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Deborah Tyroler

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## **President Serrano Blames Rebels For Intimidation Of Press; Inter Press Service Temporarily Closes Guatemala Bureau**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

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At an Aug. 30 press conference, President Jorge Serrano said military intelligence reports indicated that the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) was responsible for recent acts of intimidation against foreign journalists. According to Serrano, the incidents included a bomb placed in El Centro, a downtown Guatemala City office building which houses several foreign news agencies, and an illegal search of offices pertaining to the Mexican government's international news agency, Notimex. Next, Serrano blamed the recent increase in death squad killings on the extreme right. He said, "We know who they are and they include a former presidential candidate," referring to retired colonel Ernesto Sosa Avila of the National Liberation Movement (MLN). According to Serrano, the MLN "is the creator of the 'Officers of the Mountain' which recently released a communique making false accusations against the government and the army." The president said no military officers are involved in the group, but rather civilians dedicated to discrediting his administration. On Aug. 31, the Italian news agency Inter Press Service (IPS) temporarily shut down its Guatemala bureau following a series of death threats against correspondents Gladys Calderon (Guatemalan) and Fabiana Frysainet (Argentine). The IPS office was housed in the El Centro building. The ACAN-EFE news service reported on Sept. 4 that the two IPS correspondents had decided to leave the country. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 08/28/91, 08/31/91, 09/04/91; AFP, 08/31/91)

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