

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
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United Kingdom

5 April 1988

**EL SALVADOR FURTHER INFORMATION TO AMR 29/31/87 : ALLEGED ATTEMPTED
EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION OF THREE PEASANTS IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF CHALATENANGO**

José Vertilio ALVARADO LOPEZ, José Antonio ORTEGA ORELLANA and José Antonio LOPEZ CRUZ are campesinos (peasants) from different hamlets in the jurisdiction of La Laguna, Chalatenango department and active members of their Catholic parish. They were hospitalized in the Rosales Hospital in San Salvador on 14 June 1987, suffering from severe stab wounds which they allege were inflicted by uniformed soldiers believed to have been from the 4th Infantry Brigade and the Ramón Beloso Battalion who had reportedly arrested them the previous day on suspicion of collaborating with the armed opposition. The three peasants later testified to Salvadorian human rights groups that after having been stabbed, they were left for dead. They were taken to hospital by religious workers in the area and later discharged from hospital. A fourth man, who was also reportedly stabbed and left for dead on 14 June after having been interrogated by the same soldiers, is said to have subsequently fled to safety in neighbouring Honduras.

In testimony given in the Rosales Hospital to the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado (Legal Aid Office of the Archbishopric), José Antonio López Cruz stated

"... Yo creo que fue ganas de molestar de los soldados. Digo que son soldados porque aparte de que iban equipados, en La Laguna hay un puesto de soldados del cuartel del Paraiso permanentemente y cuando van a ... patrullajes siempre llegan por el caserío y uno sabe identificar cuando son de la Fuerza Armada. Las acusaciones que me hacían eran de que yo andaba con la guerrilla y que tenía fusiles enterrados, cosa que no es cierta y no podía hacerme cargo de lo que no es cierto..."

[Translation: I think the soldiers wanted to harrass me. I say soldiers because apart from the fact that they had all the equipment, there is a permanent post maintained by soldiers from the Paraiso barracks in La Laguna and when they go on ... patrols they always pass through the hamlet and one can identify them when they are from the Armed Forces. The accusations they made against me were that I was with the guerrillas and that I had arms buried. Which is not true and I could not accept the charges of something that isn't true ..."]

In his January 1988 report to the United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights, Mr. José Antonio Pastor Ridruejo, Special Representative on El Salvador to the UN, stated

"... The Special Representative also heard about a communiqué from Amnesty International reporting that three Salvadorian peasants, José Vertilio Alvarado, José Antonio Ortega and José Antonio López Cruz, were admitted to Rosales Hospital in San Salvador on 14 June 1987 for treatment of wounds inflicted, they claimed, by uniformed soldiers at Laguna, Chalatenango Department. A telex dated 25 June 1987 from Christian Legal Aid to the Special Representative says that the peasants in question had been detained and physically attacked (knife and machete wounds). In San Salvador, the Special Representative heard the testimony of José Antonio Ortega and the father of José Vertilio Alvarado, which substantiated the information provided by Amnesty International. The Special Representative has been informed that the Attorney-General of the Republic has received a complaint from the victims and initiated proceedings in the case."

Amnesty International initiated appeals on behalf of the three campesinos on 18 June 1987 (see UA 162/87 AMR 29/28/87, AMR 29/32/87 and AMR 29/31/87 for further details on the cases). In response to these appeals, the attached reply, denying official responsibility, was received from the Ministry of Defense and Public Security.

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MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA
Y DE SEGURIDAD PUBLICA
REPUBLICA DE EL SALVADOR. C. A.

DEPTO. AYUDANTIA GRAL.
SECCION. PERSONAL
R. CTCL. E. RZ.
ARCHIVO. _____

San Salvador, 21 de Julio de 19 87.-
ASUNTO:

MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA
OFICIALIA MAYOR

22 JUL 1987
Salida No. 6357

Con instrucciones del señor Ministro de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública, en relación a su radiocomunicación fechada 17 de junio recién pasado, atentamente comunicole: que habiendo hecho las investigaciones del caso, se comprobó que son delincuentes terroristas del F. D. R. y F. M. L. N. los que cometieron los hechos a que se refiere en su radiocomunicación, según declaraciones dadas por uno de sus excombatientes que se entregó con su arma de equipo a las unidades militares en operación.

Por lo tanto una vez más se comprueba que los delincuentes terroristas a través de los diferentes medios de comunicación divulgan noticias falsas, con el fin de desprestigiar a la Fuerza Armada.

DIOS, UNION Y LIBERTAD.



[Signature]
CMB. TEC. AGROP. CARLOS TADEO CAÑAS LOPEZ,
Jefe Departamento de Ayudantía General.



Translation



San Salvador, 21 July 1987

MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA
Y DE SEGURIDAD PUBLICA

"Following instructions from the Minister of Defense and Public Security regarding your radiocommunication of 17 June, I would like to inform you: that after investigation of the cases, it was verified that the acts referred to in your radiocommunication were carried out by delinquent terrorists of the FDR and FMLN, as per statements given by one of the former combatants who handed himself and his gun over to the operating military units.

This proves therefore once again that the delinquent terrorists spread false information by means of the various communications media, in order to discredit the Armed Forces.

GOD, UNITY AND LIBERTY

Cnel. Inf. y Tec. Agrop. Carlos Tadeo Cañas López
Head of the Department of General Adjutancy

Las instrucciones del señor Ministro de Defensa y Seguridad Pública, en relación a su radiocomunicación de fecha 17 de junio recién pasado, a teniente de coronel: que mediante hechos las investigaciones del F.D.R. y F.L.M., las que constaron los hechos a que se refiere en su radiocomunicación, según declaró elos datos por sus excombatientes que se entregó con su arma de equipo a las unidades militares en paradas.

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Por lo tanto que se ha se comprueba que las delincuentes terroristas a través de los diversos medios de comunicación divulgan noticias falsas, con el fin de desprestigiar a la Fuerza Armada.

DIOS, UNION Y LIBERTAD.



Cnel. Inf. y Tec. Agrop. Carlos Tadeo Cañas López
Jefe Departamento de Adjuntía General

