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## **EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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## “Disappearance”

14 January 1985

**EL SALVADOR:** Salvador ESCALANTE CHAVEZ RELEASED  
Gilberto Vladimir FLORES ALEGRIA RELEASED

Amnesty International is concerned about the two men above, who were recently arrested in separate incidents in San Salvador. No news has since been received concerning their whereabouts.

Salvador Escalante Chavez is Secretary General of the *Federacion Sindical Revolucionaria* (FSR – Revolutionary Trade Union Federation) and quality controller at the Listo coffee plant. He was elected Secretary General at the 19 January 1984 FSR congress. Salvador Escalante was arrested by plainclothes members of the National Police on 10 January 1985 as he was leaving his place of work in San Salvador, and is reportedly held at the National Police headquarters in the city. The incident occurred two days before the FRS was to hold a congress at which a new Secretary General was to be elected. Salvador Escalante was previously arrested at the FSR's 19 January 1984 congress, together with some 13 other trade unionists. By September 1984 all had been released. Reports indicated that some of them were pressurized, by both physical and psychological means, to confess that they were members of the *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación* (FPL – Popular Liberation Forces) (see UA 15/84 AMR 29/06/84 23 January, AMR 29/10/84 23 February, AMR 29/20/84 3 May, AMR 29/28/84 24 September).

Gilberto Vladimir Flores Alegria was seized by armed men in plain clothes in the evening of 9 January 1985 when leaving a weekly meeting in Ciudad Delgado, San Salvador department. He is said to have been forced into a car without number plates in the presence of eye witnesses, including his six-year-old son. Gilberto Flores, aged 39, is an employee of the *Universidad Nacional del Salvador* (National University of El Salvador).

## Background information

Amnesty International has been following the human rights situation in El Salvador closely for a number of years and has concluded that the security forces have been regularly involved in a systematic and widespread program of torture, "disappearance" and individual and mass killings of men, women and children. The victims have included not only people suspected of opposition to the authorities, but thousands who were simply resident in areas where security operations were taking place, whose murder or mutilation seems to have been completely arbitrary. Victims of arbitrary detention, "disappearance" and murder have included priests, trade unionists, church workers, medical personnel, patients abducted from their sickbeds or murdered in hospital by security agents, human rights activists and people working with relief and refugee organizations. Those responsible for such human rights abuses have often been referred to as "death squads". However, Amnesty International has concluded that such squads are made up of members of the Salvadorian security and military forces acting under direct orders of higher-placed officers. Since he assumed office in June 1984, President José Napoleón Duarte has announced on several occasions his intention to ensure that the military and security forces do not continue to exceed their authority as well as to investigate a number of past human rights abuses. However, Amnesty International continues to receive reports of arbitrary detentions, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Telegrams/express letters/airmail letters:

*for Salvador Escalante Chavez:* requesting clarification of his present whereabouts and urging that he be immediately released if he is not to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence. Seek assurance that he is being humanely treated while in detention.

*for Gilberto Flores Alegria:* requesting clarification of his present whereabouts and legal situation. Urge that, if detained, he is humanely treated.

APPEALS TO:

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

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

*Telex: 30344 rs sal*

Sr. Director General de la Policía Nacional  
6a Calle Oriente  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(Director General of National Police)*

*Telegrams to: Director General  
Policia Nacional, San Salvador,  
El Salvador*

COPIES TO:

CDHES  
Dr Benjamin Cestoni  
2a Planta  
Edif. Fiscalía General de la República  
Centro de Gobierno  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(governmental human rights commission)*

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

*Please organize some appeals from TRADE UNIONISTS on behalf of Salvador Escalante and from ACADEMICS for Gilberto Flores.*

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 February 1985.