

27 May 1981

### Salvadoran National Guardsmen Linked to Murders

An FBI laboratory report has linked two of the six Salvadoran National Guardsmen held in connection with the deaths of four U.S. churchwomen on 2 December 1980. (See the issues of 10 December and 13 May.) The report indicates that a fingerprint lifted from the women's van matched that of one of the guardsmen. Ballistics tests on shell casings found at the scene of the murders matched a military-issue West German-made G3 rifle which the Salvadoran Government issued to another of the suspects. Information that could point to direct involvement of the remaining four guardsmen was not established by the FBI report.

In spite of the evidence, it may be difficult to convict the guardsmen under Salvadoran law. Eyewitnesses have not come forward because there is no incentive under the law to turn state's evidence. Additionally, there is a lack of any clear-cut motive for the murders, and intimidation and assassination of judges and attorneys working on politically sensitive cases are not without precedence.

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