

**URGENT
ACTION**

**amnesty
international**

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"Disappearance"

19 August 1982

EL SALVADOR: 23 teachers
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Amnesty International has received reports that 23 teachers were arrested in San Salvador on 14 August 1982 while participating in a work meeting at the *Escuela República Federal de Alemania* (German school), where they are all believed to have worked. The Salvadorian authorities have claimed that the teachers were preparing subversive activities and that they were in contact with guerrilla groups. However, according to reports, they have not been formally charged and their present whereabouts are unknown. The 23 teachers have been named as follows:

Prudencio MELENDES	Sergio ZAMORO
Ana María CASTRO	Jesús DOMINGUEZ
Walter ZULETA	Alicia de ASTORGA
Ana Cristina BARRERA	Sra. de MENCHU
Elba ESPINOZA	Maria Lidia ESCALANTE
Carlos Arturo SANCHEZ	Berta Concepción ORTIZ
Zoila Esperanza RAMOS	America RECINOS DE BURGOS
Ciro GUEVARA	Luis MARROQUIN
Mario GONZALEZ MEDRANO	José Carmen FABIAN
Jesús REYES DUBON	Isaac David VILLAFUERTE
Carlos Hernán QUINTANILLA	Berta Alicia GUTIERREZ
Francisco MOLINA	

Prudencio Melendes, Sergio Zamoro, Ana Maria Castro, Jesus Dominguez and Walter Zuleta are members of ANDES, the Salvadorian teachers' union.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the safety of these 23 people; there are fears that they may be tortured while in detention.

Background information

Teachers and other workers in the field of education have often been a specific target of repression in recent years in El Salvador. The arbitrary arrests, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions which have been carried out against them by the regular police and military forces, or the paramilitary groups to which they are linked, appeared to be an attempt to eradicate the teachers' union ANDES (*Asociación Nacional de Educadores de El Salvador "21 de Junio"*), an active corporate member of the mass organization *Bloque Popular Revolucionario* (BPR - Popular Revolutionary Block). The BPR is a member of the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* (Democratic Revolutionary Front), the broad grouping which since its formation in 1980 has led the opposition to the Salvadorian government. Teachers may have also been targetted for repression since, as educated people, they are potential leaders in small communities and, as such, could constitute a locus of opposition to the established authorities.

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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 without reservation.

Following the elections for a constituent assembly held on 28 March 1982, reports of human rights violations involving the official security forces have continued unabated. The violations are occurring in a context of continued conflict between the government and opposition forces, but reports received by Amnesty International indicate that non-combatants from all sectors of Salvadorian society continue to be the victims of such violations, including arbitrary detention, "disappearance", and extrajudicial executions at the hands of the official military and police services, who act on occasion in conjunction with clandestine paramilitary squads who have their explicit or implicit warrant. As in previous years, in no single instance since the elections have the Salvadorian authorities issued a satisfactory response to enquiries concerning these violations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Telegrams/express letters/airmail letters requesting clarification of the legal situation and whereabouts of these 23 teachers and urging that their physical safety be guaranteed while in detention. Urge that they be released immediately unless charged and brought before a court.

APPEALS TO:

Sr. Roberto D'Aubuisson
Presidente de la Asamblea Constituyente
San Salvador, El Salvador

*Telegrams to: Sr. D'Aubuisson, Presidente
Asamblea Constituyente, San Salvador*

Sr. Manuel Sermeno
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
San Salvador, El Salvador

*Telegrams to: Sr. Sermeno, Ministro
Interior, San Salvador*

COPIES TO:

Ing. Carlos Aquilino Duarte
Ministro de Educación
Ministerio de Educación
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Minister of Education)

Comisión Arquidiocesano de Justicia
y Paz

Arzobispado de San *Salvador*
Urbanización Isidro *Menéndez*
Calle San José
Avenida Las Américas
Apartado Postal 22 53
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(Arquidiocese Justice and Peace
Commission)*

and to Salvadorian diplomatic representatives in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat if sending appeals after 19 September 1982.

Please organize some appeals from teachers and teachers' trade unions.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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." | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The name of Amnesty International may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity are often 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 information.- Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your national section Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the International Secretariat. If appropriate, thank the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case. |
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