7-6-1989

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Recommended Citation
Bolivian Interior Minister Reports Arrest Of Suspects In Killings Of U.S. Missionaries

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Category/Department: General
Published: Thursday, July 6, 1989

On July 1, Interior Minister Eduardo Perez Beltran said police had arrested the brothers Felix and Nestor Encinas, suspected of membership in the Zarate Willka Liberation Armed Forces (FALZW) and of the May 24 murders of US Mormon missionaries Jeffrey Brent Hall, 19, and Todd Ray Wilson, 21. Perez said the FALZW had also threatened to kill him in a letter delivered to the ministry. Consequently, security has been increased at several ministry offices and at the homes of Perez and other ministry officials. The missionaries were raked by submachinegun fire as they were returning to their home in a poor neighborhood of La Paz. Several FBI have been assisting Bolivian authorities in the investigation. The FALZW first appeared in August 1988, when it claimed responsibility for a dynamite attack against a motorcade in La Paz of then-Secretary of State George Shultz. The FALZW was also blamed for the Dec. 7 bombing of the legislative palace. Perez Beltran said investigators had found evidence June 29 which linked the Encinas brothers to the murders in May and the December bombing. Police, he said, had discovered that at least seven others, most university students, had links to the FALZW. The group took its name from Zarate Willka, a powerful Aymara Indian leader who supported the government in an 1899 civil war. The suspects' relatives have complained they had not been able to visit the detained brothers. The State University of La Paz, the Permanent Assembly on Human Rights and the Bolivian Workers Central labor federation have filed a request of habeas corpus on behalf of the detainees. The groups also have charged that the two men were arrested without a warrant and have been held incommunicado beyond the 48-hour constitutional limit. (Basic data from AFP, 07/01/89)

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