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Deborah Tyroler

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Guatemala: Soldiers Receive 30 Year Sentence For Killing Four Civilians

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Feb. 28, army spokespersons told reporters that a military court had found soldiers Nicolas Gutierrez and Eliseo Shuchite guilty of murder, abuse of authority, and several additional charges in connection with the January murder of four civilians in a shantytown on the outskirts of the capital (See CAU, 01/24/92 for previous coverage). The two soldiers were given thirty year prison terms with no eligibility for parole. The spokespersons confirmed earlier reports that the soldiers, stationed at Guatemala City's La Selva military base, were drunk and in uniform when they shot and killed Juan Xan, his child Marvin Xan and Juan Calel and Francisco Yax. The four indigenous persons had recently fled to the capital from El Quiche department to escape violence there. The spokespersons said that investigators found 117 machinegun shells at the scene of the murder. Attorney General Asisclo Valladares denounced the crime and reiterated an earlier call for application of the death penalty against the perpetrators. (Basic data from Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 02/28/92)

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