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El Salvador: Notes On Recent Fighting

by Deborah Tyroler

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Aug. 13: In a broadcast by Radio Farabundo Marti, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) reported 133 government troop casualties during the Aug. 5-12 period. The report said that rebels had damaged one helicopter, two tanks, and two military trucks. In addition, the rebels burned 2,000 tons of coffee beans, three trucks and an indeterminate number of warehouses during an Aug. 8 attack on a major coffee plantation in eastern El Salvador. The military press office, COPREFA, reported a pre-dawn rebel attack against National Police installations located on the northern outskirts of San Salvador. One policeman was wounded. The military source also reported the deaths of two soldiers in fighting with the FMLN in Chalatenango department. Large portions of the capital and northern El Salvador experienced prolonged electricity blackouts as a result of FMLN sabotage to power lines. The FMLN claimed responsibility for downing 18 power lines between Aug. 5 and Aug. 12. Aug. 18: COPREFA reported that on Aug. 17, nine rebels clashed with soldiers near San Jose Las Flores, Chalatenango department. Three soldiers were wounded. In a Radio Venceremos broadcast, the FMLN claimed five troop casualties in the same incident. COPREFA reported the death of one rebel in San Jose Guayabal, Chalatenango. The FMLN claimed five troop casualties in this clash. In other fighting, COPREFA claimed 13 rebel fatalities, and another 13 wounded. Radio Venceremos reported 150 troop casualties in the past five days, and nine soldiers taken prisoner. Aug. 19: In a Radio Farabundo Marti broadcast, the FMLN reported 172 troop casualties over the Aug. 12-18 period. According to the rebels, eight soldiers were killed, and nine taken prisoner. Of the latter, six wounded soldiers were released. COPREFA reported 50 troop casualties in the same period. Guerrilla attacks were concentrated in Cuscatlan, Chalatenango, Cabanas, San Vicente and San Salvador departments. Rebels dynamited 42 electricity towers and pylons in the past week, resulting in blackouts throughout 50% of the country. Aug. 20: According to the military press office, rebels attacked an army barracks in southern San Salvador late Monday. AP cited military sources who requested anonymity as saying that the rebels used mortars, and bombs hurled from homemade catapults. The rebels also dynamited several electrical towers, leaving large areas of the southern part of the city without power. Radio stations reported that President Alfredo Cristiani's residence had been hit by a mortar explosion. AP reported that journalists who toured the area after the fighting saw at least three houses in the neighborhood damaged by guerrilla mortar fire. Red Cross volunteers at the scene said they picked up five civilians wounded by shrapnel fire. Aug. 21: COPREFA reported that five civilians were injured during the Aug. 20 attack by rebel commandos against an army barracks and the presidential residence in southern San Salvador. Rebel grenades and explosives reportedly landed on private homes located in the Minerva, Costa Rica and America neighborhoods. According to a report by Notimex, rebels clashed with National Guard and 6th Infantry Brigade troops for eight hours in the village of Juacapa, 110 km. from San Salvador. Col. Luis Gutierrez told Notimex that one rebel and one soldier had been killed, and six Guardsmen were wounded. At 7 a.m. FMLN units attacked military posts in the village of Suchitoto, Cuscatlan department. No casualties on either side were reported. Notimex also reported that two police academy students were killed and another three wounded when rebels ambushed their vehicle. According to the Mexican government news service, a civilian was killed when the vehicle he was driving passed over a mine on a road

near the village of Chinameca, San Miguel department. (Basic data from Notimex, 08/13/90, 08/18/90, 08/21/90; AFP, 08/18/90, 18/19/90; AP, 08/20/90)

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