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## **Aguinada Carranza, Leader Of National Democratic Union, Returns To El Salvador After 8 Years In Exile**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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Late on Oct. 11, Mario Aguinada Carranza, secretary general of the popular leftist National Democratic Union (UDN) party, returned to El Salvador after several years in exile. In 1981, after an attempt on his life, Aguinada fled the country, and has been living in Costa Rica and Mexico. The UDN was founded in the early 1980s. Upon arriving at the Compalpas international airport from Mexico City, Aguinada, 45, told a crowd of about 100 people gathered to welcome him that he was glad to be back. He said he would dedicate his efforts toward realizing a negotiated settlement to the civil war. On July 19, the government prevented Aguinada from entering the country, ordering his arrest. UDN leader Tirso Canales told UPI that party officials spoke this week with army chief of staff Gen. Adolfo Blandon, and Security Viceminister Leopoldo Hernandez about Aguinada's return. Canales said that Blandon and Hernandez informed party officials there would be no problem with Aguinada's return, and there was no order for his arrest. The UDN allied with the illegal Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) and was one of the founding members of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). In 1980, the FDR allied itself with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The government has accused Aguinada of being a commander of the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL), the military wing of the PCS. His brother, Rafael Aguinada Carranza, was one of the FMLN's first members and died in combat. Canales said, "(Mario) Aguinada Carranza has never been a rebel commander. He has always been a politician. It was as a politician that he participated in the political commission of the FDR-FMLN until last year. He is presently...not linked to the FDR-FMLN." Rafael Antonio Vargas, who returned July 19 to El Salvador after seven years in Costa Rica, said that in 1981 the UDN dropped its membership with the FDR. "At that time, we dissolved the party due to extreme military repression," he said. Vargas accompanied Aguinada on his attempted return in July. (Basic data from UPI, 10/11/88; 10/12/88)

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