

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: AMR 29/19/93**

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**UA 402/93      Apparent political killings / fear for safety 12 November 1993**

**El SALVADOR              Manuel de Jesús Acevedo, aged 29**

**Remberto Antonio López, aged 19**

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the killing of a member of the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN)*, (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front), the former armed opposition group which recently became a political party. His body was found next to that of Remberto Antonio López, whose political affiliation remains unknown.

Manuel de Jesús Acevedo was a former combatant of the FMLN from Soyapango, San Salvador, and husband of Doris Elena Hernández, FMLN Electoral Affairs Secretary. He and Remberto Antonio López were found shot dead in a rubbish dump in Colonia Las Margaritas, Soyapango. On 8 November, people from the neighbourhood found them with their hands tied behind their backs with barbed wire and with clear signs of torture.

The bodies were examined by a Justice of Peace and the Instituto de Medicina Legal, the government's Institute for Legal Medicine. Initial police investigations confirmed that both had been shot twice in the head. Both men had been missing since 6 November and appeared to have been killed that same day.

These killings come days after the murder of four FMLN leaders and members (see UA 385/93, AMR 29/18/93, 1 November and UA 377/93, AMR 29/17/93, 26 October). They further increase Amnesty International's fear for the safety of members of the FMLN and other opposition parties in the run-up to the presidential and legislative elections to be held in March 1994.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

These killings are the latest in a series against members of the FMLN and of its electoral ally, the *Convergencia Democrática (CD)*, since the electoral campaign began. Most cases remain unresolved as thorough investigations have not been carried out. Nevertheless, the pattern of killings seems to implicate government forces or agents linked to them. As the electoral campaign intensifies, so too has the climate of threats and intimidations against opposition figures.

The FMLN became a political party earlier this year under the terms of the 1992 Peace Accords which ended the country's 12-year-old armed conflict. The Accords included commitments and reforms aimed at protecting human rights and putting an end to the massive violation of human rights which characterized the war period. However, many of these reforms have yet to be implemented. Meanwhile, an amnesty law passed earlier this year has meant that those who committed abuses in the past remain free.

Amnesty International believes that the spate of recent killings and threats could be evidence of continued activity by the so-called "death squads". During the war, these clandestine groups or individuals, inextricably linked to state structures, systematically carried out killings and "disappearances" of suspected FMLN members. The Truth Commission, appointed last year by the United Nations to investigate past human rights abuses in El Salvador, highlighted the urgent need for a special enquiry into the activities of the "death squads" because of the threat that these still posed to post-war society. Although there have been substantial reforms to the armed forces, no enquiry into "death squad" structures has been carried out and other recommendations made by the Truth Commission have so far been ignored.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:**

- expressing concern at the killing of Manuel de Jesús Acevedo, Remberto Antonio López, particularly in view of several other recent killings of FMLN leaders and members.
- requesting that an immediate investigation be carried out into these killings and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to do all that is in their power to guarantee the safety of members of opposition parties in the months leading to the March 1994 elections;
- calling on the government to comply with the human rights commitments it made in the Peace Accords, by opening a thorough investigation into alleged "death squad" killings and bringing to justice those responsible, so as to send a clear message that human rights violations will no longer be tolerated.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Minister of the Presidency

Dr. Oscar Alfredo Santamaría  
Ministro de la Presidencia  
Casa Presidencial  
San Salvador, El Salvador

**Telegrams: Ministro Presidencia, San Salvador, El Salvador**

**Faxes: + 503 22 9109**

**Telexes: 30344 RS SAL**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

2) 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:**

1) National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights

Dr. Carlos Molina Fonseca  
Procurador para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos  
Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos  
9ª Avda. Norte y 5ª Calle Pte.

Edificio AMSA, N° 535  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
**Faxes: + 503 71 2886**

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

3) Diario Latino  
6ª Avda. Norte 325  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
**Faxes: + 503 71 0971**

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 24 December 1993.