

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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#### EL SALVADOR

#### FOLLOW UP: FOUR CASES OF EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION BY THE SALVADORIAN ARMED FORCES

Following the reported arrest and extrajudicial execution of three sand excavators from Soyapango by uniformed soliders in April 1988, (see AMR 25/29/88 of 30 June 1988), Amnesty International has received further reports that other members of the community of Las Cañas, Cantón El Transito, jurisdiction of Soyapango, San Salvador department have been threatened with death by members of the Salvadorian security forces.

The Las Cañas community residents, who earn their living by manually excavating sand from the Las Cañas river bank and selling it, published a complaint in the Salvadorian press, denouncing the local landowner for having expropriated an extension of the river and for using modern machinery to extract the sand for sale, thus depriving the community of their livelihood.

The landowner has reportedly threatened the community and told them to discontinue extracting the sand. He is said to have engaged local security forces to threaten and intimidate the community who continue to extract the sand, as they regard the land to be common to all and not the property of the landowner.

In May 1988, a writ of habeas corpus was submitted to the Supreme Court of Justice, asking for guarantees for the safety of the Las Cañas community, after Carmen Garcia and José Santana Zelaya had been threatened by members of the National Police. The writ of habeas corpus also accused members of the members of the Salvadorian Air Force of threatening members of the community.

Amnesty International does not take sides in land disputes. However the organization is seriously concerned at reports of killings after detention or through assassination of leaders of peasants and members of peasant communities engaged in disputes with landowners either by members of the security forces or with their acquiescence and that these kilings have been carried out with impunity.