

Salvadoran National Civilian Police involved in 8 assassinations

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Ovidio Mauricio González, Director for *Tutela Legal* (the Human Rights Commission of the Archdiocese of San Salvador), announced that of the 26 assassination cases investigated by the organization in 2006 that were attributed to “death squad” style groups, eight of the killings implicated the National Civilian Police based on “their empirical characteristics.” Mauricio also lamented the ineffectiveness of the institutions responsible for carrying out the persecution of crime.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of *Tutela Legal*'s founding as the Human Rights Commission of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, the organization presented its annual report for 2006, which highlights an increase of homicides that fit the profile of extrajudicial executions.

Mauricio explained that during the past year *Tutela Legal* investigated 233 homicide cases, consisting of those attributed to gang violence (utilizing hit men to carry out executions), the illegal use of force by police and penitentiary officers, and other cases.

“Last year violent homicide generated 3928 deaths, which amounts to the killing of 10 people per day; these systematic criminal patterns are evidence of the participation of organized groups that continuously perpetrate these types of crime,” said Mauricio

Of the 233 homicide cases investigated by *Tutela Legal*, 139 (59.66%) were classified as extrajudicial executions. These cases were further categorized as:

- Extrajudicial executions and homicides attributed to members of the National Civilian Police
- Politically motivated assassinations
- Social cleansing meant to generate collective hysteria
- Unknown motives

“The 8 cases attributed to the National Civil Police by *Tutela Legal* are based on sufficient empirical evidence that has convinced us of the participation of police members [in the assassinations]. Politically motivated executions, along with executions for social cleansing and for the purpose of collective hysteria represent 22.5% of the total homicides investigated. These killings targeted people who were in confrontations with authorities, because of their participation in unions, or even because of their religion,” said Mauricio.

Tutela Legal representative David Morales expressed concern for the lack of importance that is given to the crimes that violate the lives of Salvadorans. “*Tutela Legal* has received many grievances and denouncements that expose the impunity that favors criminals of war and of inhumane crimes that not only affect present cases but also the 1980s massacres in El Mozote, Quesera and other places. These cases are not investigated, and the material and intellectual authors of the crimes are not condemned,” Morales stated.

The Director for *Tutela Legal* also recognized the work done by the founder of the institution, Maria Julia Hernandez, characterizing her work as a “contribution to democracy” during a much more difficult time in El Salvador.

(translated from the Spanish by CISPES; view original article at

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