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El Salvador: Residents Of Resettlement Community Denounce Abuses By Military

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Sept. 3 in San Salvador, Interior deputy minister Jorge Martinez told EFE-ACAN that an official commission will travel to Panama next week to arrange for repatriation of 610 Salvadorans, who fled their homes in the early 1980s. Residents of the Segundo Montes resettlement community, located in Morazan department, told reporters that living conditions in the Panamanian refugee camp are deplorable. Community leader Juan Jose Rodriguez said the Salvadoran government has ignored requests from camp residents to permit entry of two representatives to begin arrangements for a resettlement community. According to Rodriguez, "The people have no hope of returning this year. Rodriguez also denounced the abduction of two residents of the Segundo Montes community by soldiers. Ana Dorina Garcia and Dario Chicas, both leaders of the community's economic programs, were detained Sept. 2 and taken to a military barracks where they were subjected to intensive interrogation and accused of collaborating with the guerrillas. Col. Humberto Leon Linares confirmed that Chicas and Garcia had been arrested. According to the colonel, Garcia was "caught in the act" of delivering mail for the guerrillas. Linares said Garcia would face prosecution before the courts. Chicas, he added, will soon be released due to lack of evidence of his links with the rebels. Rodriguez said that since establishment of the resettlement community in March this year, eight residents have been abducted by soldiers and accused of collaboration with the rebels. In addition, he said, community residents have suffered constant harassment, and are subjected to strict constraints on mobility and associations. "We demand guarantees that our community will not be bombed, that [the army] desist in its attempts to dismantle the community, release detained community members, and end systematic harassment," said Rodriguez. The Segundo Montes community was named in memory of the Jesuit priest and scholar murdered last November on the Central American University campus. The priest had championed the plight of El Salvador's 1.5 million refugees. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 09/03/90)

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