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President Azcona: Human Rights Court Verdict Against Honduras "unjust"

by Deborah Tyroler

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The Inter-American Human Rights Court, based in San Jose, Costa Rica, resumed deliberations on Jan. 9. The current session is expected to continue until Jan. 27. Recently, the Court issued a guilty verdict against the Honduran government in the 1982 disappearance of Honduran Saul Godinez. On Jan. 24, Honduran President Jose Azcona Hoyo described the Court's decision as "unjust." However, said Azcona, despite the guilty verdict against his government, Honduras will not by withdrawing recognition of the Court's jurisdiction. Instead, he added, Tegucigalpa would pressure other Latin American countries to recognize jurisdiction by the Court. At present, only Mexico, Costa Rica and Honduras recognize the Inter-American Court's authority. In a precedent-setting action last July, the Court issued a guilty verdict against the Honduran government for the disappearance of Honduran student Manfredo Velazquez. The Court entered into session on Jan. 9, and is expected to continue until Jan. 27. Other suits against Honduras before the court involve Costa Ricans Yolanda Solis and Francisco Fairen Jr., who vanished in Honduras in 1981 while driving to Mexico. Like Velazquez and Godinez, these "desaparecidos" are believed to have been victims of a special military unit known as Battalion 316. The Battalion is believed to have been responsible for some 150 disappearances in Honduras between 1981 and 1984, according to testimony presented to the Inter-American Court. (Basic data from Notimex, 01/24/89; The Tico Times, 12/09/88, summarized in 01/08/89 report by the Central America Resource Center, Minneapolis, Minn.]

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