Guatemala: On Abuse Of Street Children

by Deborah Tyrolo

Category/Department: General
Published: Friday, January 24, 1992

In a Dec. 26 TV broadcast by Notisiete, Interior Minister Fernando Hurtado reported that police officer Armando Lopez Sarceno was arrested for physically abusing street children. Hurtado said the arrest undermines allegations of government cover-up and attempts to minimize violence against street children in the capital. The following day, Casa Alianza director Bruce Harris told Cerigua that an arrest order for Lopez had been issued nearly a year ago. He added that arrest warrants for six more police officers are pending. [Casa Alianza provides temporary shelter for homeless children in addition to counseling and legal advocacy services.] On Jan. 16, Interior Ministry spokespersons said a joint investigation with Casa Alianza indicates that street children in Guatemala City total about 5,000. According to the report, public security forces are the street children's "worst enemy." In 1991, seven National Police officers, two private security guards, one military police officer and 25 private citizens were accused of committing crimes against street children. The abuses included four murders, 11 arrests and 15 beatings. (Basic data from Cerigua Weekly Briefs, 12/22/91-01/04/92; Agence France-Presse, 01/16/92)

-- End --