

# Atrocities laid to Salvador military

**FUNDED BY U.S. TAXPAYERS**

U.N. panel rules  
massacres,  
disappearances the  
work of troops  
funded by U.S.

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3

By Peter James Spielmann  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — El Salvador's U.S.-funded military was to blame for the vast majority of atrocities in the country's civil war, from the massacre of six Jesuit priests to the slaughter of thousands of civilians, an international rights panel said in a report released Monday.

U.S. funded

The panel, called the Commission on the Truth of El Salvador and appointed by the United Nations, called for the immediate removal from the military of all officers it cited for human-rights violations. The commission said all rights abusers should be barred from political office for at least 10 years.

"The army, security forces and death squads linked to them committed massacres, sometimes of hundreds of people at a time," said the panel, which was led by U.S., Colombian and Venezuelan jurists.

Most of the 75,000 people killed in the war were civilians suspected of leftist leanings.

A fifth of the population of this Massachusetts-sized country of 5 million was displaced.

The proportional toll in the United States would be 50 million displaced and nearly 4 million

◆ SALVADOR from A-1

## Atrocities work of Salvador military

The U.S. Embassy monitored it all and reported monthly to Washington in a document known in-house as the "grim-gram."

Among killings blamed on the military establishment was the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero in 1980, in the first year of the civil war.

The report also cited a series of political assassinations by left-wing rebels, including the killing of civilians, "dissidents in the rebel movement, mayors, judges and unarmed U.S. military personnel." It put the number of "grave violations" by rebels at 400 killings and 300 disappearances.

The commission's report was released Monday by its authors: former Colombian President Belisario Betancur, former Venezuelan Foreign Minister Reynaldo Figueredo and U.S. human-rights lawyer Thomas Buergenthal.

Throughout the 12-year conflict that ended with 1992 peace accords, the United States backed a series of Salvadoran governments against left-wing rebels, providing about \$6 billion in military and financial aid.

Just hours before the report was issued, President Alfredo Cristiani called for an immediate general amnesty for war criminals. Leaders of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front, which led the rebellion, rejected Cristiani's suggestion and called for adherence to the panel's recommendations.

**Boutros-Ghali opposes amnesty**  
U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali also denounced the amnesty suggestion.

The country is struggling to hold elections and Cristiani and the Salvadoran military had tried for months to prevent the report's

release. Failing, the military tried to discredit the report.

To a lesser extent, the commission pointed the finger at leftist rebel leaders, who it said ordered the assassinations of U.S. soldiers and of mayors of towns under government control.

Among rights violations during the war that especially shocked the world were the 1989 slaying of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter, and the assassination of Romero as he led a Mass.

### Defense chief implicated

The commission found a chain of command for the slaying of the Jesuits that led to Gen. Rene Emilio Ponce, then a colonel, who Friday resigned his post as defense minister. Ponce called the commission "unfair and prejudiced."

Ponce and others ordered Col. Guillermo Alfredo Benavides to have special counterinsurgency soldiers from the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion kill the Jesuits and leave no witnesses, the report said.

That unit was chosen for the task because it had raided the premises of the Jesuits a few days earlier, looking for evidence of Roman Catholic support of the guerrillas during a rebel uprising in San Salvador, the capital.

The Atlacatl Battalion, which was disbanded last year, also committed the worst massacre of the war, the slaughter of at least 200 peasants around El Mozote in December 1981. Some estimates of the death toll reach 1,000.

Another finding of the commission had long been widely suspected — that Romero's assassination was ordered by Roberto D'Aubuisson, a founder of Cristiani's rightist ARENA party who died of cancer last year.

The investigators were unable to fix responsibility for the 1980 slaying of four American church women — three Maryknoll nuns and a Catholic lay worker.

But the report named numerous officials who it said were aware that senior officers had ordered the killings — among them the National Guard director, Col. Carlos

## NAMED AS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS

Some of the Salvadorans named as major human rights violators in the report on atrocities during El Salvador's civil war:



D'Aubuisson

► Roberto D'Aubuisson, a founder of the governing National Republican Alliance party, for ordering the assassination of Archbishop Oscar A. Romero in 1980. Died of throat cancer Feb. 20, 1992.



Ponce

► Gen. Rene Emilio Ponce, for ordering the murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in 1989. Offered his resignation as defense minister on Friday.

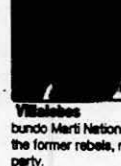
► Gen. Orlando Zepeda, vice-minister of defense; Gen. Gilberto Rubio, chairman of the Salvadoran joint chiefs of staff; Col. Francisco Elena Fuentes, Salvadoran military attache in Guatemala; and Gen.

Juan Rafael Bustillo, former air force chief, retired and serving as military attache to the Salvadoran embassy in Israel. All cited in the Jesuit case.



Benavides

► Col. Domingo Monterrosa, former head of the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion, for ordering the 1981 El Mozote massacre of hundreds of civilians. Died in 1984 when his helicopter was blown up, apparently by a rebel bomb.



Villalobos

► Joaquin Villalobos and Ana Guadalupe Martinez, for the murders of small-town mayors in contested areas. They are leaders of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, the former rebels, now a legal political party.

► Fernando Segrera, Hans Christ, Rodolfo Antonio Parker Soto and Hector Antonio Regalado, for having ties to rightist death squads that murdered thousands during the war. They are private citizens living in El Salvador.

Eugenio Vides Casanova.

Five guardsmen who said they acted on higher orders were convicted in the case and were sentenced to 30 years in prison.

### Photos trigger debate

Photographs of the bodies being removed from a shallow grave prompted intense American debate over the U.S. aid to the country.

The commission said leaders of the rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front ordered the 1985 killing of four U.S. Marine Embassy guards at an outdoor site in an operation known as the

### "Zona Rosa Massacre"

In El Salvador, Cristiani said a general amnesty would "close the door to all temptations of revenge and reprisals."

"We want to tell the country at this time that the time to pardon each other for any harm caused has arrived," he said.

Ferman Cienfuegos, a member of the former rebels' political commission, rejected the idea of an immediate amnesty.

"First we must apply the recommendations and later discuss the possibility of an amnesty," he said.