

**URGENT
ACTION**

**amnesty
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International Secretariat • 10 Southampton Street • London WC2E 7HF • United Kingdom • Telephone: 01-836 7788 • Telex: 28502

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"Disappearance"

31 August 1982

EL SALVADOR: Galileo MARTINEZ Roberto MENDEZ
 Roberto ANTILLON Guillermo PADILLA
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Amnesty International has received reports that four professors from the National University in San Salvador were abducted on 20 August 1982. Galileo Martínez, Roberto Mendez, Roberto Antillon and Guillermo Padilla were seized by agents of the treasury police (*policía de hacienda*). Their present whereabouts are unknown and there is grave concern for their safety.

All four professors had made statements during the elections for a constituent assembly in March 1982 which were critical of the political regime in El Salvador and of the electoral process.

The National University authorities have publicised the "disappearances" of these four professors in the Salvadorian press.

Background information

Amnesty International has been following the human rights situation in El Salvador closely for a number of years, and has concluded that the security forces have been regularly involved in a systematic and widespread program of torture, "disappearances", and individual and mass killings of men, women and children. The victims have included not only people suspected of opposition to the authorities, but thousands who were simply resident in areas targeted for security operations, whose murder or mutilation seems to have been completely arbitrary. Victims of arbitrary detention, "disappearance" and murder have included priests, trade unionists, church workers, human rights activists, teachers, academics, peasant families, community workers and medical personnel, as well as patients abducted from their sickbeds or murdered in hospital by security agents.

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 victims of such violations, including arbitrary detention, "disappearances" and extra-judicial executions at the hands of the official military and police services, who sometimes act 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 inquiries about these violations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Telegrams/express letters/airmail letters expressing concern about reports of the abduction of Galileo Martínez, Roberto Mendez, Roberto Antillon and Guillermo Padilla, and urging that they be humanely treated while in detention. Request clarification of their whereabouts and legal situation and urge that, unless charged and brought before a court of law, they be immediately released.

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.

APPEALS TO:

Sr. Alvaro Magaña Borja
Presidente de la República
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador

(President)

Telegrams to: Presidente Magaña,
San Salvador, El Salvador

Coronel Francisco Morán
Jefe de la Policía de Hacienda
Calle Concepción
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Head of Treasury Police)

Telegrams to: Coronel Morán, Policía de
Hacienda, Calle Concepción, San Salvador,
El Salvador

COPIES TO:

Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES)
Av. las Americas y Calle San José
Urb. Isidro Menendez, Edif. ACUS
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Salvadorian Human Rights 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 12 October 1982.

– 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.”

– 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.