

UNCLAS 6F

*** BEGIN MESSAGE 67 ***
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SERIAL: PA2311173889

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: TAKE 1 OF 2 -- JESUIT LEADER ON KILLING OF PRIESTS

SOURCE: PANAMA CITY ACAN IN SPANISH 1540 GMT 23 NOV 89

TEXT:

//((BY ANTONIO MARTINEZ))

((TEXT)) SAN SALVADOR, 23 NOV (ACAN - EFE) -- ONE WEEK AFTER THE KILLING OF SIX JESUIT PRIESTS, JOSE MARIA TOJEIRA, PROVINCIAL OF THE JESUIT ORDER, HAS INSISTED THAT "THERE IS STRONG PRESUMPTION" THAT THE MURDERERS ARE MILITARY MEN OR PERSONS LINKED TO THE MILITARY. TOJEIRA SAID THAT HE TRUSTS THE STATEMENT THAT A WITNESS WILL MAKE THAT WILL CLARIFY THE CRIME.

TOJEIRA, JESUIT PROVINCIAL FOR CENTRAL AMERICA, 42, AND A SPANISH CITIZEN LIKE THE FIVE PRIESTS WHO WERE MURDERED, SAID TODAY THAT HE ECHOES THE STATEMENTS MADE BY SAN SALVADOR ARCHBISHOP ARTURO RIVERA Y DANAS THAT "THERE IS A STRONG PRESUMPTION THAT THE MURDERERS ARE ARMED FORCES MEMBERS OR PEOPLE CLOSELY LINKED TO THEM."

DURING A MEETING WITH CORRESPONDENTS AT THE JESUIT CURIA IN SAN SALVADOR, LOCATED 100 METERS FROM THE HOUSE WHERE HIS SIX COLLEAGUES WERE KILLED EARLY IN THE MORNING ON 16 NOVEMBER, TOJEIRA SAID HE TRUSTS THE AUTHORITIES HAVE "ALREADY LISTENED TO THE STATEMENT OF AN IMPORTANT WITNESS IN ORDER TO CLARIFY THE CRIME."

TOJEIRA REFUSED TO IDENTIFY THE WITNESS FOR SECURITY REASONS.

TOJEIRA ADDED: "I DO NOT WANT TO GIVE DETAILS. THE WITNESS REQUESTED DISCRETION. EVIDENTLY, AFTER THAT WITNESS MAKES HIS STATEMENT, WE WILL AT LEAST KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENED, THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND HOW IT HAPPENED. HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO SAW SOMETHING, NOT EVERYTHING THOUGH. UP UNTIL NOW, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND A WITNESS THAT CAN SAY, I SAW HOW THEY KILLED THEM. SOME, HOWEVER, SAW OR HEARD INCIDENTAL THINGS THAT COULD HELP CLARIFY THE ORIGIN OF THE CRIME."

ACCORDING TO TOJEIRA, "THERE IS OTHER IMPORTANT DATA IN THE TRACES THAT THOSE PEOPLE (THE MURDERERS) LEFT BEHIND. A VERY USEFUL CLUE IS THE TYPE OF HEAVY WEAPONRY THEY USED. THEY NOT ONLY USED RIFLES, BUT ALSO MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS. THE ANALYSIS OF THAT ARMAMENT'S RESIDUAL MATERIAL WILL BE CONDUCTED BY FOREIGN EXPERTS, INCLUDING SPANISH ONES."

TOJEIRA ASSERTS THAT THE 70 JESUITS LEFT IN EL SALVADOR, 37 STUDENTS AND THE REST ADULTS, ARE "VERY GRIEVED, BUT NOT DISHEARTED; AFRAID, BUT NOT SCARED STIFF."

TOJEIRA STRESSED: "THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEAT FEAR IS TO STRUGGLE AGAINST THOSE WHO SHOW FEAR, AND WE ARE WILLING TO DO THAT."

(MORE)

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