

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 244/92 Possible Extrajudicial Execution

30 July 1992

HONDURAS: Juan Humberto SÁNCHEZ, aged 26

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the possible extrajudicial execution of Juan Humberto Sánchez, who was found dead on 24 July 1992, 13 days after his abduction by individuals believed to be members of the Honduran armed forces.

In the evening of 9 July 1992, Juan Humberto Sanchez was detained in front of his family at his home in Santo Domingo, Colomoncagua, Intibucá Province by about five members of the Batallón Décimo de Infantería, Tenth Infantry Battalion stationed at Colomoncagua. He was held for two nights on suspicion of illegal possession of weapons.

In the morning of 11 July 1992 he was released without charge from the Battalion barracks. He told his family that on his release members of the Battalion had warned him to be careful because they would come to his home at any time.

At around 10pm that same evening, five armed unidentified individuals arrived at his home, forcing his parents to lie face down, apparently to avoid identification. Nevertheless his mother noted that the men were dressed in green and wore camouflage headgear, of the type worn by the Fuerzas Territoriales, Territorial Forces which patrol the border with El Salvador.

Juan Humberto Sánchez was taken away, and was not seen again alive by his family.

After receiving no indication of his whereabouts, the family presented a writ of habeas corpus to the Tenth Battalion which denied all knowledge and responsibility for his detention.

His body was found in a ditch near his home on 24 July 1992. His hands and feet were tied at the back and he had been shot in the head. His body appeared to have been severely mutilated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since President Callejas took office in January 1990, Amnesty International has been concerned at several cases of apparently politically motivated killings in circumstances which suggest the involvement of the security forces. Few of these cases have been officially investigated, nor the perpetrators identified or brought to justice. Most of the victims have been suspected government opponents.

In December 1991, Manuel de Jesús Guerra Arita, assistant secretary of the Central Nacional de Trabajadores del Campo (CNTC), National Union of Rural Workers, was killed in unclarified circumstances. Allegations that the

Honduran police intelligence was involved in his killing do not appear to have been investigated by the authorities.

In July 1991 the government decreed a sweeping amnesty law granting immunity from prosecution to military and police personnel allegedly involved in human rights violation carried out in the past. Although the government has recently created new mechanisms aimed at protecting human rights, AI believes that the failure to punish those responsible for human rights violations, may have given the perpetrators the belief that they can continue to commit similar acts with impunity.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters:

- expressing grave concern about the killing of Juan Humberto Sanchez in circumstances suggesting that he was extrajudicially executed;

- calling for an immediate and full investigation into his death and urging that those responsible be brought to justice

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Rafael Leonardo Callejas
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Palacio Presidencial
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Telegrams: Presidente Callejas, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: (504) 37-9656

Telex: 1129 MMRR HO

Salutation: Sr. Presidente

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Dr. Mario Carías Zapata
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Avenida La Paz
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: (504) 31-0097

Telex: 1129 MMRR

Salutation: Sr. Ministro

3) Attorney General:

Lic. Leonardo Matute Murillo
Procurador General de la República
Procuraduría General de la República
Calle Principal 107
Colonia Reforma
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Telegrams: Procurador General de La República, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: (504) 38-3130

Salutation: Sr. Procurador

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Tnte. Cnel. Emmanuel Flores Mejía
Comandante del Décimo Batallón de Infantería
Marcala
La Paz, Honduras

2) Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos
en Honduras (COFADEH)
Apdo. Postal 1243
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

3) Sr. Director
Diario Tiempo
Altos del Centro Comercial Miramontés
Colonia Miramontés
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 September 1992.