

disappeared have since resurfaced. The offensive, which was centered in San Salvador and other major cities, also resulted in a sharp increase in the number of civilian deaths resulting from military operations (over 1,000), as armed forces used air power to dislodge guerillas from heavily populated neighbourhoods. The incidence of arbitrary detention and detention for political motives rose sharply to approximately 900, once again influenced by the events of November.

Many political detainees have complained of severe physical and psychological abuse while in detention. Salvadoran and international human rights organizations maintain that there is systematic use of torture of political detainees for purposes of extracting information, intimidation and forcing extrajudicial confessions, which are valid under Salvadoran law. Most of the torture occurs during the first 72 hours following detention, when prisoners may legally be held incommunicado. According to several sources, some severe forms of torture which were common in the early 1980s and then became rare, reappeared as a systematic practice over the course of last year.

Tutela Legal reported 30 murders and 39 kidnappings by guerillas in 1989. Guerillas have also forced the resignation and the relocation of many municipal authorities, although they have apparently desisted from their campaign of killing mayors who refused to resign. FMLN mines also cause numerous casualties among civilians. An increase in FMLN urban activity has resulted in many civilian casualties, because of the use of car bombs and other inaccurate weapons, and the offensive of this November has caused civilian deaths and injuries.

Respect for many civil and political liberties and the judicial process has improved over the past several years. Freedoms of assembly, political participation, speech and press are generally respected, with the exception of the November 1989 period, when the Armed Forces suspended all private media operations. The electronic media is particularly outspoken and gives voice to a wide range of views. While the large-circulation print media is monolithic politically, smaller papers do exist for the expression of dissenting views. The chief failing in this area is the legal system, which is largely non-functional in political cases. The latter also impinges on the right to protection from arbitrary entry, and other civil rights.