9-12-1989

Peru: Report On Recent Violence By Guerrillas & Government Security Forces

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Category/Department: General
Published: Tuesday, September 12, 1989

According to a Sept. 8 report by AP, 20 corpses (decapitated and without hands and feet) were seen in the Huallaga River near a US-built base at Santa Lucia, 270 miles northeast of Lima. An AP reporter who visited the area last week was told by a village official in La Morada, 15 miles upstream from the base, that decapitated bodies were seen shortly after army troops took away 18 villagers for questioning on Aug. 19. The official requested anonymity for fear of his life. In July, the Peruvian army launched a counterinsurgency offensive in the Upper Huallaga Valley. Since then, villagers in the area have reported that civilians disappeared after being arrested by soldiers. Reports of atrocities committed under the banner of counterinsurgency have been common since the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla movement emerged in 1980. In August this year, the London-based Amnesty International issued a report accusing Peru's security forces of massive human rights violations. The human rights group said rebel assassinations and sabotage has been met with abductions, torture and killings of suspects by security forces. On Friday, US Embassy spokesperson Gene Bigler said US Drug Enforcement Administration agents and Peruvian police began new anti-drug operations from the Santa Lucia base Sept. 7. He told reporters there were no plans to withdraw US personnel because of the bodies. Bigler said the bodies had been seen "at the beginning of this week" and not on Thursday as a DEA spokesperson in Washington reported. He added that the corpses were apparently seen over a period of several days. On Sept. 9, Peruvian officials reported a wave of assaults in the last 48 hours resulting in 18 dead. On Sept. 7 in Lincha, 100 km. southeast of Lima, Sendero Luminoso guerrillas clashed with a police patrol. Officials said eight rebels died and 12 policemen were wounded in the fighting. On Sept. 8, a girl attempting to defend her father from attackers was killed in Cerro de Pasco, a central Andean city. On the same day a suspected rebel died in a shootout with police near Huancayo, 300 km. east of Lima. Also on Friday, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement claimed responsibility for an attack on the home of Finance Minister Cesar Vaszuez Bazan. A policeman and an assailant were killed. Human rights organizations denounced Sept. 9 the murder of Martha Crisostomo Garcia, a registered nurse who was the last witness to the May 1988 massacre of 30 peasants in the Andes region attributed to government troops. Months ago, three other witnesses to the massacre were killed off, one by one. Eight uniformed men were reportedly seen barging into Crisostomo's home. She and a friend visiting her there were killed. (Basic data from AP, 09/08/89; AFP, 09/09/89)

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