

Human rights group reports on killings

NEW YORK (AP) — Torture, mutilation and mass executions are common occurrences in Guatemala since Gen. Efraim Rios Montt assumed power in March, Amnesty International charges. The group said about 2,600 Indians and peasants were slaughtered by military and civil defense units in at least 112 actions between March and July this year. The international human rights or-

ganization reported in mid-August that 2,186 Indians had been massacred since the March military coup. The updated figure was released in a report Monday during the group's annual "Prisoners of Conscience Week." According to the report, during a day-long terror spree on April 5, 100 people were murdered in Mangal, 35 killed in Covadonga, and at a village in Quiche soldiers gathered all the re-

sidents and raped the women, beheaded the men and battered the children to death. Amnesty International said its information pointed to a government program of mass killing of unarmed civilians. The country's Roman Catholic bishops last month condemned both sides in the deaths of many innocent Indians killed during the conflict.

Train wreck evacuees can return home

LIVINGSTON, La. (AP) — Hundreds of people ventured back home Tuesday for the first time in two weeks, mistrustful of assurances that there would be no long-term contamination from a train fire that sent clouds of toxic smoke over the town. "I'm not so much worried about myself and my husband, but what about my kids and our grandchildren?" said Pauline Buffy, who was concerned about long-lasting chemical contamination. "I don't think they've really given us the assurance we wanted," she said. Authorities warned residents not to eat vegetables from their gardens or food that was left on shelves or in refrigerators when the town's 2,700 residents were evacuated Sept. 28. But at two quickly called town meetings, health officials said they did not expect long-term complications. "We don't think you will have any problems," said state health officer Dr. Sarah Braud. "If we did, we wouldn't have let you back in."

Some residents — those who live in 20 homes very close to where 43 cars in a 101-car Illinois Central-Gulf States freight train derailed — were not allowed to return. Those homes were destroyed or badly damaged and now are in a roped-off area, close to the charred wrecks of the overturned rail cars where clean-up crews were still at work. Away from that area, homes seemed to have suffered little damage other than broken windows. Trees and other plants still have their leaves.

The fire began with a roar, burned in brilliant colors and produced heavy black smoke. It took days to extinguish because of the highly flammable chemicals carried in the derailed train cars. Gov. Dave Treen signaled an end to Louisiana's worst railroad disaster Monday, making the long-awaited decision allowing residents to return after hazardous waste experts told him the dangerous chemical explosions were over.

State police set up checkpoints outside the rural town and began allowing residents in at about 8 a.m. Those returning were handed a one-page sheet of "health tips."

It suggested that residents vacuum their houses, wash all cooking utensils, change air-conditioner filters and wash clothes and bedding. Although a spot check of vegetables from local gardens had shown no sign of contamination, it said those vegetables should be discarded.

Willie Spinks, who lived in a rented house about 2½ blocks from the derailment site, said his family is moving out.

"All we are going to do is go back and get our pictures."

Oregon Daily Emerald

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