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Guatemala: Two Soldiers Suspected Of Involvement In Michael Devine Murder Case Released From Custody

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On Sept. 30, Guatemala's military court issued an order to release 11 military personnel implicated in the June 1990 abduction and murder of US national Michael Devine in El Peten department. The Interior Ministry submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court which annulled the order. On Oct. 1, armed forces spokesperson Col. Homero Garcia told reporters that Col. Jose Luis Quilo, chief military court judge, had dismissed the case against Cols. Guillermo Portillo Gomez and Mario Roberto Garcia Catalan, suspected of involvement in the Devine homicide. Portillo Gomez served as commander of the Poptun military base in El Peten at the time of the murder. The two were released on Sept. 17-18. Capt. Hugo Contreras Alvarado and specialist Fabian Arevalo de la Cruz, were released on their own recognizance. Garcia said eight soldiers remained in custody awaiting trial. A US Embassy spokesperson indicated that the judge's ruling would be appealed. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 10/01/91; AP, AFP, 10/02/91)

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