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Honduras: Defendants In Murder Case Say Secret Police Used Torture To Obtain Confessions

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Nov. 16, Malaquias Velazquez and Rigoberto Calix told Radio HRN that secret police agents (Direccion Nacional de Investigaciones-DNI) obtained confessions from them for the Nov. 2 murders of four civilians in El Plomo, Olancho department, through torture. Charges were filed Nov. 13 against the two men and six other suspects. Velazquez said, "The police blindfolded us and tortured us. They kept repeating that we had to say we had carried out the crime for personal revenge. To spare ourselves further [abuse], we confessed." Local press reports and relatives of the victims claim that Col. Carlos Sanabria, chief of the 11th Infantry Battalion in Olancho, and Juticalpa Mayor Armando Montes were behind the killings. According to police sources, the murder victims were members of a gang of hired assassins, and "had many enemies" in Olancho. (Basic data from Inter Press Service, 11/16/91)

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