

**URGENT
ACTION**

**amnesty
international**

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International Secretariat, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England

EXTERNAL (for
general distribution)

*Amnesty International opposes by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons whether or not they have used or advocated violence.
(Amnesty International Statute, Article 1(c))*

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"Disappearance"

26 August 1981

EL SALVADOR: María LOPEZ VIGIL María CONSUELO CACERES
Berta MATA Jacobo MATA
Raúl MANZANO SANDOVAL

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María Lopez Vigil, a Spanish journalist aged 37, was seized by Salvadorian security forces on 25 August 1981 in San Salvador. She had travelled to El Salvador from Spain a few months ago.

María Consuelo Caceres, Berta Mata and Jacobo Mata were seized by air force troops in San Salvador at 11.00 pm on 24 August 1981.

Raúl Manzano Sandoval, a school teacher aged 33, was seized by air force troops in San Salvador at 11.15 pm on 9 August 1981.

The present whereabouts of all five people are unknown and there is grave concern for their safety.

Background information

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 have occurred at a time of escalating civil conflict between guerrilla groups and the Salvadorian authorities and is also aware of reports of human rights violations having been committed by non-governmental forces. 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.

In a letter dated 6 May 1981 Amnesty International called on the United States Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, to take steps to ensure that the USA did not give El Salvador's government military aid which would be used for murder, torture and other abuses. The letter cited case after case of abduction, murder and torture by troops and police of non-violent opponents, human rights workers, priests, teachers, students, journalists, medical workers and others.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Telegrams/express letters expressing concern about the arrests of María Lopez Vigil, María Consuelo Caceres, Berto Mata, Jacobo Mata and Raúl Manzano Sandoval. Urge the authorities to do everything possible to ensure their physical safety. Please also request an explanation of their arrest and urge that they be released immediately unless charged and brought before a court of law.

.../...

APPEALS TO:

Coronel Jaime Abdul Gutierrez
Vicepresidente de la Junta de El Salvador
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador

Dr Fidel Chávez Mena
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Calle Santa Tecla
San Salvador, El Salvador

Please send copies of appeals to Salvadorian diplomatic representatives in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Appeals may continue until 26 September 1981.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Please take immediate action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the Recommended Action.<input type="checkbox"/> Letters and telegrams should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to the relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:<ul style="list-style-type: none">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".<input type="checkbox"/> The name of Amnesty International can be used unless stated otherwise; although, letters written in a private or professional capacity may be more effective. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Information about the alleged connection of any person with an organization which is banned in their country is provided as background only and should not be included in appeals.<input type="checkbox"/> In Urgent Action cases, where Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the possible ill-treatment of prisoners, appeals are issued when the circumstances of a person's arrest or disappearance make such treatment likely. Do not make direct accusations and, unless otherwise instructed, do not use the word "torture".<input type="checkbox"/> Send at least one telegram or express letter immediately. Other letters can be sent afterwards to the addresses listed. Copies of letters should be sent to the relevant diplomatic representatives in your country. Copies of any replies received should be sent immediately to the International Secretariat, or to your national section or Urgent Action coordinator. Thank the official who has replied, requesting that you be kept informed about the case. |
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