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Salvadoran Rebels Declare Unilateral 10-day Cease-fire, Propose General Cease-fire By November 15

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On Sept. 11, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) declared a unilateral 10-day ceasefire to begin Sept. 13. The ceasefire was described as a means to create a favorable atmosphere for their meeting with a government delegation in Mexico City this week. In a statement read on Salvadoran radio, the FMLN said the ceasefire would permit the holding of a peace march by the Permanent Committee of National Debate for Peace (Comite Permanente del Debate Nacional por la Paz) scheduled for Sept. 15 in San Salvador, and a visit by a United Nations mission on Sept. 19-22. Next, the FMLN said that in contrast to its own demonstrated flexibility in recent weeks, the government is "attempting a closed and obscure dialogue" in the Mexico City meeting by not allowing international observers to attend, and the Catholic Church to serve as moderator. The statement said the FMLN had proposed that UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar attend the Mexico City encounter as a witness. Earlier, the rebels had proposed that Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador, Gregorio Rosa Chavez, serve as a witness. On Sept. 9, President Alfredo Cristiani invited Bishop Romeo Tovar Astorga join Rosa Chavez to witness the preliminary talks. The president said that international observers and moderators were not necessary for the first round of preliminary talks, but added that the possibility of national or international witnesses in future rounds had not been discarded. The FMLN delegation at the talks in Mexico City will be headed by Commanders Joaquin Villalobos and Shafick Handal. They will be accompanied by Ana Guadalupe Martinez, Salvador Samayoa, Mario Lopez, Merecedes del Carmen Letona, Miguel Saenz and Daniel Rojas. On Sept. 13 at a press conference in Mexico City, FMLN leaders said they plan to seek a ceasefire with the government by Nov. 15, a first step toward ending the 10-year-old civil war. The rebels said they have also proposed a series of reforms aimed at incorporating them into El Salvador's political life, including advancing elections planned for 1991, and prosecuting members of the armed forces guilty of human rights violations. According to DPA, the FMLN delegation was due later Wednesday to begin talks with the government commission in Mexico City. (Basic data from Notimex, AFP, 09/11/89; DPA, 09/13/89)

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