

**URGENT
ACTION**

**amnesty
international**

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ACTION**

International Secretariat, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England

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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Fear of extra-judicial killing

16 January 1981

EL SALVADOR: Vida CUADRA
Francisco RAMIREZ Avila
and seven others

AI has received reports that Vida Cuadra, Francisco Ramirez Avila, both journalists on the newspaper *El Independiente*, and seven members of staff from the office of the same newspaper were abducted by the armed forces in the afternoon of 15 January 1981.

The nine people were abducted after the armed forces entered the offices of *El Independiente*, an independent Salvadorian newspaper. There is very serious concern for the safety of these people while in the hands of their abductors.

Some 8,000 Salvadorians are estimated to have died by violence during 1980; many of them are known to have been summarily executed by the security services. People have been killed because of their association, or presumed association, with peasant, labour or religious organizations, or with political parties or other organizations which do not actively support the present government. Although human rights abuses have taken place against a background of open conflict between government forces and several violent guerilla organizations, victims of torture and death at the hands of the security services have not generally been shown to have had any direct involvement in armed guerilla activities. Most of the deaths have occurred after defenceless people have been seized from their homes or places of work.

The government of El Salvador has claimed that "independent", "anti-communist" assassination squads beyond government control are responsible for these abductions and murders. However, evidence collated by AI from hundreds of individual cases proves the responsibility of the regular security services for serious violations of human rights. By continually attributing detentions, torture and killings to groups beyond government control, the government of El Salvador would seem to be seeking a means of evading accountability for the extra-legal measures carried out by its own security services.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: *A limited number of appeals is requested; please organize only a few appeals per UA group.*

Telegrams/express letters expressing concern that Vida Cuadra, Francisco Ramirez Avila and seven other members of staff of the newspaper *El Independiente* have been abducted, requesting the government to take immediate action to guarantee their physical safety, and urging their immediate release unless charged and brought before a court of law.

APPEALS TO:

Ing. José Napoleon Duarte
Presidente
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador
(President)

Colonel José Guillermo García
Ministro de Defensa y de
Seguridad Pública
San Salvador, El Salvador
(Minister of Defence)

.../...

Colonel Rafael Flores Lima
Jefe de Estado Mayor del Ejército
Calle Concepción
Final Pasaje Merazo
San Salvador, El Salvador
(Army chief)

Appeals from JOURNALISTS are requested, if possible.

FINAL DATE FOR ACTION: 27 February 1981

Copies of appeals may be sent to Salvadorian diplomatic representatives in your country.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Please take immediate action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the Recommended Action.<input type="checkbox"/> 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">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".<input type="checkbox"/> The name of Amnesty International can be used unless stated otherwise; although, letters written in a private or professional capacity may be more effective. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> 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.<input type="checkbox"/> 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".<input type="checkbox"/> 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. |
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