6-23-1989

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El Salvador: Nun Seriously Injured In Shooting Incident

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General
Published: Friday, June 23, 1989

On June 21 unidentified assailants in a pickup truck fired at three nuns on a road to Zaragoza, 10 miles south of San Salvador. US citizen Sister Mary MacKey, 73, was shot in the head. MacKey, a member of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, is a registered nurse, and works at an orphanage located at the Oscar Arnulfo Romero Community in Zaragoza. The community is named after the Salvadoran archbishop murdered in March 1980. Unidentified hospital sources told AP that Sister MacKey was in serious condition Thursday morning at the downtown Policlinica Hospital after being operated on Wednesday night. Other unidentified sources cited by AP said shots were fired at the nun's car from another vehicle that passed it, going in the same direction. Sister McKay was the only one wounded, the sources said. Sister Ana Maria Brangan, who was driving the pickup, said she and her companions were approaching Zaragoza from the capital when a yellow pickup carrying at least six men, four riding in the bed, pulled alongside. "They stayed alongside and pulled closer, and I didn't understand what was going on...Then I heard a noise and thought they had bumped us. I didn't realize it was a bullet." The single shot broke the truck's passenger side window and entered Sister MacKey's skull. Rev. Ken Myers, founder of the orphanage, said doctors had told him she would probably lose her left eye. According to Myers, the attack could have been part of a robbery attempt. He said, "There were at least six men in the truck and only one weapon. They may have been thieves. Maybe they were drunk." Sister MacKey is a native of County Clare, Ireland, and a naturalized US citizen. She has worked in Central America since 1963 and in El Salvador since 1983, Myers said. Catholic clergy and other church people who work in poor communities have often been accused by Salvadoran rightists of "sympathizing" with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). (Basic data from AP, DPA, 06/22/89)

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