

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

7 May 1987

EL SALVADOR: Edwin Ernesto VARGAS AGUILAR, aged 20
Luis Humberto LEMUS URRUTIA, aged 24
Julio Ernesto GARCIA LUCERO, aged 18

Amnesty International has received reports of the detention of the above three persons on 1 May 1987 by armed men in civilian clothes. The detention took place in the city of Santa Ana, while the men were on their way to attend the May-day workers march. Their families believe them to be held at the military base of the 2nd Infantry Brigade in Santa Ana, but military officials there deny their detention and their whereabouts remain unknown.

Luis Lemus Urrútia is a student of Social Science at the University Center in Santa Ana, Edwin Vargas is a member of the *Sindicato de la Industria del Café* (SICAFE), Coffee Industry Union and Julio Garcia Lucero, a baker and member of the *Sindicato de Panificadores* (Bakers Union). Both SICAFE and the Bakers Union are affiliated to the *Unidad Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadoreños* (UNTS), National Union of Salvadorian Workers, who were the organizers of the May-day march in Santa Ana.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Recently, both the State of Siege regularly declared since 1980 and Decree Law 50 (Law of Penal Proceedings applicable under the suspension of Constitutional Guarantees), of February 1984 have been allowed to lapse in El Salvador. While they had been in force, detainees could be legally held for up to 15 days in unacknowledged incommunicado detention in security force or military installations. It was during this period that the use of torture to extract extrajudicial statements from detainees, which were later used as evidence against them, was regularly reported. Since the two measures were allowed to lapse in January 1987, Amnesty International has noted that some branches of the security forces appear to have been abiding by constitutional provisions, according to which suspects may be held for 72 hours only, at which point the detention should be acknowledged, and the detainee transferred to a recognized detention centre, or alternatively released. However, Amnesty International has continued to receive reports that those who, like these three people, have been detained by the military in the Salvadorian countryside continue to be held for longer periods in unacknowledged detention, during which they have allegedly been subjected to maltreatment and torture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported detention of Edwin Ernesto Vargas Aguilar, Luis Humberto Lemus Urrútia and Julio Ernesto Garcia Lucero;
- asking that their whereabouts be made known and that if detained, they be humanely treated while in detention;
- asking that if detained, for details of the charges against them and urging that, unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence, they be immediately released.

APPEALS TO:

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

*Telegrams: Presidente Duarte,
San Salvador, El Salvador
Telexes: 20644 rs sal*

Dr. Julio Alfredo Samayoa
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Avenida Masferrer 612-b
Colonial Lomas Verde
San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams to: Ministro Justicia,
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Minister of Justice)

Dr. Miguel Alejandro Gallegos
Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social
Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social
2a Av. Norte 428
San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams to: Ministro Trabajo
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Minister of Labour and Social Security)

COPIES TO:

Dr. Rafael Flores y Flores
Procurador General
Procuraduría de la República
1a Av. Norte y 5a Calle Poniente
San Salvador, El Salvador

Monseñor Arturo Riviera y Damas Arzobispo
Arzobispado de San Salvador
1 Calle Poniente 3412 Apdo. 01-126
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Archbishop)

Senores
COACES (Confederation of Agricultural Produce
Cooperatives)
17 Calle Oriente No. 121
San Miguelito
San Salvador, El Salvador

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 June 1987.