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Deborah Tyroler

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U.S. Religious Leaders Call For Suspension Of Aid To Guatemala

by Deborah Tyroler

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At a June 12 press conference in Washington, religious leaders denounced the November 1989 abduction, torture, and rape of Sister Diana Ortiz by Guatemalan security forces. They called on the US Congress to require the creation of a human rights investigation committee and demonstrated improvement in observance of human rights before release of any aid to Guatemala in the future. Attorney Paul Sorell said that Sister Diana's experience was similar to those of thousands of Guatemalans every year. He added that 40,000 Guatemalans have been abducted and "disappeared" by the armed forces. Congressperson Ted Weiss (D-NY) said that the abuse suffered by Ortiz was unforgiveable, and expressed support for halting military aid to Guatemala. The Bush administration's FY1992 request for aid to Guatemala includes \$30 million in economic support funds, \$30 million for development projects, and \$2 million in military assistance. (Basic data from EFE, 06/12/91)

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