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U.N. General Assembly Committee Approves Resolution Expressing Concern Over Death Squad Killings In El Salvador

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Nov. 29, a UN General Assembly committee approved a resolution expressing concern over the rising toll from death squads operating with impunity in El Salvador. The resolution, sponsored by Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, France, Canada, Ireland, Greece, Sweden, Norway and Portugal, passed with 95 votes in favor, one against and 35 abstentions. The document also criticized the Salvadoran government for its actions during a recent guerrilla offensive, as well as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) itself. The resolution highlighted the case of the assassination of the six Jesuit priests and two women at Central American University and called on the Salvadoran government to seek and prosecute the assailants. The committee urged the US not to intervene in El Salvador's civil war. Criticizing sabotage by the FMLN, the resolution also declared "serious concern at the systematic attacks on the country's economic infrastructure, which seriously undermine the present and future enjoyment of important economic, social and cultural rights" of the Salvadoran people. Selected excerpts from the resolution follow: "Supports fully the expressed readiness of the Secretary General to help bring about, as a first stage in a political solution, an immediate agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict, and his decision taken last September to accept the invitation from the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion that he or his representatives should participate in their process of dialogue and negotiation, since all this forms part of the mission of good offices which he is performing to assist the Central American Governments in their efforts to achieve the objectives set forth in the Esquipulas II agreement; "...Considering that, under Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, the war-wounded and war-injured must be respected and protected, their evacuation by the International Committee of the Red Cross so that they may receive the medical care that they need must not be impeded and no one may be punished for carrying out medical activities compatible with medical ethics, regardless of the circumstances and the beneficiaries of such activities; "...Expresses its deep concern at the persistence of and increase in politically motivated serious violations of human rights such as summary executions, disappearances, torture and abductions; "Expresses its deep concern at the persistence of and increase in the alleged activities of the so-called "death squads," which are operating with impunity in El Salvador; "Renews its appeal to all States to refrain from intervening in the internal situation of El Salvador and, instead of seeking in different ways to spur the prolongation and intensification of the armed conflict, to stimulate dialogue until a firm and lasting peace is attained." (Basic data from AFP, Notimex, 11/29/89)

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