

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 29/14/91

Distr: UA/SC

UA 450/91

Death threats

18 December 1991

EL SALVADOR

Juan José HUEZO (trade union leader)

Juan José Huevo, Secretary General of the Federación Nacional Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños (FENASTRAS), the National Trade Union Federation of Salvadorian Workers, has been threatened with death by a clandestine group calling itself the Frente Anticomunista Salvadoreño (FAS), the Salvadorian Anti-Communist Front.

The threat arrived in the form of a letter sent to the FENASTRAS offices on 13 December. The text of the letter is reproduced below.

SALVADORIAN ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT

In view of the fact that the terrorist Juan José Huevo, FMLN front group leader and malignant cell infiltrated into FENASTRAS, publicly and shamelessly agitates our glorious Salvadorian people to discredit our Armed Forces, the valiant soldiers and selfless officers who for 10 years have fought to defend the sovereignty of our nation, El Salvador

we declare

that the Salvadorian Anti-Communist Front reserves the right to act without mercy against him and his family from this day on.

The true Salvadorian people retain the right to defend themselves from the bloodthirsty treacherous communists.

1991 Year of Truth

Spanish original:

Frente Anticomunista Salvadoreño. En vista de que el terrorista Juan Jose Huevo, dirigente de fachada del FMLN, enquistado en FENASTRAS, en forma descarada agita públicamente a nuestro glorioso pueblo salvadoreño a deslegitimar a nuestra fuerza armada, a los valientes soldados y sus abnegados oficiales salvadoreños que durante 10 años han luchado por defender la soberanía de nuestro pueblo El Salvador

Le manifestamos: Que el Frente Anticomunista Salvadoreño se reserva el derecho de actuar sin misericordia en contra de su persona y familiares, a partir de este día. Al verdadero pueblo salvadoreño le asiste el derecho a defenderse de los sanguinarios comunistas vendepatria. 1991 Año de la verdad.

Two days before receiving the letter, Juan José Huevo had given a press conference in which he expressed FENASTRAS' support for the formation of the Commission of Truth, a United Nations-appointed commission which is to investigate selected cases of past human rights violations in El Salvador. Juan José Huevo had stated that FENASTRAS would make available to the Commission evidence of security force responsibility for the bomb attack on the FENASTRAS offices in November 1989, in which 10 FENASTRAS members (including former Secretary General Febe Velásquez) were killed. Despite government pledges to bring those responsible for the massacre to justice, judicial investigations

did not proceed beyond the initial stages and the case remains unresolved.

page 2 of UA 450/91

Since receiving the threat, FENASTRAS has requested a meeting with President Cristiani, the Defence Minister and the President of the National Assembly to urge that steps be taken to investigate the origin of the threats and to guarantee the safety of FENASTRAS leaders and others involved in presenting evidence to the Truth Commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The threats against Juan José Huezo are the latest in a series of threats directed at outspoken critics of government violations of civil, political and social rights. Mirtala López of the refugee organization CRIPDES left the country in October after receiving repeated death threats from the Frente Anticomunista Salvadoreño. The threats had begun in September after she had denounced human rights violations by the Salvadorian army in the course of military operations in the north of the country. The FAS has also issued death threats to journalists, trade unionists and to those cooperating with the United Nations human rights monitoring mission, ONUSAL. Though these incidents have been denounced to the Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General), the authorities appear to have done little to identify those responsible.

While both the civilian and military authorities have publicly denied any connection with the FAS, the nature and circumstances of the threats and the fact that they persist with impunity, lend weight to allegations that the perpetrators are closely linked to the armed forces. Moreover, the FAS' condemnation of groups and individuals who criticize the armed forces has found echo in public statements made by sectors of the ruling ARENA party, some of whom are believed to be vehemently opposed to the current negotiations between the government and the armed opposition group FMLN on the issue of the reduction and restructuring of the armed forces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the threats by the FAS against Juan José Huezo following the FENASTRAS press conference on the Commission of Truth.
- urging that steps be taken to investigate the origin of the threats and to prosecute those responsible. Express concern that the recurrence of such threats has been encouraged by the government's failure to carry out effective investigations into similar threats by the clandestine group FAS in recent months.
- requesting that the government take measures to ensure that all those who may have evidence to present to the Commission of Truth are able to do so without threat to their physical safety.

APPEALS TO:

1) S.E. Alfredo Cristiani
Presidente de la República de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: Presidente Cristiani
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telexes: 20245 RS SAL
Faxes: + 503 71 09 50
[Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear President]

2) Gral. René Emilio Ponce
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública
Km. 5 Carretera a Sta Tecla
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telegrams: Ministro Defensa,
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telexes: 20446 MINDEF
Faxes: + 503 22 85 14
[Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister]

page 3 of UA 450/91

3) Lic. Roberto Angulo
Presidente de la Asamblea Legislativa
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telegrams: Presidente Asamblea Legislativa
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telexes: 20532 CEDICE SAL
[Salutation: Sr. Presidente de la Asamblea
/Dear President of the Assembly]

4) Dr. Mendoza Jérez
Fiscal General
Fiscalía General de la República
13a calle Poniente
Centro de Gobierno
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telegrams: Fiscalía General, San Salvador, El Salvador
[Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General/Dear Attorney General]

COPIES TO:

FENASTRAS
10 ave Norte
120 Costado Oriente del Mercado Ex-cuartel
San Salvador, El Salvador
Faxes: +503 25 92 32

Non-governmental Human Rights Commission
Comisión de Derechos
Humanos (no-gubernamental)
Urbanización la Esperanza
Pasaje 1, 117
San Salvador, El Salvador
Faxes: +503 25 92 32

Opposition newspaper
Diario Latino
6a Ave Norte, 325
San Salvador,

El Salvador

Faxes: +503 71 09 71

National radio station

Radio Sonora

Urb. La Esperanza

Diagonal Principal 1322

San Salvador, El Salvador

Faxes: +503 26 87 43

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country

Please ensure this UA is distributed to trade union/target sector coordinators in your section, as well as to trade union organizations and members and others who may be interested in the case.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 January 1992.