

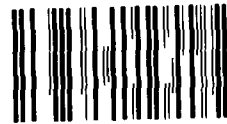
GAO

Briefing Report to the Honorable  
Hamilton Fish, Jr., House of  
Representatives

May 1987

# ILLEGAL ALIENS

## Extent of Problems Experienced by Returned Salvadorans Not Determinable



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National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-226656

May 12, 1987

The Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr.  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Fish:

This report is in response to your request that we investigate certain issues concerning Salvadoran nationals. As agreed with your office, our review covered those Salvadorans who, whether through deportation, voluntary departure proceeding, or otherwise, have been required to return to El Salvador. Specifically, you asked us to comment on (1) whether they have been targeted for violence or persecution upon their return and (2) the reliability and use made of reports by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) on its reception program for returning Salvadorans. When we briefed you in late March 1987, we focused on the three questions summarized below. Additional details are presented in the appendices.

First, to what extent have Salvadoran returnees experienced violence or persecution? The State Department has stated that ICM has not reported a single case of political persecution involving returnees to El Salvador. Our review of ICM's reports showed that, while the reports do not specifically state that individuals have experienced political persecution, they do state that some returnees have reported personal security problems. ICM's records showed that, as of February 1987, 70 returnees have reported personal security problems. ICM, based on personal interviews or correspondence with returnees, classifies reports of threats of violence or persecution as "personal security problems." ICM has decided that such cases warrant its assistance to individuals to apply for emigration to other countries that have humanitarian resettlement programs. Australia, Canada, and Sweden have accepted 5 returnees determined to be in life-threatening situations from either government security or guerrilla forces and were considering the applications of 32 others. We did not attempt to verify the validity of ICM's determinations or whether, in fact, the reported violence or persecution had occurred.

The ICM program covered only about two-thirds of returnees from the United States during the period December 1, 1984 to December 31, 1986. The reliability of information

developed by ICM, human rights organizations, and the U.S. embassy in San Salvador is limited, and therefore the frequency or extent of political violence or persecution experienced by returnees cannot be determined.

Second, what is the extent of violence or persecution experienced by the general population of El Salvador? Evidence obtained from the U.S. embassy and human rights monitoring organizations in San Salvador indicates that human rights abuses in El Salvador are still occurring but with distinctly less intensity and frequency than previously. However, the limitations on data collection that exist for all organizations monitoring human rights violations in San Salvador weaken the validity of information on the extent of such occurrences. U.S. and Salvadoran officials we contacted in San Salvador believe that Salvadorans continue to have a pervasive fear of random violence. They told us that Salvadorans are concerned about the consequences of being viewed as sympathetic to either government security or guerrilla forces. Some officials reported a widespread Salvadoran mistrust of government judicial institutions and processes.

Third, have Salvadoran returnees experienced more violence or persecution than the general population? It cannot be determined whether Salvadoran returnees, as a group, have experienced more violence or persecution than the general population. This is because (1) organizations that gather data on returnees do not have adequate information about returnees' experiences after they return to El Salvador and (2) organizations that gather data on human rights violations do not identify returnees as a separate group. Officials we interviewed said that, while some returnees may have greater personal fear of violence and persecution, than does the general population, the likelihood that they would actually experience such violence or persecution depends more on the reasons individuals left El Salvador in the first place than it does on the status of being a returnee.

ICM provided some clarifying comments on this report and we have incorporated them in the report as appropriate. (See app. III.)

In its comments on the report, the Department of State said that there was no evidence that returnees have suffered political persecution. While we agree that ICM reports do not specifically refer to returnees experiencing political persecution, they do report on returnees having personal

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security problems. ICM's basis for such a determination includes evidence that returnees have reported life-threatening situations and, as a result, other nations have accepted some returnees for humanitarian resettlement.

Although the Department stated it agreed with the observation that returnees encounter the same problems as do similarly situated persons in the general Salvadoran population, it was not our intention to infer that we had reached that conclusion. We believe that due to the data limitations described in this report, a comparison cannot be made of the problems encountered by returnees versus the general population in El Salvador.

The Department stated that civil strife and other violence in El Salvador have created circumstances that cause people to experience personal security problems. Also, the Department noted that, while human rights abuses are not authorized or condoned by the highest level of the Salvadoran government, lower-level government security forces and guerrillas are responsible for some human rights abuses from time to time. The State Department's comments are included in appendix IV.

We analyzed information on Salvadoran returnees and conditions in El Salvador at the Departments of State and Justice (including the Immigration and Naturalization Service) in Washington, D.C., and at the U.S. embassy and ICM in San Salvador. We also met with representatives of U.S. agencies and of key international, Salvadoran government, church, and human rights agencies in San Salvador who assist displaced persons in El Salvador. Our work was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

As agreed with you, we are providing Congressman John Joseph Moakley with a copy of this report. We are also sending copies to appropriate congressional committees; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of State and Justice; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,



Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General

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ABBREVIATIONS

GAO	General Accounting Office
ICM	Intergovernmental Committee for Migration
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service

EXTENT OF PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY  
RETURNED SALVADORANS NOT DETERMINABLE

BACKGROUND

Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr., Ranking Minority Member, Committee on the Judiciary, asked us to determine the situation of Salvadoran nationals who had been required to leave the United States to return to El Salvador. Specifically, we were asked to determine whether Salvadorans forced to leave the United States have been targeted for violence or persecution upon their return to El Salvador. Also, we were asked to evaluate the reliability and use made of reports by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM).

ICM is an independent international organization founded in 1951 initially to facilitate resettlement of refugees and migrants from Europe. Over the years it has expanded its services worldwide and currently has 33 member countries and 15 observer countries. ICM facilitates refugee resettlement, national migration, repatriation, and reintegration of persons in need. Its migration and refugee resettlement programs are developed and conducted in close collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and governments of resettlement and host countries. In light of ICM's experience in working with resettling refugees, the governments of the United States and El Salvador requested that ICM provide a reception and counseling service for Salvadorans required to leave the United States. In December 1984, ICM began to provide these services, which included interview upon arrival, inland transportation, temporary accommodation, and some food expenses. An additional part of the ICM reception program is to reestablish contact with returnees through mail-in questionnaires, follow-up letters, and field surveys. During this process, ICM collects a variety of information, which is volunteered by the returnees, including information about problems they might have experienced. ICM's data has been cited by the State Department as an indication that persecution of returnees is non-existent. Those who believe that Salvadoran returnees experience human rights violations have questioned this use of ICM's data.

Legislation that would provide a temporary stay of detention and deportation to Salvadoran nationals has been considered by past Congresses and is now before the 100th Congress. H.R. 618 and H.R. 1409 would stay the deportation of certain Salvadorans and Nicaraguans until we complete our report on a series of questions concerning displaced nationals of these two countries. The legislation was approved in the 99th Congress by the House of Representatives but not agreed to in the House-Senate conference on

what became the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. This act (Public Law 99-603) grants amnesty under certain conditions to illegal aliens of all nationalities who have resided continuously in the United States since before January 1, 1982.

One of the issues that H.R. 618 and H.R. 1409 are apparently intended to address is the reported difficulty Salvadorans have experienced in meeting the criteria to obtain asylum in the United States. In a January 9, 1987, report (GAO/GGD-87-33BR) we provided information on the decision-making process in granting asylum and on the relatively low percentage of Salvadorans and Nicaraguans who have had asylum applications approved. Aliens had to prove that they meet the Refugee Act of 1980's criterion of having a "well-founded fear of persecution" by submitting objective facts that show that there is a "clear probability or realistic likelihood" (greater than 50 percent chance) of persecution. The Supreme Court, in March 1987, ruled in the INS v. Cardoza-Fonseca case that the "clear probability" standard applied by the administration was not applicable to asylum claims. The Court held that applicants would be eligible for asylum if persecution is a "reasonable possibility" and thus rejected the stricter administration standard.

Our January 1987 report noted that few of the applicants who were denied asylum in 1984 were actually deported--about 1.5 percent of the 21,032 aliens covered in the report. Our current review of Salvadorans forced to leave the United States considers not just deportees but the three categories of illegal aliens forced to return to their homeland. These categories are (1) "deportees," (2) "voluntary departures under safeguards," and (3) "required to depart."

Deportees: illegal aliens who undergo deportation proceedings and leave the United States under final orders of deportation. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) normally makes travel arrangements and provides travel documents to the airline flight attendants who in turn give them to the Salvadoran immigration authorities.

Voluntary Departures Under Safeguards: illegal aliens who have been apprehended by INS, waive their rights to deportation hearings, are held in custody, and agree to depart from the United States as soon as INS can arrange for travel documents and transportation. These individuals are not assigned INS control numbers for follow-up action. Most Salvadoran voluntary departures are those apprehended at the time of illegal entry into the United States. INS provides travel documents to the airline flight attendants who in turn give them to the Salvadoran immigration authorities.



Required To Depart: illegal aliens who are assigned INS control numbers for follow-up action but waive their rights to deportation hearings or, following deportation hearings, agree to depart from the United States within specified time periods rather than leave under final orders of deportation. These individuals make their own travel arrangements and retain their travel documents. They may be required to post bond to ensure their adherence to INS deportation proceedings.

(The remainder of this report refers to all three categories of Salvadorans forced to leave the United States as "returnees.")

#### DISCUSSION OF PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

ICM's program officials contacted about two-thirds of all Salvadoran returnees. In commenting on studies of the treatment and condition of Salvadorans forced to return, the State Department has indicated that ICM meets every Salvadoran who has been sent home by the United States. We determined that ICM has met 9,530 returnees. These returnees represent 92 percent of all "deportees" and "voluntary departures under safeguards" and few, if any, of the "required to depart" Salvadorans. This latter category represents about 25 percent of those who have returned to El Salvador since December 1984. (See app. II, item 1.) Although ICM attempted to meet all returnees passing through Salvadoran immigration with INS-furnished travel documents (i.e., "deportees" and "voluntary departures under safeguards"), ICM's records noted that it had not met some returnees who apparently were able to pass through Salvadoran immigration procedures without being identified.

Returning Salvadorans met by ICM generally had been in the United States for a much shorter period of time than those not met by ICM. The large majority of those met by ICM in 1986 (77 percent) were apprehended within 1 year of arrival in the United States, whereas only 10 percent of those not met by ICM were in this category. (See app. II, item 2.)

The State Department has stated that ICM has not reported a single case of political persecution involving returnees in El Salvador. Our review of ICM's reports shows that, while the reports do not specifically state that individuals have reported political persecution, they do state that some returnees have experienced personal security problems. We found that 271 Salvadorans reported to ICM--through questionnaires, letters, surveys, or interviews--that they were experiencing problems that ICM thought might be related to personal security. (See app. II, item 7.) ICM classifies reports of violence and persecution as personal security problems. As of February 1987, ICM had determined through personal

interview or correspondence with the returnees that 70 of the 271 returnees reported personal security problems. ICM records show that 5 of the 70 returnees were subsequently accepted for resettlement in third countries for humanitarian reasons (i.e., the individuals were determined to be in life-threatening situations from government security or guerrilla forces) and that 32 others were awaiting resettlement decisions by these countries. ICM was not able to interview 54 of the 271 returnees who had indicated in questionnaires that they were experiencing problems. Consequently, nothing is known about their current condition. They did not respond to ICM's cables inviting them to come to ICM to discuss their problems nor were they located in subsequent field surveys. ICM's records also indicate that 9 returnees met by ICM have died. Six of the deaths are attributable to causes that do not appear to be related to personal security problems or civil strife. The circumstances surrounding the remaining 3 deaths indicate that personal security factors involving civil strife might have been involved. (See app. II, items 8 and 9.)

We reviewed ICM's data collection and documentation methodologies to assess whether information reported to ICM and categorized as personal security problems can be used to estimate the incidence of violence or persecution experienced by Salvadoran returnees. We concluded that the data cannot provide a meaningful indicator of the extent of violence or persecution experienced by Salvadoran returnees for several reasons. The usefulness and quality of ICM's information for this purpose is limited due to data collection and documentation weaknesses. For example, our evaluation showed that ICM:

- Uses data collection methods that do not clearly request information about personal security and do not uniformly assure returnees of the confidentiality of their responses.
- Collects information about returnees from family, friends, neighbors, and officials who may not have accurate information about the returnees' experiences (information for about 40 percent of those returnees for whom ICM has follow-up information was obtained from secondary sources, see app. II, item 3).
- Lacks information about the condition of some of the returnees. ICM's records show that ICM had not reestablished contact with 18 percent of returnees who had arrived in El Salvador as of April 30, 1986, and with 29 percent of those who had arrived as of December 31, 1986. The higher non-contact rate as of December 1986 reflects the absence of completed field surveys to locate returnees

who arrived after April 30, 1986. (See app. II, item 4.) ICM's records also show that, in 5 out of 6 cases, these individuals could not be located through field surveys because they had given inadequate addresses when met by ICM.

- Maintains relatively short-term contact with returnees. (ICM's information on 44 percent of returnees who arrived by April 30, 1986 ended 3 months after their arrival, see app. II, item 5).

In its comments on our draft report, ICM noted that its reports do not represent a scientific data base from which to construct definitive analyses of the situation of returnees.

Data collected by human rights monitoring organizations in El Salvador also cannot be used to indicate the extent of violence or persecution experienced by Salvadoran returnees. This is because organizations such as Tutela Legal of the Catholic Archdiocese of San Salvador, the International Red Cross, and Americas Watch, do not separate returnees from the general population in their reports on violence or persecution.

The U.S. embassy in San Salvador conducts an informal survey of those "required to depart" who seek release of bonds they posted in the United States to ensure their adherence to INS deportation proceedings. We have determined that data obtained in this survey cannot be used to identify occurrences of violence or persecution because (1) it is obtained shortly after returnees arrive in El Salvador (usually within 2 weeks) and (2) the methodology for collecting the information is weak (a brief, oral interview in a public place by a U. S. embassy employee who could be perceived as not being impartial).

Statistics generally show a marked decline in the number of civilian deaths and disappearances reported by Tutela Legal and the Salvadoran press as well as a reduction in the number and severity of other cases of violence and abuse reported by organizations monitoring human rights. The statistics vary significantly among sources. (See app. II, item 10.) We were told by a U.S. embassy official that statistics on political violence and abuse should be used to indicate the trend in the number of abuses rather than the actual number of such incidents. This is because of weaknesses inherent in the data collection methodologies of human rights monitoring organizations. These weaknesses include

- collecting information about incidents of human rights abuses from people who may not have accurate information;

- limited access to detainees and sites of incidents to verify reports;
- the inability to create conditions that would overcome reluctance among Salvadorans to report potentially sensitive information (we were told that Tutela Legal, a church entity, is probably the organization most likely to overcome this weakness);
- gathering information using only voluntary reporting (the human rights monitoring organizations do not use surveys, questionnaires, or any other formal means for obtaining reports of abuses); and
- relying on reports from possibly biased sources about incidents of human rights violations (using information released by either government security or guerrilla forces).

U.S. and Salvadoran officials we contacted believe that most Salvadorans would not readily share sensitive information about themselves in an effort to avoid undue attention from either government security or guerrilla forces.

The officials we contacted expressed the view that the extent of a returnee's fear of violence or persecution is more likely to be affected by the individual's personal situation than by the general conditions existing now in El Salvador. In this regard, we were informed that if a returnee originally came from a conflictive zone or left El Salvador in the early 1980s when the level of civil violence was higher, there is a greater possibility that the reasons for his migration to the United States were related to fear of violence or persecution than to economic factors.

ICM reported that the "large majority" of returnees who had returned to El Salvador prior to May 1986 and with whom ICM had established contact had indicated that their poor economic situation in El Salvador was their primary motive for departure. However, the officials we contacted said that it is extremely difficult to determine the primary motivation for the Salvadorans who migrated to the United States--economic factors or fear of violence or persecution. When we asked them to comment on which factor was more important, they provided mixed responses and said that both factors were involved.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In response to a request from Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr., dated October 17, 1986, and a subsequent request from Representative John Joseph Moakley, we attempted to determine whether Salvadorans forced to leave the United States have been the target of violence or persecution upon their return to El Salvador. In studying this matter, we focused our attention on the accuracy and use made of reports prepared by ICM and the views of U.S. and Salvadoran officials involved with displaced persons in El Salvador.

We obtained and analyzed reports, statistical data, and correspondence on Salvadoran returnees and human rights conditions in El Salvador; at the Departments of State and Justice (including INS) in Washington, D.C.; and at the U.S. embassy and ICM in San Salvador. Further, we obtained information from representatives of ICM and private organizations in Washington, D.C., who have expressed interest in returned Salvadorans. We also spoke with U.S. and Salvadoran officials of 19 agencies and human rights activist groups located in San Salvador representing international, government, church, and private sector interests, using pro forma interviews to ensure consistency of data collection. We conducted our work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

In this appendix, we present statistics gathered from the Departments of State and Justice, the ICM, and human rights monitoring organizations. We formulated our questions to respond to the information needs of congressional requesters.

1. What portion of Salvadoran returnees are included in the ICM program?

An estimated 13,773 Salvadorans were forced to leave the United States between December 1, 1984, when ICM commenced its reception program, and December 31, 1986. Of these returnees, 9,530, or 69 percent, were met by ICM at the airport and included in the ICM program for subsequent assistance.

Table II.1: Salvadoran Returnees Met by ICM  
(Dec. 1, 1984 - Dec. 31, 1986)

<u>Returnees</u>	<u>Met by ICM</u>	<u>Not met by ICM</u>
"Required to depart"	-	3,388
Deportees and voluntary departures	9,530	855
Percent of returnees	69	31

2. How long had Salvadoran returnees been in the United States?

Based on information gathered on Salvadorans required to return to El Salvador in 1986, those who were met by ICM generally had been in the United States for a much shorter period of time than those not met by ICM. The large majority of those met by ICM (77 percent) were apprehended within 1 year of arrival, whereas only 10 percent of those not met by ICM were in this category.

Table II.2: Salvadoran Returnees' Length of Stay in the United States Before Apprehension

<u>Length of stay in the United States</u>	Met by <u>ICM</u> ---- (percent) ----	Not met by <u>ICM</u> ----
Apprehended upon entry	69	-
Apprehended within 1 year	8	10
Apprehended after 1 year (arrived in U.S. after Jan. 1, 1982)	15	52
Apprehended after 1 year (arrived in U.S. before Jan. 1, 1982)	8	38
Total	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Number of returnees in 1986	4,689	1,338

3. What were ICM's sources of information about returnees' experiences in El Salvador?

Following its last field survey, ICM reported that it had obtained information on 5,203, or 82 percent, of 6,373 returnees that it had met as of April 30, 1986. This information was obtained from the following sources.

Table II.3: Sources of Information on Returnees' Status (Dec. 1, 1984 - Apr. 30, 1986)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Returnee (questionnaire/letter)	50
Returnee (field survey)	10
Family members	30
Friends	6
Neighbors	3
Authorities	1
	<u>100</u>

4. How did ICM reestablish contact with returnees?

ICM records showed that, as of February 1987, ICM had reestablished contact with 5,203, or 82 percent, of the 6,373 returnees who had been met by ICM by April 30, 1986, and 6,803, or 71 percent, of the 9,530 returnees who had been met by December 31, 1986. The lower contact rate with returnees through

December 1986 reflects the absence of completed field surveys to locate returnees who arrived after April 30, 1986. The contacts were made as follows.

Table II.4: Method of ICM's Follow-up Contact With Returnees

<u>Method of contact</u>	<u>By percent of returnees who arrived</u>	
	<u>12/1/84-4/30/86</u>	<u>12/1/84-12/31/86</u>
Questionnaire )		48
Letter )	50a	14
Survey	<u>50</u>	<u>38</u>
Total	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

<sup>a</sup>A breakdown of contact between questionnaire and letter was not available.

5. How long did ICM maintain contact with returnees?

ICM's records indicate that ICM maintained relatively short-term contact with returnees after their arrival in El Salvador. Contact was maintained for less than 4 months for the majority of returnees who had arrived as of December 31, 1986. The length of time between date of arrival and last contact with a returnee varied as of the last completed field survey (April 30, 1986) and December 31, 1986, as shown below.

Table II.5: Length of Time ICM Maintained Contact With Returnees

<u>Length of contact</u>	<u>By percent of returnees who arrived</u>	
	<u>12/1/84-4/30/86<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>12/1/84-12/31/86</u>
0 - 3 months	44	53
4 - 6 months	24	22
7 - 9 months	22	17
10 - 12 months	7	6
over 1 year	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

<sup>a</sup>Excludes returnees who arrived after April 30, 1986, and therefore have not been included in a field survey. Most contacts occurring 3 months after arrival were survey contacts.



6. What were the characteristics of returnees met by ICM?

ICM had met 9,785 returnees as of January 31, 1987. They had the following characteristics.

- 87 percent was male  
13 percent was female
- 89 percent was over 18 years old  
10 percent was 10 to 18 years old  
1 percent was under 10 years old
- 21 percent was married  
79 percent was single
- 17 percent was illiterate  
68 percent had primary educations  
14 percent had high school educations  
1 percent had an university education
- 60 percent accepted transportation and food assistance  
38 percent accepted transportation, food, and lodging  
1 percent accepted no assistance  
less than 1 percent accepted only transportation or pocket money
- 47 percent was given provisional Salvadoran ID cards (these cards are valid for 30 days to permit the returnee time to obtain a permanent ID card)

7. How many returnees have reported personal security problems?

As of February 1987, ICM's records indicated that 271 Salvadorans had reported problems that ICM thought might be related to personal security. This figure is broken down as follows.

- 138 returnees indicated through questionnaires, follow-up letters, or field surveys that they were experiencing problems that ICM thought should be followed up since they might be related to personal security.
  - a. 84 of the 138 accepted ICM's invitation to discuss their problems in more detail at its San Salvadoran office. Of these, about half (40) were determined to be reporting security problems.

b. 54 returnees have not had contact with ICM since reporting they were experiencing problems. ICM unsuccessfully attempted to contact them through telegrams, letters, and/or field surveys to learn more about their situation.

-- 133 returnees visited ICM on their own initiative to report their problems. Of those, 30 were determined to be reporting personal security problems.

8. What is the status of the returnees who have been determined to be reporting personal security problems?

ICM's records indicate that as of February 1987 the status of the 70 returnees' cases was as follows.

-- 5 have been accepted for humanitarian resettlement (3 to Australia, 1 to Canada and 1 to Sweden).

-- 32 were awaiting resettlement decisions.

-- 13 have been rejected for humanitarian resettlement by the recipient countries (reasons for rejections are not required to be documented).

-- 9 reported that their problems have been resolved.

-- 4 have left El Salvador on their own.

-- 1 was given forms for normal Canadian immigration because ICM considered it unlikely that the individual would qualify for humanitarian resettlement since he was illiterate.

-- 2 have died (one committed suicide in 1985, and one was killed in a bar (see item 9)).

-- the status of 4 is unknown (ICM tried unsuccessfully to reestablish contact with them).

9. What were the causes of death for returnees met by ICM (including those who did not report problems)?

As of February 1987, ICM's records indicate that 9 returnees had died, including the 2 mentioned above. The deaths were attributed to the following causes.

- 1 was killed in a bar. This returnee had reported to ICM, through questionnaires, that men associated with guerrilla forces were trying to kill him. ICM had provided him with an application for the Canadian humanitarian resettlement program and had tried to locate him to ensure that he returned the application. ICM received his last questionnaire, which said that his situation was worsening, 9 days before he was killed. There is conflicting testimony about the circumstances of his death. The Salvadoran police report indicates that the men who shot him came into the bar looking for him. Other testimony indicates that he was killed during a fight over a soccer match.
- 1 was killed in cross fire between Salvadoran security forces and the guerrillas.
- 2 committed suicide. One of the suicide victims had reported personal security problems to ICM. The second suicide was found hanged in his hotel room the night of his return to El Salvador. He had not reported any threat or persecution to ICM when he arrived.
- 1 was killed while robbing a store.
- 1 drowned. No political motives for the drowning are suspected.
- 2 died of natural causes.
- 1 died from unknown causes following his return to the United States.

10. What evidence exists showing that random violence in El Salvador has declined?

According to data reported by the U.S. embassy, Tutela Legal, and others, the number of civilian deaths attributable to political violence has declined markedly since 1981. The statistics noted below are subject to many of the weaknesses inherent in data collection methodologies and vary as to numbers reported. However, they do agree in indicating a significant downward trend.

Table II.6: U.S. Embassy's Reports<sup>a</sup> of Civilian Deaths  
Attributed to Political Violence

<u>Category</u>	<u>1981<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>1982<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>1983<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>1984<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>
Guerrillas					152	73
Possibly by guerrillas					33	94
Extreme right					3	0
Possibly by extreme right					13	7
Unidentified assailant					80	46
Civil defense					4	6
Security forces/Army					9	15
Other military action					41	20
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>5,331</u></b>	<b><u>2,630</u></b>	<b><u>1,677</u></b>	<b><u>770</u></b>	<b><u>335</u></b>	<b><u>261</u></b>

<sup>a</sup>Statistics obtained from Salvadoran press reports.

<sup>b</sup>Breakdown not readily available.

Table II.7: Tutela Legal's Reports<sup>a</sup> of Civilian Deaths  
Attributed to Political Violence

<u>Category</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>
Death squads	1,227	1,259	218	133	45
Guerrillas	46	67	66	66	43
By others	<u>4,066</u>	<u>3,816</u>	<u>1,996</u>	<u>1,762</u>	<u>1,184</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>5,339</u></b>	<b><u>5,142</u></b>	<b><u>2,280</u></b>	<b><u>1,961</u></b>	<b><u>1,272</u></b>

<sup>a</sup>The Archbishopric of San Salvador's Office of Human Rights and Legal Assistance was not founded until May 1982.

According to statistics compiled from various sources by the Jesuit-run Central American University in San Salvador, civilian deaths attributable to political violence averaged 1,548 per month as of June 1981 and declined to 216 per month as of June 1984, at which time it stopped compiling these statistics. A breakdown by category was not available.

11. Where are the returnees located in El Salvador and to what extent was ICM able to reestablish contact with them?

Twenty-five percent of the returnees included in the ICM field surveys provided ICM with home addresses in departments located in the more conflictive areas of El Salvador (Cabanas,

Chalatenango, Morazan, and San Miguel). ICM's contact rate with these returnees ranged from 47 to 70 percent, depending on the department, whereas the overall contact rate for all returnees was 66 percent.

Table II.8: Location and Contact Statistics for Returnees  
Included in ICM's Field Surveys (Dec. 1, 1984 - Apr. 30, 1986)

<u>Department</u>	<u>Total cases</u>	<u>Percent by dept<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>Contact number/percent<sup>b</sup></u>		<u>No contact number/percent<sup>b</sup></u>	
Ahuachapan	49	1	39	80	10	20
Cabanas <sup>C</sup>	119	3	83	70	36	30
Chalatenango <sup>C</sup>	90	2	42	47	48	53
Cuscatlan	61	2	41	67	20	33
La Libertad	200	5	148	74	52	26
La Paz	127	3	102	80	25	20
La Union	751	19	417	56	334	44
Morazan <sup>C</sup>	143	4	95	66	48	34
San Salvador	919	24	668	73	251	27
San Miguel <sup>C</sup>	622	16	396	64	226	36
Santa Ana	346	9	240	69	106	31
San Vicente	62	2	49	79	13	21
Sonsonate	120	3	95	79	25	21
Usulután	287	7	171	60	116	40
	<u>3,896</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>2,586</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>1310</u>	<u>34</u>

<sup>a</sup>Percent based on total cases.

<sup>b</sup>Percent based on total cases for each department.

<sup>c</sup>Areas of these departments are considered the most conflictive zones in El Salvador.

12. How many Salvadorans has ICM assisted in resettling to other countries?

ICM has assisted, under its refugee resettlement program, over 5,000 Salvadorans who approached ICM in emigrating to other countries from June 1983 through December 1986. These individuals represent a comparatively small segment of the estimated 1 million internally and externally displaced Salvadorans, approximately half of whom are believed to have been residing illegally in the United States. A breakdown of Salvadorans resettled by year and country is shown in table II.9.

Table II.9: Salvadorans Resettled to Other Countries by ICM  
(June 1983 - Dec. 1986)

<u>Country</u>	<u>1983<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>Total</u>
Canada	332	438	614	1,040	2,424
Australia	104	327	861	408	1,700
Sweden	62	166	134	153	515
United States <sup>b</sup>	94	-	7	-	101
Costa Rica	24	36	13	4	77
Mexico	-	33	15	6	54
Holland	-	42	3	-	45
Nicaragua	-	30	-	-	30
All others	<u>29</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>70</u>
Total	<u>645</u>	<u>1,098</u>	<u>1,655</u>	<u>1,618</u>	<u>5,016</u>

<sup>a</sup>June through December 1983.

<sup>b</sup>The United States participated in resettlement of political prisoners released under Salvadoran amnesty law.



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR MIGRATION

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22 April 1987

Mr. Frank C. Conahan  
 Assistant Comptroller General  
 U.S. General Accounting Office  
 National Security and  
 International Affairs Division  
 Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

ICM herewith submits comments on the GAO draft briefing report entitled Illegal Aliens: Extent of Problems Experienced by Returned Salvadorans not Determinable (GAO code 472126). Our comments are submitted in the form of recommended editorial changes aimed at more accurately defining ICM's role and procedures and the terms of reference of the program in question. The reason behind each editorial change should be self-explanatory, but should there be any questions, please feel free to contact me.

We thank you for this opportunity to review and comment on the report before its official issuance.

Sincerely,

Gretchen S. Bolton  
 Chief of Mission

GSB/md  
 Encl.



United States Department of State

Comptroller

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 1, 1987

Dear Mr. Conahan:

I am replying to your letter of April 9, 1987 to the Secretary which forwarded copies of the draft report entitled "Illegal Aliens: Extent of Problems Experienced by Returning Salvadorans Not Determined" for review and comment.

Enclosed are comments prepared in the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Your staff also met with officials in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs and obtain their oral comments.

We appreciate having had the opportunity to review and comment on the draft report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger B. Feldman".

Roger B. Feldman

Enclosure:  
As stated.

Mr. Frank C. Conahan,  
Assistant Comptroller General,  
National Security and  
International Affairs Division,  
U.S. General Accounting Office,  
Washington, D.C. 20548



April 28, 1987

DRAFT REPORT COMMENTS: ILLEGAL ALIENS: EXTENT OF PROBLEMS  
EXPERIENCED BY RETURNING SALVADORANS NOT DETERMINABLE

Your report concludes that (1) Salvadoran returnees have experienced personal security problems, (2) human rights abuses in El Salvador are still occurring, though with less intensity and frequency than previously, and (3) that no conclusive answer can be given to the question of whether returnees suffer more persecution and violence than the general population.

Our comments on these conclusions are the following:

(1) As we have noted before, there is no evidence that returnees have suffered political persecution. However, civil strife in El Salvador is continuing as is violence unrelated to the conflict. Under these circumstances individuals can and do experience personal security problems.

(2) As our annual report on human rights conditions notes, the intensity and frequency of human rights abuses in El Salvador has declined sharply. Human rights abuses are neither authorized nor condoned at the highest level of the government. Though some human rights abuses by lower-level police and army personnel do occur from time to time, guerrillas are now responsible for a substantial portion of such abuses.

(3) We would agree with the observation to which you refer that returnees, as such, encounter the same problems as do similarly situated persons in the general population.



Richard Schifter  
Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Human Rights and  
Humanitarian Affairs



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