

**URGENT
ACTION**

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

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))

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/Extrajudicial killing

28 January 1981

EL SALVADOR: Victor MEDRANO
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Victor Medrano, aged 29, is information and administration secretary of the Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES), the El Salvador Human Rights Commission. He was abducted by armed men in plain clothes from his house in San Salvador on the night of 25 January. His whereabouts are unknown and there are very serious concerns for his safety.

Two other members of the CDHES have been killed last year. One was María Magdalena ENRIQUEZ, press secretary of the El Salvador Human Rights Commission. María Magdalena Enriquez was found dead in a shallow grave about 20 miles from the capital. She was abducted on 3 October while shopping and appears to have been killed the day after the abduction. Witnesses confirmed that 2 of the heavily armed men who detained Sra. Enriquez were uniformed members of the National Police. Representatives of the Junta (that led the government of El Salvador up to December 1980) however denied that police carried out the detention, and stated that the government "was not implicated" in the matter (UA 227/80, AMR 29/49/80 and follow-up AMR 29/51/80). The other member of the CDHES was Ramón VALLADARES PEREZ, administrator of the CDHES. Sr. Valladares was shot dead on 26 October while driving a car in the capital.

The El Salvador Human Rights Commission is an independent human rights monitoring group that both provides assistance to victims of human rights abuse and publicizes their cases. The Commission, composed primarily of lawyers, is one of the few institutions in El Salvador, independent of political opposition groups, that have spoken out strongly in condemnation of the torture, arbitrary detentions and summary executions which have been carried out on a massive scale since January 1980. The Commission's offices have been destroyed by bombings three times this year in the presence of the permanent police guard on the premises.

The CDHES had reportedly been accused by the President of El Salvador of being "anti-patriotic" a few days before the abduction of Victor Medrano. The offices of the CDHES were again surrounded by troops on 18 January and the Commission has seen itself forced to close down.

The human rights situation in El Salvador has deteriorated sharply in recent months. AI is seriously concerned and fears a further increase in summary executions, torture and abduction by government forces as civil conflict continues between guerrillas and the government. Of some 8,000 Salvadorians estimated to have been killed during the past year, many are known to have been the victims of extrajudicial execution by the armed forces. Peasants and young people appear to be particular targets. Sources in the country say that nearly 3,300 peasants were among those killed for political reasons in 1980.

Despite government claims that those killed by its forces are guerrillas and guerrilla sympathizers, victims of torture and death at the hands of the security forces were not generally shown to have any direct involvement in armed guerrilla activity.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/express letters requesting clarification of the whereabouts and legal situation of Sr. Medrano and asking the authorities to do everything possible to ensure his physical safety and to take concrete measures to protect other members of the El Salvador Human Rights Commission and other human rights workers. Urge that he be immediately released, unless formally charged.

If your country has a human rights commission or office, please bring the case of Sr. Medrano to their attention and ask them to appeal on his behalf.

Appeals to: (A limited number of appeals is requested; please organize only a few appeals per UA group)

Ing. José Napoleón Duarte
Presidente
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador

Sr. Carlos López Nuila
Director de la Policía Nacional
6 Calle Oriente
San Salvador, El Salvador

Copies to:

Nunciatura Apostolica
Apartado Postal 559
Colonia Excalón
San Salvador, El Salvador

and to the El Salvador diplomatic representative to your country.

FINAL DATE FOR ACTION: 28 February 1981

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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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