

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats/Harassment

1 July 1991

EL SALVADOR: Members of popular organizations, and others

Amnesty International is concerned at a wave of death threats and other forms of harassment directed against members of popular organizations, political groups and foreign workers over the last two months. The following are among the cases reported to Amnesty International:

- **The Instituto de Investigación, Capacitación, Desarrollo de la Mujer "Norma Virginia Guirola de Herrera"**, IMU, the "Norma de Guirola de Herrera" Institute for Women's Research, Training and Development, reported that their offices were under constant surveillance at the beginning of June by men in plainclothes.

An IMU worker was followed by two vehicles, and at least two threatening telephone calls were received at the office in the name of a group calling itself Condor. In one of the calls, IMU leader Nora García was warned she would be executed if she didn't leave the offices within 25 days. In another telephone call, IMU was accused of having foreigners with them who "disrupt the country and are against ARENA" (the ruling party.)

- At the beginning of June, a group calling itself the **Frente Anticomunista Salvadoreño**, FAS, Salvadorian Anticommunist Front, circulated a pamphlet threatening all Salvadorian businesses which provided services to international organizations working in the country including United Nations bodies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the French medical organization, **Médecins sans Frontières**. The businesses were warned that reprisals would be taken against them if they did not stop collaborating with organizations linked to communism who were trying to take over the country. The Defence Minister reportedly announced that the threats would be investigated in order to guarantee the safety of members of international organizations working in El Salvador. Days earlier, FAS is reported to have issued a similar leaflet threatening members of opposition groups and their families whom they accused of being fronts for the armed opposition movement.

- In June also, **René Flores**, Legislative Assembly deputy for the **Convergencia Democrática**, Democratic Convergence party, and secretary general of the **Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario**, MNR, National Revolutionary Movement, reported receiving an unsigned letter in a Treasury Police envelope warning him that he and his family would be killed, after he had criticised the government on television. Two other MNR leaders reported receiving telephone calls threatening them with death. The caller identified himself as an "Angel of Death". A caller identifying himself as an "Angel of Death" also issued death threats against members of the **Comité de Familiares Pro-Libertad de Presos y Desaparecidos Políticos de El Salvador**, CODEFAM, Committee of Relatives for the Release of Political Detainees and the Disappeared of El Salvador, in May.

Amnesty International has documented a pattern of intimidation against groups and individuals perceived by the authorities as sympathising or having links with the armed opposition in El Salvador. The intimidation is often

carried out in the guise of "death squads" which Amnesty International believes to be linked to, or operating with, the acquiescence of the military. The intimidatory acts serve to maintain a climate of insecurity and fear, particularly as the threats are issued against a background of serious human rights violations such as extrajudicial executions and torture.

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

- expressing concern at recent death threats and other forms of harassment against members of IMU, CODEFAM and other popular organizations as well as against foreign workers and those who have links with them;
- urging that an immediate investigation be carried out and those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that steps be taken to ensure that women's groups and other popular organizations can carry out their work without threat to their physical security.

APPEALS TO:

S.E. Alfredo Cristiani Burkard **Sr. Presidente**
Presidente de la República
de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador
El Salvador

Telegrams: El Presidente, San Salvador, El Salvador

Telexes: 20245 RS SAL
20522
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Dr. René Hernández Valiente
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Av. Masferrer No. 612-b
Colonia Lomas Verde
San Salvador, El Salvador

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Telexes: 20179 RREE SAL
20599 RREE SAL (via Foreign Ministry)

COPIES TO:

FUNSALPRODESE
Apdo Postal 1952
San Salvador, El Salvador
CODEFAM

Señores

(Social development agency)

Urbanización la Esperanza **Señores**
Pasaje No.1, No 116
San Salvador, El Salvador

Convergencia Democrática **Señores**
21a Ave. Norte 1315
Colonia Laico
San Salvador, El Salvador

PLEASE TRY TO INVOLVE WOMEN'S GROUPS/POLITICAL GROUPS IN THIS ACTION.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat
or your section office if sending appeals after 12 August 1991.