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EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

12 July 1985

EL SALVADOR: Pedro Armando OPORTO MARTINEZ, member of the *Federación Sindical Revolucionaria (FSR), Revolutionary Trade Union Federation, worker at the Fábrica de León*
Modesto RODRIGUEZ ESCOBAR, aged 24, Secretary General of the *Sindicato de la Industria Avícola*, Poultry Industry trade union

Amnesty International is concerned about the two trade unionists above, who are reportedly being held in unacknowledged detention following their arrests in separate incidents.

Pedro Armando Oporto Martínez is reported to have been detained on the morning of 15 June 1985 as he was going to the centre of San Salvador. Although the authorities have denied his detention, he is said to have been seen in the headquarters of the National Police, where is reported to have been tortured. The reasons for his arrest are not known.

The FSR has often been the target of repression in the past. In January 1985 the Secretary General of the FSR, Salvador Escalante Chavez, one of those arrested in January 1984, was re-arrested two days before the annual congress was due to be held. He was released 10 days later. Those arrested in January 1984 were reportedly subjected to torture while in detention.

Modesto Rodríguez Escobar is reported to have been arrested by armed civilians in San Salvador on 4 July 1985 as he was on his way home from work. Although the authorities have not yet acknowledged his detention, he is believed to be held at the headquarters of the Treasury Police.

Under Decree Law 50 of February 1984, suspects may be held for up to 15 days in incommunicado detention before being brought before a military examining magistrate. It is during this period that torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment are frequently inflicted. In the case of Pedro Oporto, the period for holding him in incommunicado detention has clearly been exceeded.

Background information

Since President José Napoleón Duarte assumed office in June 1984, Amnesty International has continued to receive reports of human rights abuses, including arbitrary detentions, "disappearances", individual death squad-style killings and the extrajudicial execution of non-combatant civilians. Such violations, however, appear to be taking place on a more selective basis against people suspected of being in opposition to the present government or being sympathetic to those that are. In response to expressions of international concern regarding human rights violations, a series of administrations have blamed them on the so-called death squads, which Amnesty International has concluded to be made up of members of the Salvadorian security and military forced acting under direct orders of superior officers.

Amnesty International has noted with interest various statements concerning human rights issues which President Duarte has made since taking office, as well as a number of steps which have been taken in this regard. These include the announcement of special enquiries to investigate some of the thousands of abuses reported since 1979, the restructuring of the country's security forces, and plans to implement a number of judicial reforms, including legislation related to the training of forensic experts, judges and prosecutors. However, in all but a very few known instances, the many thousands of human rights abuses which have occurred in recent years have gone uninvestigated and their perpetrators unpunished.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express letters/airmail letters:

- requesting clarification of the whereabouts and reasons for the detention of Pedro Armando Oporto Martínez and Modesto Rodríguez Escobar;
- expressing concern at reports that Pedro Armando Oporto Martínez has been tortured and urging that both men be treated humanely while in detention;
- urging that they be released unless promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- if charged, urging that inter nationally recognized standards of the right to fair trial be adhered to and that they be allowed immediate access to an independent lawyer of their choice.

APPEALS TO:

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

*Telegrams to: Presidente Duarte,
 San Salvador, El Salvador*

Telexes to : 20644 re sal

for Modesto Rodríguez Escobar

Cor. Rinaldo Golcher
 Comandante de la Policía de Hacienda
 Calle Concepción
 San Salvador, El Salvador

(Head of Treasury Police)

*Telegrams to: Cor. Golcher,
 Policía Hacienda, San Salvador, El Salvador*

for Pedro armando Oporto Martínez:

Cor. Adolfo Antonio Revelo
 Director General de la Policía Nacional
 6a Calle Oriente
 San Salvador, El Salvador

(Head of National Police)

*Telegrams to: Cor. Revelo, Policía Nacional, San
 Salvador, El Salvador*

for both men:

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

(Minister of Labour and Social Security)

*Telegrams to: Ministro Trabajo Gallegos, San
 Salvador, El Salvador*

COPIES TO:

CDHES (no-gubernamental)
2a Av. Norte y 17 Calle Oriente No. 1003, Planta
Alta
San Salvador, El Salvador

(non-governmental human rights commission)

Diario El Mundo
2a Av. Norte No. 211
San Salvador, El Salvador

(newspaper)

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador in your country.

Please organize some appeals from TRADE UNIONISTS.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 August 1985.