

## **EL SALVADOR: Government "Regrets" Child Disappearances**

CHALATENANGO, March 23, 2006 - Yesterday, against a large banner backdrop boasting a picture of the government Commission on Disappeared Children's first reencounter, amidst cries of "The president should be here" from family members of the disappeared, Chancellor of the Republic of El Salvador Francisco Laínez publicly expressed regret to the Serrano Cruz family on behalf of the Salvadoran government, but failed to explicitly ask them for forgiveness.

Speaking in front of the cathedral in the city of Chalatenango, Laínez said the Salvadoran state is "deeply sorry for everything that happened during the armed conflict that lasted 12 years in our country and directly affected each and every Salvadoran family and above all those cases involving children. **The state is especially sorry for the incidents related to the case of Erlinda and Ernestina Serrano Cruz**" and "expresses our desire that situations that happened in those times and that affected Salvadoran society never occur again."

President Saca himself did not appear, much to the disappointment of family members of the disappeared and **Pro-Búsqueda, the organization founded by the late Fr. Jon Cortina that has worked to reunite more than 300 disappeared children with their biological families.**