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El Salvador: Ultra-rightist Activist Edgar Chacon Assassinated

by Deborah Tyroler

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On the afternoon of June 30, ultraright advocate Edgar Chacon was assassinated in Miramonte, a neighborhood located in northwestern San Salvador. He was attacked by unidentified persons in a passing pickup truck who raked his car with submachine-gun fire. Chacon, 42, died in the emergency room of the Hospital Diagnostico. No group claimed responsibility for the killing. President Alfredo Cristiani and the armed forces press office blamed the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Chacon was director of the International Relations Institute (IRI), a far-right think tank created in 1988. Several years ago, Chacon abandoned the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) reportedly because he believed ARENA had gone "soft" in opposing communism. In public appearances, Chacon frequently accused Cuba and Nicaragua of supporting the Salvadoran rebels, and declared his support for all-out war to end the conflict with the guerrillas. In May this year, he was a sponsor of the Patriotic Civil Defense Force of rightist volunteers in the affluent Escalon neighborhood. President Jose Napoleon Duarte dissolved the force shortly before Cristiani's inauguration on June 1. Chacon called for the imprisonment of Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) leaders Ruben Zamora and Guillermo Ungo when they returned to El Salvador in late 1987 to participate in talks between the government and the FMLN. Chacon's widow, Helen Vasquez de Chacon, present in the car when her husband was shot, told reporters that the FMLN and the CIA were responsible: "We know the FMLN is responsible, under orders from the CIA." She added that the US government is covertly financing the guerrillas "in order to continue exercising power" over El Salvador. In a July 1 broadcast on rebel station Radio Venceremos, the FMLN denied involvement in Chacon's assassination. The killing, said the FMLN, was likely sponsored by the ARENA faction linked to President Cristiani and supported by the CIA. Chacon's assassination was in reprisal against another ARENA faction for the June 9 assassination of presidency minister Antonio Rodriguez Porth. (Basic data from AP, AFP, UPI, Noticias Argentinas, 06/30/89; Notimex, 07/01/89)

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