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Salvadoran Rebels Launch Offensive In Response To Increased Repression Following March 19 Election

by Deborah Tyroler

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On April 6, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) units attacked the 4th army brigade headquarters at El Paraiso in Chalatenango department, and the army engineers base in Zacatecoluca. A rebel communique said the attack at El Paraiso caused "numerous casualties." Col. Ciro Lopez Roque, 4th brigade commander, said three soldiers and three guerrillas died in a predawn attack. He said the rebels did not penetrate the brigade's perimeter, but several of their mortars landed inside. Benjamin Canjura, commander of the army engineer post, said seven civilians were wounded when homemade guerrilla artillery fell short of the military installation. He said three soldiers were killed while pursuing retreating rebels. On the same day, guerrilla commandos reportedly bombed banks in San Salvador, and attacked the offices of government agencies in several departments throughout the country. A statement broadcast by Radio Venceremos said that ARENA had sponsored increasing repression since the March 19 election. In response, said the statement, the FMLN launched a new offensive which commenced April 4: "ARENA is clearly implementing a policy of capturing popular movement leaders and activists" and "every repressive action will receive a telling response from us." Since the election, several union and student activists have disappeared or been killed, allegedly by rightist death squads. Unidentified human rights groups consulted by The Associated Press said they do not have enough information to document a post-election surge in rightist violence. (Basic data from Xinhua, AP, 04/06/89)

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