

**URGENT
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ACTION**

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"Disappearance"

14 September 1982

EL SALVADOR: Dr Juan Lempira ALAS
Dr Juan Atlacatl ALAS
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Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the safety of twin brothers Juan Lempira Alas and Juan Atlacatl Alas, aged 32, who are reported to have been taken from their home in Colonia 10 de septiembre in San Salvador during the night on or about 11 September 1982. Their abduction, carried out by men in olive green uniforms, was witnessed by neighbours. The detention of these two men has not been acknowledged by the authorities and their present whereabouts are unknown.

Juan Lempira Alas and Juan Atlacatl Alas, both doctors, graduated from medical school at the University of San Salvador in 1980. They are both currently working at the Zacatecoluca hospital, Zacatecoluca in the province of La Paz. At the time of their abduction, they had been visiting their home in San Salvador.

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, "disappearance", 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, teachers, academics, peasant families, community workers and medical personnel, as well as patients abducted from their sickbeds or murdered in hospital by security agents.

Medical personnel in El Salvador have been among the specific targets of repression by the official security forces, apparently for having treated the wounded, including non-combatant civilians. First aid workers have also been abducted as they tried to transport medical supplies to victims of the current hostilities in El Salvador.

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. Violations of human rights 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 killings 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

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.

single instance since the elections have the Salvadorian authorities issued a satisfactory response to enquiries concerning these violations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Telegrams/express letters/letters expressing concern about the detention of Dr Juan Lempira Alas and Dr Juan Atlacatl Alas, apparently by the official security forces, urging that their physical safety be guaranteed, and requesting clarification of their whereabouts and legal situation. Urge that they be released unless charged and brought before a court.

Please send appeals in a personal or professional capacity.

Please organize appeals from MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS.

APPEALS TO:

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

*Telegrams to: Presidente Magaña Borja,
San Salvador, El Salvador*

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

(President of Constituent Assembly)

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

General José Guillermo García
Ministro de Defensa y Seguridad Pública
Ministerio de Defensa y Seguridad Pública
Casa Presidencial
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Minister of Defence)

*Telegrams to: Ministro de Defensa
García, San Salvador, El Salvador*

Dr Fernando Berrios Escobar
Ministro de Salud Pública
Ministerio de Salud Pública
San Salvador, El Salvador

(Minister of Health)

*Telegrams to: Ministro de Salud
Berrios Escobar, San Salvador
El Salvador*

COPIES TO:

Comité Nacional de Defensa de los Pacientes,
Trabajadores y Instituciones de Salud
Decanato Facultad de Medicina
Universidad Nacional de El Salvador
San Salvador, El Salvador

*(Committee for defence of patients,
health workers and health centres)*

Sr. Director
Hospital Zacatecoluca
Zacatecoluca
Departamento de La Paz
El Salvador

*(Director of Zacatecoluca
Hospital)*

and to Salvadorian diplomatic representatives in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Check with the International Secretariat if sending appeals after 14 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.