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Guatemala: Update On Case Against Suspended Attorney General Acisclo Valladares

by Deborah Tyroler

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On the evening of Nov. 27, police officers detained suspended attorney general Acisclo Valladares, taking him to a prison in northern Guatemala City. The police, who picked Valladares up at a private hospital where he had been interned for the previous week, acted on an arrest warrant issued against Valladares in connection with his alleged involvement in a fraud case. (For previous coverage see CAU 11/06/92). Speaking from the wheelchair in which the police escorted him from the hospital, Valladares declared that "those who are interested in maintaining impunity, drug trafficking and corruption alive in this country have now orchestrated my political lynching." Earlier in the week, following issuance of the arrest warrant against Valladares, a judge set bail at 4.5 million quetzales (US\$850,000). Valladares's attorney appealed the ruling, asserting that the amount was far out of proportion to the charges against his client. The appeals court, however, actually increased the bail amount to US\$1.1 million. Valladares claims his relatives have been receiving death threats. He said his son, also named Acisclo Valladares, left the country fearing for his life. On Nov. 20, unknown assailants shot at Valladares's brother-in-law in Guatemala City. Valladares also expressed concern over his own safety, since he is sharing prison facilities with inmates who he, as attorney general, had been responsible for prosecuting. Valladares is being held at a minimum security facility used for detention of suspects awaiting trial. (Sources: Agence France-Presse, 11/20/92, 11/27/92; Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 11/26/92, 11/28/92)

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