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## **Costa Rica: Rural Guard Police Officers Torture & Execute Suspected Drug Traffickers**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Feb. 25 in San Jose, Interior Minister Luis Fishman and Judicial Police (OIJ) director Rafael Guillen told reporters that 13 members of an anti-narcotics unit pertaining to the Rural Guard (GAR) had been arrested in connection with the Feb. 21 torture and execution of two persons suspected of drug trafficking. According to the report, the incident occurred on an indigenous reservation near the town of Cunabre in the Talamanca mountain range, and was witnessed by at least nine persons. Fishman said forensic reports corroborated witnesses' statements that the victims were handcuffed, beaten, and then shot to death by the police patrol. He said the police officers then forced local residents to hurl the victims' bodies off a cliff. The bodies of the victims were recovered Feb. 24 by judicial authorities. On Feb. 26, Attorney General Jose Maria Tijerino said accounts provided by witnesses to the events of Feb. 21 indicated that members of the GAR unit implicated in the double execution also raped two indigenous women and physically and verbally abused community members. Tijerino noted that several of the 13 arrested in the case had received military training in Israel and Chile. (Basic data from Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, Agence France-Presse, 02/25/92, 02/26/92)

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