



ASOCIACION PRO-BUSQUEDA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS DESAPARECIDOS

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San Salvador, 12th March 2006.

“Those who bear the wounds should tell us,
that is to say the victims themselves should tell us
whether or not their wounds have healed”

Father Jon de Cortina, S.J.

Founder of Pro Búsqueda

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We, the families and people that work with the Pro-Búsqueda Association for children who were forcibly disappeared as a result of the Salvadoran armed conflict, send our warmest greetings to you.

We write to you with high hopes, in order to let you know that we are celebrating the first anniversary of the declaration of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' Final Sentence in the case of the Serrano Cruz sisters. This precedent constitutes a landmark in the fight against impunity and for justice in our country. It creates an opportunity for the Salvadoran State to take responsibility for the crime of the forced disappearance of Erlinda and Ernestina Serrano Cruz, which happened in 1982 at the hands of the Salvadoran Army, and for their obstruction of justice in this case.

It is important to note that although the Inter-American Human Rights Court's decision is obligatory, to date, the State has not yet complied with the 9 corrective measures laid down by the Court. This shows a profound lack of respect for the victims.

Our aim of demanding that the State comply with each one of the measures laid down by the Court has implied certain risks for our operations team. We wish to denounce the fact that Pro Búsqueda is currently the object of a campaign of intimidation and sabotage by agents of the Salvadoran State:

- In February, our electrical power was cut off. This incident has been documented in a report by the electrical supply company CAESS

- Vehicles with national number plates and with private number plates have repeatedly parked in front of the Pro-Búsqueda office and have been taking photos of the office and the people who enter and leave the building. We have checked the number plates and they do not correspond to the cars which we have seen. Moreover, some of the number plates have been reported as out of circulation.
- A number of our employees and the directors of our organization have received phone calls at their homes, from unidentified people asking about Pro-Búsqueda's activities and other aspects of our internal workings.
- To date, we have not had internet service in our office for three weeks and our official email address has been blocked as a result of state sabotage. This has been done in collusion with the Spanish company who provide our web service.

In spite of all of this, we want to let you know that during the month of March we will be carrying out a number of actions aimed to encourage compliance with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' Sentence in the case of the Serrano Cruz sisters. Our aim in carrying out these activities is to ensure that the Salvadoran State complies with the Court's measures prior to the expiry date that occurs on the 29th of March. To mark this occasion, we plan to carry out the following activities:

1. 15th of March, 2006: Panel forum: "The state of the Salvadoran government's compliance with the Sentence in the case of the Serrano Cruz sisters".
2. 22nd of March, 2006: A march against impunity to the Legislative Assembly to hand over a letter asking to change the "Day of Missing Children..." to the "Day of Forcibly Disappeared Children".
3. 22nd to 28th of March: Week of hunger strikes against impunity held in Plaza de El Salvador del Mundo in San Salvador, and other simultaneous hunger strikes in the Cathedral of Chalatenango, a historical zone and an area directly affected by the violence resulting from the armed conflict for more than 12 years. Every day we will be developing a different theme (Historical Memory, Disappeared Children, Salvadoran Youth, Women's Human Rights). Churches, civil society organisations, artists and individuals with an interest in human rights will be participating.

We will inform you of the results of these politically important, non-violent actions.

Finally, dear friends, we ask you to send a letter to the President of the Republic of El Salvador, President Elias Antonio Saca, inviting him to comply with the mandates of the sentence handed down by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, but above all demanding that he **ask forgiveness from the Serrano Cruz family**. Please also invite other institutions and individuals to write to President Saca in order to make these demands.. These types of actions carry a positive political weight on behalf of the families (in this case the Serrano Cruz family) and in a symbolic way for the all of the families of the survivors that have fought for access to truth and justice. The

executive summary of Pro-Búsqueda's official report about the state of the fulfillment of the sentence is attached to this letter.

The email address of the Secretary to the President is fmelgar@presidencia.gob.sv. The secretary to the president is Francis de Melgar, however obviously it may be more effective to send a letter by post to:

Mr Elias Anthony Saca
President of the Republic of El Salvador
House of the President
Alameda Dr. Manuel Enrique Araujo 5500
San Salvador, El Salvador
Central América
e-mail: casapres@casapres.gob.sv

The email address for the Justice Commission of the Legislative Assembly is: mnonez@asamblea.gob.sv . The President of the Commission is the deputy Marta Lilian Coto from the FMLN.

Please also send a copy of your letter to Pro Búsqueda at probusqueda@telesal.net or alternatively to miltoaparicio@yahoo.com

At Pro Búsqueda, we want to see the Court's Sentence complied with. However, we would like even more to find Erlinda and Ernestina Serrano Cruz, wherever they are, because we are sure that they are alive. We feel it is important to increase the size of the crack in the wall of impunity that the Sentence has begun to open. With your assistance, we hope to be able to do this.

With heartfelt thanks,

Milto Aparicio
Coordinator of the Incidence Team
PRO BÚSQUEDA