Guatemala City: On Violence & Reactions To Violence

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.
Guatemala City: On Violence & Reactions To Violence

by Deborah Tyroler
Category/Department: General
Published: Wednesday, September 6, 1989

On Aug. 31, the Civil Protection System (SIPROCI), or the combined force of Guatemala's several police agencies and the military, commenced large-scale security operations in the capital city to stem a recent wave of violence. The government opted for the deployment of troops and police at checkpoints throughout the city instead of imposing a state of emergency, as requested by many officials, including Interior Minister Roberto Valle Valdizan. In the past two months, dozens of bombs exploded or were deactivated by police. Bomb scares were more numerous. In addition to abductions and assassinations of persons associated with labor unions and other "leftist" organizations, a well-known politician and a bank executive were assassinated. As of Sept. 5, the whereabouts of seven university students and a member of the Mutual Support Group (GAM) abducted in recent weeks were unknown. A prolonged nationwide strike by 50,000 teachers and public employees triggered an escalation in intimidation and assassinations by rightists, acting in death squads or alone. Several politicians have received death threats. A few politicians and well-known labor leaders have fled Guatemala. According to Valle Valdizan, "These actions are intended to create an atmosphere of terror among the population, an atmosphere of instability to justify the imposition of a strong-arm government in Guatemala." As a result of the apparent inability of authorities to track down responsible persons for any of the crimes mentioned above, many Guatemalans are demanding the resignation of Interior Minister Valle Valdizan. Last week during testimony before the Congress, Valle insisted that a state of emergency was necessary. He said that while certain constitutional guarantees would as a result be suspended, "the sacrifice was worth it in exchange for an effective control of delinquency." (Basic data from New York Times, 09/03/89; Notimex, 09/05/89)

-- End --