



**amnesty  
international**

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT  
1 Easton Street London WC1X 8DJ  
United Kingdom

**URGENT  
ACTION**

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 29/01/90  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 14/90

Fear of "disappearance"

12 January 1990

EL SALVADOR:      Oswaldo Antonio ALFARO ESTÉVEZ  
                         Rubén Ernesto IRAHETA ABREGO  
                         Pedro Edilberto RAMÍREZ ARIAS

Amnesty International has learned of the reported arrest and subsequent "disappearance" of the above-mentioned people.

Oswaldo Antonio Alfaro Estévez, a law student at the Universidad de El Salvador (UES), the University of El Salvador, is a member of the Frente de Estudiantes Universitarios Salvadoreños (FEUS), the Salvadorian student organization. He was detained on 11 November 1989 reportedly by members of the Policía de Hacienda, the Treasury Police, along with Rubén Ernesto Iraheta Abrego and Pedro Edilberto Ramírez Arias, both mechanics, as they were driving near the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), the Central American University, in Antigua Cuscatlán, San Salvador. The three men were taken to an unknown destination.

The vehicle in which the three were driving was seen by witnesses the next day being searched by police and soldiers in an area with heavy military presence near the UCA.

Despite enquiries made by human rights groups, the Treasury Police have denied the detention of Oswaldo Antonio Alfaro Estévez, Rubén Ernesto Iraheta Abrego and Pedro Edilberto Ramírez Arias, and their whereabouts remain unknown.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety, since the circumstances of their arrest and unacknowledged detention are consistent with the pattern of "disappearances" in recent years.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Students, teachers, university staff and church workers have been frequent targets of arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by the security forces. On 16 November 1989, six Jesuit priests and two university staff were killed at the UCA. The government has acknowledged that military personnel were responsible for the killings. Forty-seven members of the elite Atlacatl battalion are reported to have been confined to barracks and are under investigation in connection with the killings.

The killings took place four days after the government declared a state of siege, suspending constitutional guarantees, following the launch of a major offensive by the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN), the Farabundo Martí Liberation Front. Since the state of siege began there has been a marked increase in the number of arrests and reported "disappearances" of university students and staff.

Telephone: 01-833 1771 Fax: 01-956 1157 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used or advocated violence. These are termed prisoners of conscience. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/telegrams/telephone calls/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

expressing concern at the reported unacknowledged detention of Oswaldo Antonio Alfaro Estévez, Rubén Ernesto Iraheta Abrego and Pedro Edilberto Ramírez Arias, and asking for an immediate investigation to establish their whereabouts;

asking that, if detained, they be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or else released;

seeking assurances that their physical safety be guaranteed while in detention and that they be allowed to be visited by their relatives and lawyers.

**APPEALS TO:**

S.E. Alfredo Cristiani      Telegrams: Presidente Cristiani  
Presidente de la República      San Salvador, El Salvador  
de El Salvador      Telephone: (503) 421172; 218280  
Casa Presidencial      Telexes: 20245 RS SAL  
San Salvador, El Salvador      Fax: (503) 265301

Gral. Rafael H. Laríos      Telegrams: Ministro Defensa  
Ministro de Defensa y de      San Salvador, El Salvador  
Seguridad Pública      Telephone: (503) 230233  
Ministerio de Defensa y de      Telexes: 20446 MINDEF; 20624 COPREFA  
Seguridad Pública      Fax: (503) 228514  
Doble Vía a Santa Tecla  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Cnel. Heriberto Hernández      Telegrams: Director Policía de Hacienda  
Director General de la      San Salvador, El Salvador  
Policía de Hacienda      Telephone: (503) 255855; 262656  
Calle Concepción      Telexes: 20458  
San Salvador, El Salvador

**COPIES TO:**

Lic. Benjamín Cestoni  
Comisión de Derechos Humanos  
de El Salvador,  
gubernamental (CDH)  
29a Av. Norte, No. 1102  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Mons. Arturo Rivera y Damas  
Arzobispo  
Arzobispado de San Salvador  
1 Calle Poniente 3412  
Apdo. 01-126  
San Salvador, El Salvador

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 February 1990.

Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action. If possible, send a telegram or express letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.

Telegrams and letters should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to 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 may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity may be more effective.

Copies of appeals should be sent to relevant diplomatic representatives in your country.

In Urgent Action cases, Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when Amnesty International believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new facts.

Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your section's Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the Campaign and Membership Department of the International Secretariat. If appropriate, thank the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case.