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Report Distributed In U.N. General Assembly Claims
Salvadoran Government Making Significant Progress In
Human Rights

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According to a report distributed in the UN General Assembly this week by Prof. Jose Antonio Pastor Riruejo, respect for human rights continues to be an important element of Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte's regime. Pastor Riruejo is a special representative of the UN Commission on Human Rights. His report and others on Guatemala and Chile will be discussed in the third committee (Social, Cultural and Humanitarian) during the week of Nov. 17-21. Pastor said Duarte's policy "is achieving increasingly significant and commendable results in the crucial area of respect for the life of persons both in non-combat situations and in or as a result of combat." He also criticized Decree No. 50, considered responsible for increasing numbers of political prisoners that in some cases have been subjected to severe psychological pressure, and impeding the normal functioning of the criminal justice system. However, "worthwhile and commendable attempts" were being made by the Salvadoran government to reform the legal system. Moreover, said Pastor, psychological pressures are not part of Salvadoran government policy. In contrast, Pastor said the Salvadoran rebels have continued summary executions and abductions of civilians. He also mentioned that he had information on a "large and disturbing number of non-combatants" killed or seriously wounded by land mines. He said he wished to place on record that in the general view, which he shared, most such mines were placed by the rebels, or the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Pastor then stated that living conditions have deteriorated due to the on-going conflict and the world economic crisis. FMLN attacks, he said, on the economic infrastructure "seriously threaten the present and future enjoyment by Salvadoran citizens of important economic, social and cultural rights." Pastor recommended that the government and the FMLN resume talks, that Decree 50 be repealed, and that agrarian and judicial reforms continue.

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