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Salvadoran President Defends Evacuation Of Rebel Wounded

by Deborah Tyroler

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In a statement May 25, Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte defended his decision to permit the evacuation of 109 rebel wounded to Europe for medical treatment. Guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) are to be moved to hospitals in West Germany and France for treatment under an arrangement between the government and the Roman Catholic Church. The Church and the International Red Cross are coordinating the transfer of the wounded to Europe via Cuba and Mexico. Salvadoran Attorney General Eduardo Colorado and legislators of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) have threatened legal action against Duarte on the ground that his decision to cooperate in evacuation of the "subversives" is "unconstitutional." Duarte responded, "I would not have any objection over going to prison if it were for making a humanitarian gesture." He added that the gesture "would open possibilities for dialogue between the FMLN and the new ARENA government." ARENA president-elect Alfredo Cristiani will be inaugurated June 1. (Basic data from Xinhua, 05/25/89)

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