

NEWS RELEASE

from Congressman Joe Moakley, 9th District, Massachusetts

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, Jan. 30, 1985
For more information contact:
Jim McGovern at (202)225-8273

MOAKLEY INTRODUCES BILL TO TEMPORARILY HALT THE DEPORTATION OF SALVADORANS

Congressman Joe Moakley (D-MA) today introduced legislation to temporarily halt the deportation of Salvadoran refugees now in the United States. Moakley stated, "For many Salvadorans, this bill could mean the difference between life and death."

Moakley continued, "The great debate in the US over our policy in El Salvador will persist. However, the humanitarian problems of Salvadoran refugees should not be a political or partisan question. Violence and terror still remain a fact of life in that country."

Between 40-50 thousand Salvadoran civilian/non-combatants have been murdered since the beginning of the civil war in 1979. Many thousands more have been imprisoned, tortured or have disappeared.

The Massachusetts Congressman added, "While the election of Jose Napoleon Duarte may be heartening, it is not realistic to believe that he or anyone else can magically end the civil unrest in El Salvador overnight. It will take time."

In the past, the US has offered temporary refuge to nationalities fleeing civil strife in the form of "extended voluntary departure" status. This status has been granted to nationals from 15 countries in the last 24 years. It currently applies to Poles, Afghans, Ethiopians and Ugandans. The Administration, however, has steadfastly refused to offer this protection to Salvadorans.

Moakley concluded, "We can turn our backs on this tragic situation or we can provide Salvadorans the same limited protection that we have granted other nationals from countries that were experiencing equally deplorable conditions. A temporary suspension of deportations is a modest yet responsible step."