

**Sr. Rodolfo Delgado**

Fiscal General de la República (FGR)  
Calle Cortéz Blanco Poniente No. 20,  
Edificio Farmavida, Urb. Madre Selva 3  
Antiguo Cuscatlán  
San Salvador, El Salvador

October 23, 2023

Dear Attorney General:

We are outraged to learn that members of the **Salvadoran military raped a 13 year-old girl** on September 23, in the rural village of Santa María Mizata, Tetotepeque municipality, La Libertad Department. We are deeply distressed that the National Health Forum (FNS) has reported that since the suspension of Constitutional rights when the State of Exception was initiated in March 2022, sexual violence against girls, teens, and adult women committed by state security forces (National Police or Armed Forces) has intensified.

On the night of September 23, a child was in town with her parents to visit friends. On her way back from the beach with three friends, they were detained by six members of the military, led by a Navy sergeant. The sergeant reportedly told his subordinates he was going to check to see if the girl was a virgin and left with her. When one of the friends tried to stop the sergeant, he was beaten by the military subordinates. A truck arrived to pick up the soldiers; the vehicle was later identified as property of the mayor's office of Teotepeque. The three youth, after a few minutes of searching, found the girl crying. She told them she was raped by the sergeant on the side of the El Litoral highway, on the detour to Santa María Mizata. The sergeant had told her that the alternative was being sent to jail.


Local residents called the police, who took 40-60 minutes to arrive, although the Mizata police post is only one kilometer away. In collusion with the military, the police took all four youth to the police post. Eight military personnel arrived in the same truck involved with the youth's detention, including the sergeant who raped the girl and the five others who were with him. The sergeant was held in police custody. The five subordinates were set free but were brought back in the next day. Usually accused criminals' identities are released, but the identities of all six military personnel are being withheld.

Since the State of Exception began in March 2022, state security forces have been exploiting citizens for money or sex by threatening them with imprisonment as alleged gang members. Of 223 victims of police or military encounters surveyed in a joint report from Cristosal, Pasionist Social Service (SSPAS), and the Human Rights Institute of the Central American University (IDHUCA), 18% of respondents reported threats, 17% surveillance, 16.6% arbitrary detention, and 14.8% mistreatment or torture by police officers and soldiers. One notable example is José Edid Cortez Henríquez, Chief of the Naval Forces, who, according to the Prosecutor's Office, sexually assaulted several women, threatening that they or their husbands would otherwise be imprisoned.

Because of the rape of this girl and repeated military and police abuses during the emergency regime, we call upon your integrity to:

- ensure the safety, physical and emotional well-being of the victim, her family, and the community
- thoroughly investigate sexual offenses committed by members of Armed Forces and the National Civilian Police and bring those responsible to justice

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Sr. Presidente Nayib Bukele, Presidente de la República ~ via email and US mail  
Licda. Raquel Cabellero de Guevara., Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos/ Human Rights Ombudsman of El Salvador ~ via email  
Carmen Milena Mayorga de Monterrosa, Ambassador of El Salvador in Washington, DC ~ via email & US mail  
Julissa Mantilla Falcón, Rapporteur for El Salvador, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email & US mail  
William H Duncan, Ambassador of the US in San Salvador ~ via email & US mail  
US State Department: El Salvador Desk ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Vance ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**