



CENTRAL AMERICA SPECIAL ACTION (CASA)

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E L S A L V A D O R

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CASA 17/82 Recent "disappearances" of medical personnel

The following medical workers were detained between 16 December 1981 and 5 February 1982 by members of the Salvadorian security forces. The detention of the people named below has not been acknowledged by the Salvadorian authorities. There are grave fears that they might "disappear" if not acknowledged to be in detention.

1. Oscar Armando ESPINOZA MARTINEZ

Doctor, aged 28, abducted on 5 February 1982 at the Chinameca health unit in the department of La Union.

2. Marina Isabel MELENDEZ

Graduate in clinical laboratory work, aged 34, four months pregnant, arrested on 1 February 1982 from her home in Ciudad Barrios, department of San Miguel, by men in plain clothes believed by eye witnesses to be members of the security forces, and taken away in a red Volkswagen van without number plates.

3. Manuel de PAZ VILLALTA

Doctor, aged 46, married with three children, secretary general of the trade union of workers at the Salvadorian Social Security Institute, who works at the health unit in Zacamil, was arrested by army troops around 9 am on 28 January 1982 in Boulevard Los Heroes in San Salvador.

4. José Alfredo CRUZ RIVAS

Worker for the Salvadorian Social Security Institute at the Atlacel health unit, arrested by army troops at 4:10 pm on 20 January 1982 at a bus stop near his place of work and taken away in a white van.

5. José Alfredo PEREZ CABRERA

Worker at the Salvadorian Social Security Institute arrested by army troops on 27 January 1982 who took him away in a white minibus.

6. René Pompilio VAZQUEZ GIL

Salvadorian doctor, cancer specialist, who works at the health unit in Apopa, was arrested on 19 January 1982 by army troops. His wife and daughter are Costa Rican nationals.

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7. Dr Carlos Armando VARGAS LOPEZ

Surgeon, aged 31, professor of the faculty of medicine in the department of physiology at the National University of El Salvador, was abducted on 16 December 1981 at 4:30 pm outside the 'Pasteur' clinic where he worked. He was abducted by men in plain clothes believed by eye witnesses to be members of the security forces, who had been waiting outside the clinic for an hour in a white Volkswagen and a Toyota van. At the same time two men in plain clothes were standing at the entrance to the clinic with rifles, undisturbed by ordinary police passing by. Dr Vargas attempted to resist arrest and shouted for help. He was gagged, hit on the head with a rifle and thrown in the back of the Volkswagen van. It is believed that Dr Vargas is being held by the Treasury Police (Policía de Hacienda) although this is denied by the Background authorities.

Human rights violations on a massive scale in El Salvador continue to be brought to the attention of Amnesty International. Amnesty International is aware that these violations of human rights have occurred at a time of escalating civil conflict between guerrilla groups and the Salvadorian authorities. However, there is a systematic pattern of human rights violations, including torture, "disappearances" and cold-blooded murder, being carried out by the Salvadorian security forces, and directed against people not involved in guerrilla activities. Testimonies received by Amnesty International implicate all branches of the Salvadorian security forces in gross abuses of human rights.

Both non-combatants and others have been removed from hospital and then killed, apparently merely because they had sought medical attention after having been wounded during the continuing civil conflict. Medical personnel have similarly been abducted and murdered, apparently for having given treatment to the wounded, including non-combatants. First aid workers have also reportedly been abducted as they tried to transport medical supplies to victims of the current hostilities.

Recommended Action Appeals from MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS in particular are requested.

Telephone calls/letters expressing concern about the detention of these seven medical workers, urging that their physical safety be guaranteed, and requesting clarification of their whereabouts and legal situation. PLEASE SEND APPEALS IN A PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY; DO NOT USE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S NAME.

Appeals to:

Note

As the political situation is confused in El Salvador following the presidential elections on 28 March, we suggest that appeals be directed to the Salvadorian diplomatic representatives in your country. Ask the diplomatic representatives to pass on your appeals to the appropriate authorities in El Salvador.

Copies to:

Comité Nacional de Defensa de los Pacientes, Trabajadores y Instituciones de Salud
Decanato Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Nacional de El Salvador,
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Committee for defence of patients, health workers and health centres)