

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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“Disappearance”

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EL SALVADOR: Carlos Ernesto VASQUEZ ZOMETE, a trade unionist

Carlos Ernesto Vásquez Zomete, aged 28, is a truck driver for the *Administración Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (ANDA)*, the national water company, and secretary general of the *Sindicato Empresa Trabajadores de ANDA (SETA)*, the waterworkers' union.

Carlos Vásquez was reportedly abducted in San Salvador on 27 March 1984. He had left home to go to work at 7.20 a.m. He arrived at work and left at 9.00 a.m. to attend a press conference and is believed to have been abducted by unknown men while on his way to the press conference. Later reports indicate that he is being held by the National Police although it is not clear whether his detention has been acknowledged.

Amnesty International is concerned about Carlos Ernesto Vásquez Zomete and fears that he may be ill-treated or tortured while in the custody of the National Police. Detainees are normally held for between 10 and 15 days in incommunicado detention by the security forces before being released or transferred to an official prison which, in the case of male prisoners, is usually La Nueva Esperanza Prison in Mariona, San Salvador.

SETA is a member of the FENASTRAS, *Federación Nacional Sindicat de Trabajadores de El Salvador*, National Trade Union Federation of Salvadorian Workers, which in turn forms part of the *Central Unica Sindicat (CUS)*, United Trade Union Central.

Amnesty International has received reports that several trade unionists have “disappeared” in the past few weeks following increased trade union activity, including strikes and occupation of places of work. Some trade union leaders have reportedly received death threats from so-called “death squads”. Amnesty International believes that such “death squads” act with the implicit or explicit warrant of the Salvadorian security forces.

Amnesty International has been following the human rights situation in El Salvador closely for a number of years, and has concluded that the security forces have been regularly involved in a systematic and widespread program of torture, “disappearances”, and individual and mass killings of men, women and children. Testimonies received by Amnesty International indicate that all branches of the Salvadorian security forces have been implicated in human rights violations on a large scale. Victims are detained by uniformed or plain clothes members of the security forces and held incommunicado in police stations, army barracks or secret detention centres. It is during the period of incommunicado detention that prisoners are frequently subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and torture.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Telegrams/express letters/airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the detention of Carlos Ernesto Vásquez Zomete and requesting clarification of his whereabouts and legal situation;

- requesting that he be immediately released unless charged and brought before a court with full judicial guarantees;

- seeking assurances that his physical integrity will be guaranteed while in detention.

APPEALS TO:

S.E. Dr Alvaro A. Magaña Borja  
Presidente de la República de El Salvador  
Casa Presidencial  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*Telegrams to; Presidente Magaña Borja  
San Salvador, El Salvador*

Don Manuel Isidoro López Sermeno  
Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior  
Palacio Nacional  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(Minister of the Interior)  
Telegrams to: Ministro Interior López Sermeno,  
San Salvador, El Salvador*

Coronel Carlos Reynaldo López Nuila  
Director General de la Policía Nacional  
6a Calle Oriente  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(Head of National Police)*

*Telegrams to: Director Policía Nacional  
López Nuila, San Salvador, El Salvador*

COPIES TO:

CDHES  
Dr Benjamin Cestoni  
2a Planta  
Edif. Fiscalía General de la República  
Centro de Gobierno  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(governmental human rights commission)*

*Diario El Mundo*  
2A Av. Norte No. 211  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(newspaper)*

CDHES  
Av. las Américas y Calle San José  
Urb. Isidro Menéndez, Edif. ACUS  
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(non-governmental human rights comm.)*

Sr. Presidente  
ANDA  
9 Av. Sur 214  
San Salvador, El Salvador

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

*Please organize some appeals from TRADE UNIONISTS*

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat if sending appeals after 11 May 1984.