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El Salvador: Tutela Legal Reports Murder Of Two Journalists

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Sept. 29, Maria Julia Hernandez, director of the Tutela Legal (archdiocesan legal aid office) announced that journalists Pedro Martinez and Jorge Euceda, found dead Sept. 28 in a pick-up truck on the Pan American Highway in San Vicente department, were murdered. Police reports had indicated the two men were killed in a traffic accident. Martinez was director of the magazine *Semana*, and correspondent for the Mexican news magazine *Proceso*. Euceda, a contributor to *Diario Latino*, taught journalism at the National University of El Salvador. Outraged by police claims that the men died in a traffic accident, the journalists union, relatives of the victims and the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), called on President Alfredo Cristiani to launch an immediate investigation of the murders which "must not go unpunished as have crimes against thousands of other Salvadorans." Results of an autopsy conducted at Tutela Legal's demand, showed shrapnel in Martinez's left eye and cuts on the sides of his body. Euceda's corpse displayed multiple head wounds and a broken leg, interpreted by Hernandez as signs of torture. Tutela Legal believes that the victims were probably followed by unknown persons who signaled for them to stop and then attacked. Hernandez speculated that blood on the pavement and the absence of blood inside the vehicle "could mean that the journalists were dragged out of the automobile and then beaten to death." A total of 42 journalists have been killed in the 11-year civil war, 29 Salvadorans and 13 foreigners. On Oct. 1, the Salvadoran journalists association broadcast a eulogy for Martinez and Euceda over a San Salvador radio station. The association expressed its "pain and indignation," and demanded punishment of "those who cloak themselves in impunity." The late journalists were described as "faithful exponents of the new journalism in El Salvador." The killers were portrayed as "enemies...of the media's professional work...who seek to silence the voices of truth." (Basic data from AP, 09/30/90; AFP, 09/29/90, 09/30/90; Notimex, 10/01/90)

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