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Guatemala: Summary Of Recent Violent Incidents

by Deborah Tyroler

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Feb. 6: Police spokespersons told reporters that Enrique Adolfo Piril, a Guatemalan Religious Youth member, was shot to death in Guatemala City by unidentified assailants. The spokespersons noted that Piril was not robbed. Feb. 10: University of San Carlos (USAC) professor Manuel Estuardo Pena was shot to death at his Guatemala City home by two unidentified assailants. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Pena was involved in researching problems faced by Guatemala City's low-income households. Pena also collaborated with several neighborhood committees. Police spokespersons reported at least five persons killed and 20 others injured when four unidentified men attacked a public bus near Tulul, Suchitepequez department. The assailants, who carried grenades and high-caliber weapons, were traveling as passengers on the bus. According to police, after the driver was forced to pull off the highway, the assailants robbed the passengers and then opened fire. Feb. 11: The Guatemalan Council of Churches reported that 18 Methodist missionaries from the US had been assaulted on a highway in El Quiche department by a group of "four heavily armed men who tied them to trees and beat them." Feb. 12: University Students Association (AEU) spokespersons reported that the body of Luis Solares Argueta, a medical student at the University of San Carlos, had been discovered in Guatemala City. Argueta, abducted the previous evening, had been tortured and shot to death. USAC rector Alfonso Fuentes denounced the wave of violence targeting USAC students and faculty. He said three students and faculty members went into exile last week following a series of death threats. In a recent bombing, AEU headquarters were seriously damaged. Salvador Ramirez, mayor of Santiago Atitlan, Solola department, said soldiers were responsible for the Feb. 10 robbery and murder of bus passengers. According to Ramirez, six persons, all residents of Santiago Atitlan, died as a result of bullet wounds. Defense Minister Gen. Jose Garcia attributed the Feb. 10 murders of bus passengers to the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). According to the minister, the rebels "dressed in uniforms resembling those of the army." UN special human rights investigator Christian Tomuschat arrived for a three-day visit to assess human rights conditions in Guatemala. On Feb. 21, the UN Human Rights Commission is scheduled to vote on appointing a UN human rights observer to Guatemala. (Basic data from Agence France- Presse, 02/11/92; Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 01/06/92, 02/10-12/92)

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