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Guatemala: Army Deliver Six "former Rebels" To Human Rights Attorney General

by Deborah Tyroler

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At a Jan. 24 press conference, army press office (DIDE) director Capt. Julio Yon released six former rebel combatants into the custody of Human Rights Attorney General Ramiro de Leon Carpio. According to Yon, the six surrendered to the army on separate occasions at different locations. He added, "They were abandoned by their companions...and some were wounded, and received medical attention. They requested protection from the army." One of the six, Veronica Ortiz, appeared before journalists with her arm in a cast. She said, "I requested army protection, because I was tired of fighting and because I came to regret all of the things I did during the last five years." [In November, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) reported that Ortiz was taken prisoner by soldiers during combat in Sacatepequez department, and demanded acknowledgement of the same by military leaders. Army spokespersons consistently denied having information concerning Ortiz's whereabouts. See CAU 11/22/91.] Gladys Eugenia Perez Olivario, another self-proclaimed former rebel, said she turned herself over to the army in 1989 and was currently employed by the armed forces. Oscar Ovidio Yol told reporters that he was a member of the Communities of People in Resistance (CPR), not the URNG. The other persons turned over to de Leon Carpio were Abraham Morales Caceres, Eliseo Lopez Alcon, and Maria Xinama. On Jan. 26, de Leon Carpio told reporters that at least two of the former "rebels" were army personnel who had been on leave for the previous two years. He refused to reveal names. Yon responded by asserting that the six were indeed former rebels, but that two had been placed on the army payroll after deserting rebel ranks. He said the army provided them with salaries as a "humanitarian gesture." (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 01/24/92; ACAN-EFE, 01/24/92, 01/26/92)

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