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Salvadoran Congress Passes New Tax Levy To Increase Military Budget

by Deborah Tyroler

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Media sources in Central America reported on Oct. 3 that the Salvadoran National Assembly has approved a war tax bill. The bill, called the "tax to defend national sovereignty," is aimed at collecting some \$24 million to bolster the country's military budget. The new tax legislation was requested by President Jose Napoleon Duarte, and is part of a tax reform program to finance anti-guerrilla operations. The president also requested that the congress approve a bill to draft men over 18 years of age "so that everybody can defend their homeland." According to Cuban news agency PRENSA LATINA, the defense and security ministry will receive \$180 million, or one-fourth of the national budget in fiscal 1987. Assembly chairman Guillermo Guevara Lacayo said the "war tax" will be effective immediately, while the remainder of the tax reform program is scheduled for implementation in 1987. PRENSA LATINA reported that right-wing political parties opposed the legislation, while the Salvadoran Workers National Unity (UNTS) referred to the legislation as yet "one more burden for the people."

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