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Deborah Tyroler

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El Salvador: Report On Escalating Political Violence, Rollback Of Agrarian Reform

by Deborah Tyroler
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Last week the independent Salvadoran Human Rights Commission (CDHES) reported a large increase in political assassinations and kidnappings between mid-March and the end of May. According to the CDHES, 517 deaths, 325 abductions and 56 disappeared were attributed to military and paramilitary forces in this time period. On June 23, an estimated 2,000 farm workers and family members assembled at La Hacienda Nueva, located 40 km. from San Salvador, to protest a recent decision by the Supreme Court of Justice. The Court ruled that land turned over to the La Hacienda Nueva agricultural cooperative formed by 600 families under the previous government's partial land reform program is to be returned to former owner Victoria Amada Sol. Amanda Villatoro of the National Agricultural Workers Union (UNOC) said that another 21 agricultural cooperatives are currently threatened with dismantlement via actions to return land to former landowners. On June 21, UNOC sources reported that government security forces abducted and disappeared 15 members of agricultural cooperatives in Usulutan department from June 16 through June 19. According to the National Cooperatives Federation (FENACOA), the government of President Alfredo Cristiani is responsible for the abductions which are intended to frighten peasant farmers into abandoning their land. (Basic data from 06/26/89 weekly report by Salpress-Notisal)

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