

UNCLAS 67

SERIAL=PA0401191090 \*\*\* BEGIN MESSAGE 118 \*\*\*  
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WARNING: MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

SERIAL: PA0401191090

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: PONCE PROVIDES LIST OF SOLDIERS NEAR SITE OF KILLINGS

SOURCE: PANAMA CITY ACAN IN SPANISH 1716 GXT 4 JAN 90

TEXT:

((TEXT)) SAN SALVADOR, 4 JAN (ACAN - EFE) -- COLONEL RENE ENILIO PONCE, CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES, HAS PROVIDED THE LIST OF SOLDIERS WHO WERE IN SERVICE NEAR THE CENTRAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WHEN SIX JESUIT PRIESTS WERE ASSASSINATED TO A SALVADORAN COURT.

JUDICIAL SOURCES TODAY SAID THIS LIST IS INCLUDED IN A SWORN STATEMENT THAT COL PONCE GAVE TO THE SAN SALVADOR FOURTH CRIMINAL COURT. THE CONTENTS OF THE STATEMENT HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED.

THE COURT IS INVESTIGATING THE MURDER OF ONE SALVADORAN AND FIVE SPANISH JESUITS EARLY ON 16 DECEMBER AT THEIR RESIDENCE AT THE UCA, WHEN AN ALL NIGHT CURFEW WAS IN FORCE IN EL SALVADOR.

OFFICIAL SOURCES HAVE INDICATED THAT THE STATEMENT IS IN RESPONSE TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CHARGING THAT "MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES ARE SUSPECTED OF HAVING PARTICIPATED IN THE DEATH OF THE PRIESTS."

SALVADORAN PRESIDENT ALFREDO CRISTIANI SAID ON 2 JANUARY THAT THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE PRIESTS' ASSASSINATION, INCLUDING UCA RECTOR IGNACIO ELLACURIA, IS NOW "ALMOST TOTALLY FOCUSED INSIDE THE ARMED FORCES."

JUDICIAL SOURCES SAID TODAY THAT FIDEL CHAVEZ MENA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC), WILL ALSO BE CALLED TO TESTIFY AS A WITNESS AND AT THE REQUEST OF THE PROSECUTORS INVOLVED IN THE CASE.

ACCORDING TO A JUDICIAL SOURCE, THE PROSECUTORS HAVE ALSO ASKED GREGORIO ROSA CHAVEZ, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF SAN SALVADOR, TO SEND HIS SWORN STATEMENT, ALSO AS A WITNESS, CONCERNING THE MURDER OF THE PRIESTS.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS FROM THE OPPOSITION POLITICAL LEADER AND THE AUXILIARY BISHOP IS DUE TO THEIR REMARKS ON THE INDIVIDUALS PRESUMABLY IMPLICATED IN THE CRIME.

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