



CENTRAL AMERICA SPECIAL ACTION (CASA)

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E L S A L V A D O R

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Further information concerning CASA 37/82 (AMR 29/55/82 of 8 July 1982
and AMR 29/57/82 of 15 July 1982)

Antonio Francisco PEÑATE MELARA

38-year-old Antonio Francisco Peñate Melara (note reversed christian names), professor and head of the Department of Business Administration at the Economics Faculty of the University of San Salvador and owner and manager of a small photography business, was taken from his shop in San Salvador at 3.30 p.m. on 30 June 1982 by armed men in plain clothes, believed to be members of the Guardia Nacional, National Guard. Unofficial reports indicated that he was seen at the National Guard headquarters shortly afterwards. Subsequent reports suggested that he was being held at the headquarters of the Policía de Hacienda, Treasury Police. A relative of his reportedly took some clothes to him there and they were accepted. However, when his lawyer asked for him there, the authorities denied holding him. In August 1982, the Director General of the National Guard, General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, in response to appeals addressed to him by members of Amnesty International, denied that Antonio Francisco Peñate Melara was being held by the National Guard. Relatives of Peñate Melara living in the United States sought the intervention of US politicians in the case, who in turn contacted the US Embassy in San Salvador. In a letter dated 24 August 1982 to the US Embassy, the Minister of Defence General José Guillermo García stated that Antonio Francisco Peñate Melara was not being nor had been held by any branch of the Salvadorian security forces. Unconfirmed reports received by Amnesty International, however, indicate that Peñate Melara has been moved from prison to prison around the country since his arrest and one recent report indicates that he may now be held in the main men's prison of "La Esperanza" in Mariona.

According to Salvadorian law, detainees must be brought before a juez militar de instrucción, examining judge, within fifteen days of their arrest. The judge may then remand the detainee in custody for up to 180 days pending secret investigation. Even if insufficient evidence is found to justify the continued detention of the prisoner, the judge may order the person to be held for a further period of up to 120 days for reasons of security. Antonio Francisco Peñate Melara has so far been held for almost 300 days in unacknowledged detention.

Further recommended action

Please renew appeals on behalf of Antonio Francisco Peñate Melara expressing concern at his continued "disappearance", requesting clarification of his present whereabouts and legal situation, and urging that he be released unless charged and brought before a court. Urge also that his physical integrity be guaranteed while in detention.

Appeals to:

S.E. don Alvaro Magaña (President of the Republic)
Presidente de la República
de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR

*Sr. Ministro de Defensa y (Minister of Defence and
Seguridad Pública Public Security)
Ministerio de Defensa y
Seguridad Pública
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR

Coronel Carlos López Nuila (Director of the National Police -
Director de la Policía Nacional also member of the recently-created
6a Calle Oriente governmental Human Rights Commission)
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR

Copies to:

Oficina de Tutela Legal del (Legal aid office of the
Arzobispado Archbishopric)
Comisión Arquidiocesano de
Justicia y Paz
Apartado 2253
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR

and to Salvadorian diplomatic representatives to your country.

Also ONE APPEAL PER SECTION may be addressed to "La Esperanza" Prison, asking whether Antonio Francisco Peñate Melara is being held there:

Sr. Director (Director of "La Esperanza"
Centro Penitenciario "La Esperanza" men's prison)
Calle A, Cantón Mariona
Mejicanos, San Salvador,
EL SALVADOR.

Please try to involve members of the teaching profession in your actions.

DEADLINE FOR ACTION: No further action should be taken on this case after three months of receipt of this document without first consulting the International Secretariat.

* At the time of writing, there are reports that General José Guillermo García has resigned as Defence Minister.