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El Salvador: On Military Harassment Of Resettlement Communities

by Deborah Tyroler

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According to an Aug. 22 report by Salpress, hundreds of demonstrators affiliated with the Christian Committee of Displaced Persons (CRIPDES) and the Repopulated Communities Council (CNR) marched through the capital and rallied in front of the presidential palace to protest military operations against their communities. The demonstrators presented Presidency and Justice Minister Oscar Santamaria with a summary of military violations since Aug. 1 in Chalatenango, Cabanas, San Vicente, La Paz and Morazan departments. Next, the protesters demanded that the government guarantee unrestricted movement by domestic and foreign humanitarian organizations in affected areas. On Aug. 21, Celia Medrano, director of the independent Salvadoran Human Rights Commission (CDHES), denounced an Aug. 18 army attack on the Segundo Montes resettlement community in Morazan department. Medrano said that CDHES investigators verified that nine civilians were wounded; 23 overcome by tear gas; and six suffered beatings, including a pregnant woman who subsequently miscarried. In his Aug. 25 homily, Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador Gregorio Rosa denounced military actions against resettlement communities including a recent attack in Cinquera, Cabanas department during which a military helicopter bombed corn fields and a chapel. He also criticized army personnel for refusing permission to Bishop Jose Eduardo Alas to visit the San Antonio Los Ranchos resettlement community in Chalatenango department. (Basic data from Salpress, 08/22/91; AFP, 08/25/91)

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