



**amnesty
international**

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
1 Easton Street London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

**URGENT
ACTION**

EXTERNAL (for
general distribution)

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Torture/"Disappearance"

30 May 1984

EL SALVADOR: José Inés MEZQUITA, aged 16, day labourer
Walter Vidal RODRIGUEZ POLANCO, aged 19, labourer
José Noe VASQUEZ, aged 17, mechanic
Edmundo Ulises GRIMALDI HERNANDEZ

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José Inés Mezquita is reported to have been taken from his home in Sonsonate at 6.00 am on 10 May 1984 by civil defence agents from Sonsonate. He was later located in the National Police station in Sonsonate but on 15 May 1984 was transferred to the National Police headquarters in San Salvador where he is reported to be held in incommunicado detention for investigation.

Walter Vidal Rodríguez Polanco, a labourer (*obrero*) from Sonsonate, is reported to have been detained on the morning of 12 May 1984 in Santa Ana by soldiers from the Second Infantry Brigade, Santa Ana, who intercepted the bus on which he was travelling from Santa Ana to Sonsonate. After being held in the National Police stations in Santa Ana and Sonsonate, he is now believed to be held in incommunicado detention at the National Police headquarters in San Salvador.

José Noe Vásquez, who lives in San Salvador, is reported to have been abducted by armed men, believed to be members of the security forces, at 7.15 pm on 14 May 1984 at the end of the number 43 bus route in Cantón El Limón, Soyapango, just outside the capital, San Salvador. His present whereabouts are unknown.

Edmundo Ulises Grimaldi Hernández, who is believed to be from San Salvador, is reported to have been abducted by armed men at 2.30 pm on 23 May 1984 as he was on his way to work. His present whereabouts are not known but it is believed that the security forces may have been responsible for his abduction.

Amnesty International fears that these four young men may be tortured while held in incommunicado detention.

Background information

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 torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

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☎ 01-833 1771 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the *release* of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used or advocated violence. These are termed *prisoners of conscience*. It works for *fair and prompt trials* for all *political prisoners* and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the *death penalty* and *torture* or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of *all prisoners*.

Such incidents have in the past been attributed to so-called "death-squads". However, available information strongly suggests that such squads are made up of members of the Salvadorian security and military forces acting under direct orders of higher-placed officers.

Recent presidential elections in El Salvador resulted in victory for José Napoleón Duarte, who is due to take office on 1 June 1984. Among his election promises were pledges to "stop the death squads, to stop the abuses of authority and to stop the cultural violence that is in force" in El Salvador. Amnesty International considers it to be the responsibility of the present government to resolve past abuses and prevent any future abuses, and has called on the new authorities to take positive steps to do so.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Telegrams/express letters/airmail letters:

- expressing concern about reports of the detention of José Inés Mezquita, Walter Vidal Rodríguez Polanco, José Noe Vásquez and Edmundo Ulises Grimaldi Hernández
- requesting clarification of the whereabouts of José Noe Vásquez and Edmundo Ulises Grimaldi Hernández
- requesting that all four be immediately released unless charged and brought before a court with full judicial guarantees
- urging that they be humanely treated while in detention

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— Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action. If possible, send a telegram or express letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.

— Telegrams and letters should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 3 — "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Article 5 — "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Article 9 — "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

— The name of Amnesty International may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity may be more effective.

— Copies of appeals should be sent to relevant diplomatic representatives in your country.

— In Urgent Action cases, Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when Amnesty International believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new facts.

— Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your section's Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the Campaign and Membership Department of the International Secretariat. If appropriate, thank the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case.

APPEALS TO:

Exmo. Sr. José Napoleón Duarte
Presidente de la República de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador
(President)

Telegrams to: Presidente Duarte,
San Salvador, El Salvador

General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova
Ministro de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública
Doble Via a Santa Tecla
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Minister of Defence and Public Security)

Telegrams to: Ministro Defensa
Vides Casanova, San Salvador, El
Salvador

COPIES TO:

CDHES
Dr Benjamín 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)

and to Salvadorian diplomatic representatives in your country.

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

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 Lopez Nuila, San Salvador,
El Salvador

Comisión de Derechos Humanos de
El Salvador (CDHES)
Av. las Américas y Calle San José
Urb. Isidro Menéndez, Edif. ACUS
San Salvador, El Salvador
(non-governmental human rights
commission)