

**URGENT  
ACTION**

**amnesty  
international**

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ACTION**

International Secretariat, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England

COUNTRY	SECTION
DOSSIER	7

*Amnesty International opposes by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or*

EXTERNAL (for general distribution) *degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained persons whether or not they have used or advocated violence* **AI Index: AMR 52/28/81**  
**Distr: UA**  
(Amnesty International Statute, Article 1(c))

For action only by the following national sections: SFO, Canada (Francophone branch), Australia (Perth), Belgium (both branches), Denmark, France, FRG, Sweden, Switzerland, UK.

HISTORICAL FILE

UA 212/81

"Disappearance"

2 September 1981

URUGUAY: Washington DE VARGAS Saccone  
Ignacio FONSECA

Amnesty International has received information from relatives of Washington de Vargas Saccone that he and another political prisoner, Ignacio Fonseca, held at the *Establecimiento Militar de Reclusión No. 1* (La Libertad, San José), have "disappeared". They were not present on visiting day, 1 September, and may have been abducted from the prison over the weekend.

Washington de Vargas Saccone, a lawyer aged 30, was originally arrested on 21 May 1972 and sentenced on 21 June 1976 to six years' imprisonment on charges of criminal association and offences against the Constitution. Although his original sentence was due to expire on 21 May 1978, the Supreme Military Tribunal postponed his release until 21 May 1982. In 1977 fresh accusations were made against him, including alleged involvement in the assassination of two policemen. In April 1978 he was taken to a military court and asked to sign documents of confession. He refused and was later removed from La Libertad, badly beaten with heavy chains and transferred to the Military Hospital in a coma. After a month in intensive care, he was taken away for further torture. He later reappeared in La Libertad at the beginning of June. After repeated and brutal torture, he finally signed a confession and received a sentence of 24 years, plus an additional four years.

As a result of his treatment, he has made repeated suicide attempts. He was the subject of a previous Urgent Action, UA 88/77 of 9 June 1977.

Ignacio Fonseca is 31 years old and a former student leader. He was also arrested in 1972; he was accused of the same crimes as Washington de Vargas Saccone and they were repeatedly interrogated together. He was held at Punta Carretas until 1976/1977 and has so far not received a final sentence.

Amnesty International is aware that prisoners currently serving prison sentences are sometimes tried on new charges. In some cases it is believed that trial proceedings have been based on confessions extracted under torture. In all cases, if accused of a specific crime, the prisoner should have access to legal advice and be treated according to proper legal procedures.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Telegrams/airmail letters requesting clarification of the whereabouts of Washington de Vargas Saccone and Ignacio Fonseca and asking for assurances of their physical integrity and safety.

APPEALS TO:

Sr. Presidente del Supremo Tribunal Militar  
Coronel Dr Federico Silvo Ledesma  
Canelones 2331  
Montevideo, Uruguay

General Julio César Rapela  
Comandante de la División de Ejército II  
18 de Julio 660  
San José, Uruguay

Teniente General Luís Queirolo  
Comandante en Jefe del Ejército  
Soriano 1090  
Montevideo, Uruguay

Please send copies of appeals to the Uruguayan diplomatic representative to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Appeals may be sent until 14 October 1981.

- ☐ Please take immediate action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the Recommended Action.
- ☐ Letters and telegrams should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to the 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 can be used unless stated otherwise; although, letters written in a private or professional capacity may be more effective.

- ☐ Information about the alleged connection of any person with an organization which is banned in their country is provided as background only and should not be included in appeals.
- ☐ In Urgent Action cases, where Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the possible ill-treatment of prisoners, appeals are issued when the circumstances of a person's arrest or disappearance make such treatment likely. Do not make direct accusations and, unless otherwise instructed, do not use the word "torture".
- ☐ Send at least one telegram or express letter immediately. Other letters can be sent afterwards to the addresses listed. Copies of letters should be sent to the relevant diplomatic representatives in your country. Copies of any replies received should be sent immediately to the International Secretariat, or to your national section or Urgent Action coordinator. Thank the official who has replied, requesting that you be kept informed about the case.