio de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública
Doble Vía a Santa Tecla
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Deputy Minister of Defence in charge of Treasury Police, National Guard and National Police)

*Telegrams to: Vice-Ministro Defensa Lopez Nuila,
San Salvador, El Salvador*

Sr. Jorge Eduardo Tenorio
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Carretera a Santa Tecla
San Salvador, El Salvador
(Minister of Foreign Relations)

*Telegrams to: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores Tenorio,
San Salvador, El Salvador*

COPIES TO:

Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado
Comisión Diocesana de Justicia y Paz
Apartado Postal 2253
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Legal Aid Office of the Archbishopric)

Lic. Miguel Angel Parada
Rector
Universidad de El Salvador (UES)
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Rector of University of El Salvador)

Diario El Mundo
2A Av. Norte No. 211

San Salvador, El Salvador

(newspaper)

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

Please organise some appeals from STUDENTS/TRADE UNIONISTS.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat if sending appeals after 5 October 1984.