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Mexican Delegation Criticizes Guatemalan Government's Failure To Act Against Paramilitary Groups

by Deborah Tyroler

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At the conclusion of a visit to Guatemala on Sept. 16, a delegation of Mexican university faculty, students and staff said there is sufficient evidence of involvement by soldiers and police in recent attacks against Guatemalan university faculty members and students, and particularly persons affiliated with the University of San Carlos. During their visit, delegation members met with President Vinicio Cerezo, judiciary and army officials, and members of the national congress. Delegation members were as follows: Gilberto Lopez y Rivas, National Anthropology and History School (Escuela Nacional de Antropologia e Historia); Felipe Espinoza Torres, Mexican University Workers Union (Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores Universitarios de Mexico); Rene Cecena, University Student Council (CEU); Jose Luis Melendez and Marco Antonio Rocha, Chapingo University's Academic Workers Union (Sindicato de Trabajadores Academicos); Hugo Miranda, former Chilean senator and president of the World University Service (Servicio Universitario Mundial); and, Juan Pablo Espejel, of the World University System (Sistema Universitario Mundial). The Mexican delegation was accompanied by Douglas Masariego, international affairs secretary for Guatemala's University Student Association (AEU). In the past two months, Masariego and other student leaders have been victimized by an intimidation campaign that has included death threats, surveillance, beatings, and bombings. The bodies of four university students and a professor were recently discovered by police close to the University of San Carlos campus. In a letter addressed to Cerezo, the Mexican delegation said that the Guatemalan executive had opted for "institutional passivity and equivocal statements" aimed at creating confusion regarding the origins and authors of recent violence that clearly has been perpetrated by paramilitary organizations. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/16/89)

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