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El Salvador: Summary Of Recent Rebel Actions

by Deborah Tyroler

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July 29: Radio Farabundo Marti and Radio Venceremos reported 212 casualties among government security forces in the past 63 days, including 186 among the elite Atlacatl Battalion and 26 members of the 1st Infantry Brigade. The report referred to attacks by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) directed against counterinsurgency operations by the army, National Police, Treasury Police and the National Guard in San Salvador and its environs. The counterinsurgency campaign commenced on May 27. Next, the FMLN reported eight army troop casualties in a July 27 rebel ambush against a unit pertaining to the 4th Infantry Brigade in Laguna, Chalatenango department. Aug. 1-3: FMLN units attacked military positions in San Salvador and periphery and in 19 separate locations in eight of the country's 14 departments. (See CAU 08/02/89 for report on Aug. 1 actions.) On Aug. 2, Radio Venceremos said the attacks were part of a campaign against "the fascist government" of President Alfredo Cristiani "and in repudiation of increases in transportation costs and repression in general." Earlier in the week the government lifted price controls on about 200 consumer goods and services, including transportation and electricity. On Aug. 2, bus fares in the capital and on rural routes increased, in some cases by almost 100%. New electricity charges are to be announced next week. On Wednesday, several rebel columns attacked military positions in San Pedro Nonualco, La Paz department, 38 miles east of San Salvador. A rebel radio broadcast warned people to stay off the road to San Pedro because FMLN forces had mined it. Rebels attacked military positions in northern Chalatenango department near the Honduran border, and other rebel columns attacked the towns of San Jorge and Carolina in San Miguel department. According to an Aug. 3 report by Salpress, more than 160 government troops were killed or injured in clashes Aug. 2 with units of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). A total of 13 rebels were killed after a series of battles in eight of the country's 14 departments, said Salpress. A military spokesperson said only one soldier had been killed and two injured. Fighting was reported Thursday at a military garrison in Cabanas department, located 90 km. east of the capital. The FMLN reported that on the afternoon of Aug. 3, rebels shot down a Hughes 500 helicopter when the air force attempted to support ground troops near San Pedro Nonualco. (Basic data from Notimex, 07/29/89; AP, 08/02/89; DPA, Xinhua, 08/03/89)

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