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Salvadoran Rebel Command Acknowledges "errors" Resulting In Civilian Deaths

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In a communique broadcast by Radio Venceremos on the evening of May 23, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) high command acknowledged having committed "errors" that resulted in civilian deaths. In the joint statement, FMLN commanders Shafick Handal, Joaquin Villalobos, Leonel Gonzalez, Ferman Cienfuegos and Roberto Roca asserted that the rebels would act to compensate civilians for damage to property or person. Rebel units were advised to avoid harming civilians by following correct tactical and planning procedures, and ensuring that armaments for a particular objective are appropriate. The communique asserted that if FMLN commanders receive proof that damage to civilians resulted from "an intentional act" rather than "error," responsible parties will be severely punished. According to the communique, in recent months the use of mines and mobile artillery has caused damage to numerous private homes and harmed innocent persons. On May 22, a public bus traveling on a highway in Libertad department detonated a rebel mine, resulting in civilian dead and wounded. (See CAU, 05/24/89.) [Basic data from Notimex, 05/24/89]