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Guatemala: Dominican Order Nuns Subjected To Intimidation

by Deborah Tyroler
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At a Nov. 11 press conference, Carlota Merida and Alba Mendez members of the Catholic Church's Dominican order of nuns told reporters that on Nov. 5, five unidentified men armed with machineguns searched their Guatemala City residence, and stole US$300. The intruders declared they were seeking Mendez and Sister Vilma Martinez Enriquez. Mendez, vice president of the Guatemalan Nuns Conference (COFREGUA), and Martinez Enriquez are both Salvadoran. The two women were not present during the search. Merida said the search was the second act of armed intimidation against Dominican order nuns in less than a week. The clergywomen also reported receiving threatening telephone calls. On Nov. 12, Efrain Hernandez, a representative of the Guatemalan Bishops Conference, expressed the Church's concern for the "climate of fear...[which affects] the population in general, and not just religious orders." Interior Minister Fernando Hurtado said that police protection had been offered to the Dominican sisters, and that an investigation into the incidents had been ordered. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, Notimex, 11/11/91; ACAN-EFE, 11/12/91)

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