

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**Possible – Extra-Judicial Killings**

**2 November 1989**

**EL SALVADOR:** Febe Elizabeth VELASQUEZ  
Ricardo Humberto CESTONI  
Rosa Hilda SANABRIA de ELIAS  
Julia Tatiana AGUIRRE MENDOZA  
Vicente Salvador MELGAR  
José Daniel LOPEZ MELENDEZ  
Luis Edgardo VASQUEZ MARQUEZ  
Ana Patricia CHACON, aged 13  
and two others, including a nine-year-old child,  
whose names are not known

The ten above-named people were killed and approximately 36 other people injured in a bomb attack on the offices of the *Federación Nacional Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños* (FENASTRAS), the National Federation of Salvadorian Workers, on 31 October 1989.

The bomb, which exploded at 12.30 pm during a meeting of the union leaders, is believed to have been placed in the hallway of the building, situated in the centre of San Salvador. Six prominent trade union leaders were killed immediately and four people, including FENASTRAS leader Febe Elizabeth Velasquez and two children, died later in hospital.

The bombing followed an attack earlier that day on the offices of COMADRES, the Committee of Mothers and Relatives of the Disappeared, in which four people were seriously injured, including two children. Witnesses claim to have seen uniformed men running from the offices shortly before the blast. Members of the National Police and of the First Infantry Brigade are believed by human rights sources in El Salvador to have been responsible for the attack.

The FENASTRAS offices have suffered three previous bomb attacks this year, for which members of the National police and of other branches of the security forces are alleged to have been responsible.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Trade unionists have been particular targets of human rights violations since President Cristiani took office in June. On 18 September, 64 trade unionists were detained following a demonstration protesting against the detention earlier that day of several members of the Executive Board of FENASTRAS. Many of the detainees, including Julia Tatiana Aguirre Mendoza and Jose Daniel Lopez Melendez, reported having been tortured while in custody at the National Police headquarters. Amnesty International knows of at least six trade unionists detained since June who remain "disappeared" and there are frequent reports of police raids and attacks on trade union offices by the armed forces.

The recent escalation in human rights violations directed against members of trade unions and other organizations suspected by the government of links with the armed opposition has coincided with the stepping up of guerrilla activity by the *Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional*, FMLN. Human rights sources in El Salvador believe that the FENASTRAS bombing was carried out in retaliation for a mortar attack on 30 October on the headquarters of the Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff. One civilian was killed and 15 injured in the attack, which has been attributed to the FMLN. The sources cite a statement attributed to the Minister of Defence, General Rafael Humberto Larios, that the labour movement would be made to suffer the consequences of the attack.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Telephone calls/Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the killings and urging that a full and impartial investigation be carried out and that those responsible be brought to justice;

- urging that the physical safety of trade unionists and members of other grassroots organizations (organizaciones populares) be guaranteed.

**APPEALS TO:**

Exmo. Sr. Alfredo Cristiani  
Presidente de la República de El Salvador  
Casa Presidencial  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: Presidente Cristiani  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
Telephone: (503) 241172; 218280  
Telexes: 20245 TS SAL; 20522  
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Gral. Rafael H. Larios  
Ministro de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública  
Ministerio de Defensa y de Seguridad Pública  
Doble Vía a Santa Tecla  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa,  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
Telephone: (503) 230233  
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Cnel. René Emilio Ponce  
Jefe del Estado Mayor Conjunto de la Fuerza  
Armada  
Calle Concepción  
Final Pasaje Merazo  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
(*Army Chief of Staff*)

Telegrams: Jefe Fuerza Armada,  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
Telephone: (503) 237116; 241559  
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Fax: (503) 228514

**COPIES TO:**

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Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador  
gubernamental (CDH)  
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Comisión de derechos Humanos de El Salvador,  
no-gubernamental (CDHES)  
Urbanización La Esperanza  
Pasaje 1, No. 117  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia  
Centro de Gobierno "José Simeón Cabañas"  
San Salvador, El Salvador

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 December 1989.