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Salvadoran Rebels Report Cross-border Honduran Troop Movements, Salvadoran Military Use Of Honduran Airspace

by Deborah Tyroler

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In a Sept. 3 communique, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) claimed that since Aug. 17, Honduran army troops had conducted "continuous" incursions into areas under rebel control in Chalatenango department. According to the statement, the incursions resulted in the exchange of gunfire, and endangered the lives of civilian residents. The communique said the incursions "are part of a military plan devised and supported by the US and Honduran rightwing working in complicity" with the Salvadoran army in efforts to justify continued US military aid. The rebels called on Honduran President Rafael Callejas to "control his armed forces," asserting that such actions only serve "to promote confrontation and war in Central America." Next, the FMLN said that between Aug. 18 and Aug. 23, the Salvadoran elite Arce Battalion used Honduran territory to launch offensives against rebel strongholds in Morazan department. The attacks were reportedly launched from Carrizal, Las Flores, Los Amates and San Marcos, in Colomoncagua department (Honduras). The communique said that between Aug. 20 and Aug. 31, the Salvadoran air force used Honduran airspace to launch bombing attacks, and to drop supplies to Salvadoran troops. The FMLN requested intercession from UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. Honduran army spokesperson Col. Napoleon Santos refuted rebel claims that the Salvadoran army used Honduran territory to launch attacks against the FMLN. He also denied reports by civilians in Intibuca department (Honduras), who asserted that they sighted Salvadoran military planes flying over Honduran territory. According to Santos, members of the UN observer group in Central America (ONUCA) stationed on border "have not detected any violation of Honduran sovereignty." (Basic data from AFP, ACAN-EFE, 09/03/91)

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