

**URGENT
ACTION**

HISTORICAL FILE
**amnesty
international**

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ACTION**

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EXTERNAL (for
general distribution)

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 whether or not they have used or advocated violence.
(Amnesty International Statute, Article 1(c))

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COUNTRY	SECTION
DOSSIER	7

RELEASED

UA 39/80

Fear of torture

21 March 1980

EL SALVADOR: Detained trade unionists and peasants

1. Security forces raided the offices of the Revolutionary Trade Union Federation (*Federación Sindical Revolucionaria*) in Zona Franca, San Salvador, on 19 March and reportedly arrested some 35 trade union leaders, including:

María CORDIANA ROSALES	Mima Elizabeth TORAN	Natividad ROSALES
Esperanza ARGUMEDO	Rosalina NIETO	Manuel de Jesús GOMEZ REYES
Recina GARAY GOMEZ	Gertrudis CHAVEZ	Araceli SANDOVAL
Jorge Alberto GOMEZ MONTAÑO	Carlos Alfredo MARQUEZ	

According to AI information, some 200 people were at the union offices holding a wake for a worker who died on 17 March.

2. Alfredo CARPIO BORGES and 11 other peasants (*campesinos*) were reportedly detained by the army on 17 March in the town of Suchitoto (Department of Cuzcatlán). Six other peasants are believed to have been killed during the incident.

There is concern for the physical safety of all those detained. Since the coup of 15 October 1979 which overthrew President Carlos Humberto Romero, AI has continued to receive allegations of illegal detention and torture by the security forces in El Salvador. Arrests, disappearances and murder of suspected members of the opposition appear to have intensified since the beginning of the year, despite announcements of reform.

Background: "Update on El Salvador", AMR 29/19/79; and AI news release of 17 March, "AI says hundreds killed in El Salvador", NR 17/80, AMR 29/08/80 (over).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/express letters/letters, requesting clarification of the whereabouts and legal situation of the two groups and assurances regarding their physical safety.

IF POSSIBLE, WE HOPE UA COORDINATORS CAN ALLOCATE THE TWO CASES (TRADE UNIONISTS AND PEASANTS) SEPARATELY TO UA PARTICIPANTS FOR SEPARATE RATHER THAN COMBINED APPEALS.

Appeals to:

Sres Miembros de la Junta Revolucionaria -or- Capitán Oswaldo Marínco,
de Gobierno, Presidente, Consejo Permanente de las
Palacio Nacional, San Salvador, Fuerzas Armadas (COPEFA),
El Salvador. Segunda Brigada d'Artillería,
Cuartel San Carlos, San Salvador.

(COPEFA, the Permanent Council of the Armed Forces, was set up by young military who carried out the October 1979 coup, in order to monitor political developments and to see that the Proclamation of 15 October (which announced the release of political prisoners and guaranteed human rights) is carried out.)

In case 2 only, appeals to local army commander:

Sr Jefe de la Comandancia Local,
Calle San Francisco Morazan 18, Suchitoto, Cuzcatlán, El Salvador.

Copy appeals to the Salvadorean diplomatic representative to your country, and to the following television stations:

- Sr Ronaldo Calvo, Director, CANAL 4 SA, Carretera de San Salvador a Sta Tecla, Ap.444, San Salvador, El Salvador.
- Lic. Ricardo Mena López, CANAL 10, Final 13 Avda Sur, Ap.4, Nueva San Salvador, El Salvador.

Text of News Release 17/80 (AMR 29/03/80), 17 March 1980 (for immediate release)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS HUNDREDS KILLED IN EL SALVADOR

Amnesty International today (Monday, 17 March 1980) called on the government of El Salvador to halt a campaign of murder and abduction against peasants, launched following an announcement of agrarian reform. Hundreds of men, women and children are believed to have been killed and many more forced to flee their homes, according to reports from the country.

The international human rights organization also said it had expressed its concern to the United States government about reports of stepped-up American aid to El Salvador's internal security forces, including military advisors, coinciding with the campaign of repression. Under present conditions in El Salvador, an AI spokesman said, the nature of the aid, believed to centre on the military's police and public order operations, could be expected to lead to further violations of human rights.

The government's announcement of agrarian reform, on 9 March, was coupled with a state of siege censoring the news media, AI said. Since then, it has received reports of 80 people, including at least 28 children, killed in Cuscatlan Department alone. In Chalatenango Department, a circle of fire was lit round a village to prevent local people escaping: troops then entered the village, killing some 40 people and abducting many others, according to reports received by Amnesty International.

Troops operating in open coordination with the paramilitary organization *Orden* have shot or abducted peasants, razed villages and destroyed crops in Suchitoto and Morazan Departments, as well as Cuscatlan and Chalatenango, the organization said.

The authorities said troops were ordered to occupy plantations to be expropriated under the agrarian reform. Under these orders, AI said, they attacked villages supporting opposition peasant unions, the Christian Federation of Salvadorean Peasants (FECCAS) and the Union of Rural Workers (UTC). Land seized has been handed over to members of *Orden*, a movement organized by El Salvador's previous government to use clandestine "guerrilla-style" terror against government opponents and now re-named the *Frente Democrático Nacionalista* (Nationalist Democratic Front).

The repression has also included a bomb attack on 13 March against El Salvador's unofficial human rights commission (CDHES) and police confiscation of its documentation; death threats against Roman Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero, an outspoken critic of human rights violations; and a bomb attack on the Church's radio transmitter. The Roman Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace has been forced to dissolve, according to recent reports.

AI also said it wrote to US Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher on 29 February, before the latest events, noting that provision of some 200,000 dollars worth of training and material by the US was followed by the deaths of scores of people in the breaking up of street demonstrations by Salvadorean authorities last November. The letter asked for official information on press reports that a much bigger US contribution, including army training teams and seven million dollars worth of security equipment, was now proposed or under way. The reports said this aid was in response to political unrest in the country.

Please take immediate action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the Recommended Action.

The military-dominated government of El Salvador took power in October 1979, replacing General Carlos Humberto Romero, whose position had been weakened by opposition at home and abroad to repression attributed to his government.

- 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.