El Salvador: Army Launches Recruitment Drive After Signing Of Dec. 31 Peace Accords

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by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, January 10, 1992

On Jan. 6, Reynaldo Blanco, of the independent non-governmental Salvadoran Human Rights Commission (CDHES), told the Agence France-Presse that the commission had received innumerable complaints from parents of young men who have been forcibly recruited into military service since Dec. 31. On the last day of the year, government and rebel representatives signed peace accords in New York. The agreement calls for suspension of obligatory military service when the cease-fire goes into effect Feb. 1. According to Blanco, public buses and other vehicles were being forced to stop at military check-points. Young male passengers were then rounded up and taken by force to military barracks. Blanco noted that for many households, these young men are the only wage-earners. In most cases, he said, parents visiting military barracks to request release of sons have been unsuccessful. The peace accords also specify a reduction in army and security forces troop strength from 55,000 to 27,000 over the next 22 months. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 01/06/92)

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