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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Letter dated 23 September 1988 from the Permanent Representative  
of El Salvador to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the official communiqué of the Government of El Salvador, dated 14 September 1988, concerning recent events in El Salvador:

"The Government of El Salvador condemns and regrets the serious street unrest which occurred during the demonstration by the university community and trade union members on 13 September, both in San Salvador and in the western province of Santa Ana, to protest against what they consider a refusal by the Salvadorian Government to reform the university budget. These demonstrations were used by anti-Government groups, especially members or sympathizers of the armed opposition groups (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front - Democratic Revolutionary Front), to incite disorder, acts of violence, aggression and damage to public and private property, in order to force the authorities to meet their obligation of safeguarding public order and to involve the Government directly in the resulting events.

It is important to note that specialized crowd control units accompanied the demonstrators from the university campus to keep them from committing destructive acts against public and private property, as they had done in other marches. Before arriving at the headquarters of the Ministry of Finance, the public security units were attacked by 9 mm and 45 mm pistols, 38 calibre revolvers, Molotov cocktails, nail-studded clubs and hand grenades; one soldier was killed and several police officers suffered gunshot wounds. Military and Government spokesmen warned students, trade union members and foreigners that, in view of the grave events, the full force of the law would be applied, without exception against those who had disturbed the public order, especially any foreigners who had participated in these marches and

disorders, since they were strictly prohibited by the Salvadorian Constitution from participating in internal political activities. More than 200 students were detained, including 11 foreigners, who were identified as follows: Mika Mayumi and Kosuke Shimono, Japanese; Haustin Powell Hagherle and Deamo Grimaldi, from the United States; Kai Christian Helmut Rodolf, Barbara Ursula Wagner, Michael Kramer, Anja Maria Romaus and Steurer Christian R., Germans; Bettina Maria Hecke, Austrian; and Edson Adolfo Najera, Guatamalan.

Most of the nationals detained were released to the Salvadorian Red Cross, Government Commission on Human Rights and other organizations, and nine persons were arraigned and charged with illegal possession of weapons, liability for violent actions and provocation and instigation of violence.

On 14 September the authorities released the detained foreigners to diplomatic representatives of their respective countries.

Nearly simultaneously with the disturbances, groups of members of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front attacked the Fourth Army Brigade, located in El Paraíso, in the province of Chalatenango, and Perquín, in the province of Morazán.

Another more recent event which should be taken into account in considering the human rights situation in El Salvador is the transport stoppage in the past few days by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, especially at a time when El Salvador has been undergoing severe weather conditions caused by hurricane Gilbert; the need for transport to various areas of the country, mainly the most seriously affected parts of the eastern region, is becoming imperative in order to provide humanitarian assistance to the thousands of persons who urgently need clothing, provisions, medicine and food. The Government of El Salvador would like to draw to the attention of public opinion that the actions of the Farabundo Martí Front are contrary to all reason and to the humanitarian assistance actions and efforts of both the Salvadorian authorities and the Red Cross and other service agencies on behalf of the victims; the Government therefore condemns, repudiates and blames these groups for the consequences of the stoppage of public and private transport, especially during a period of national emergency

The attack on the Fourth Brigade, the unrest during the demonstration and the transport stoppage constitute clear violations of human rights and should not be viewed in isolation from the prolonged guerrilla war against the Salvadorian people. The strategic plan of that war is chiefly designed to radicalize the masses in order to achieve a violent takeover of power.

The Government of El Salvador requests the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights and the international agencies, institutions and groups that monitor the human rights situation in El Salvador expressly to condemn and censure these events, which have no ideological and political basis or justification whatsoever. On the contrary, they constitute flagrant violations of human rights, adversely affecting most of the Salvadorian people and hindering efforts to achieve a negotiated political settlement."

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this information to be circulated as an official document of the forty-third session of the General Assembly under item 12 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Roberto MEZA  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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