

El Salvador's air war intensifies, civilians bombed

Editor's Note: The National Campaign to Stop the Bombing in El Salvador was started by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (C.I.S.P.E.S.) in response to the growing number of civilian casualties from the air war in El Salvador. Members of the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee (P.C.A.S.C.) and other Portland area residents are working in support of this campaign.

Reports of civilian bombing casualties in El Salvador have prompted a number of fact-finding missions from the United States. All confirmed that civilians were being killed and injured

by government bombing and air attacks. Moreover, although concrete evidence was scarce, all reported credible refugee reports of the use of incendiary bombs, either "home-made" napalm bombs or white phosphorous marker rods used directly against persons on the ground.

The routine use of incendiary bombs in the Salvadoran conflict has not been thoroughly established by any of the fact-finding missions or by independent news reporters on the scene in El Salvador. However, doctors visiting El Salvador have reported treating refugees having wounds consistent with those inflicted by napalm and white phosphorous. The

use of these types of weapons has been described by refugees displaced by the bombing campaign, and Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, has confirmed the existence of napalm and white phosphorous bombs in the Salvadoran Air Force arsenal. Mr. Pickering, however, denies Salvadoran Air Force use of napalm bombs in the counterinsurgency war, and claims that the white phosphorous bombs are used only to mark targets for directing air and artillery attacks.

Salvadoran and United States officials argue that the civilian casualties, those killed or wounded by the air attacks, had provided "logistical

support" to the guerrillas. But the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights and Americas Watch point out that the Geneva Conventions require a different view:

"The issue is not whether civilians sympathize with or support the FMLN (the rebel army); the issue is whether they are combatants or noncombatants. If they are noncombatants, and their deaths do not result from attacks on legitimate military targets, killing them violates international law. Such deaths are gross human rights violations regardless of whether the victims support the guerrillas or the (government) Army."

Recent reports from El Salvador indicate a steady increase in the intensity of the air war. In January the Reagan administration sent the first two C-47 "airborne fire support platforms" to El Salvador. These special counterinsurgency planes, used extensively in Vietnam, represent a substantial increase in the firepower that the Salvadoran airforce now has at its disposal. In February, three more A-37 Dragonfly attack aircraft and several (8 to 10) helicopter gunships were included in a weapons shipment from the United States. Among the new helicopters are four Hughes Model 500's equipped with guns capable of firing five to six thousand rounds per minute. The delivery of these new weapons systems has greatly increased concern over possible civilian casualties.

Persons interested in the National Campaign to Stop the Bombing in El Salvador may contact the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee at P. O. Box 6443, Portland, OR 97228, (503) 227-5102.

State police seek people of color

by Lanita Duke
GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — The Oregon State Police Department is sending out an S.O.S. to qualified candidates of color who are interested in law enforcement as a career.

The state Police is a complete law enforcement agency with eight divisions including patrol, criminal, communications, Fish and Game and the crime labs. "We provide services to other police agencies," said Trooper Aaron Olson. "We operate the Bureau of Criminal Identification where copies of those fingerprinted are kept statewide."

Olson added that those interested in

helping others would find a career as a State Trooper rewarding. "We are social agents. We conduct public talks on rape awareness and crime prevention," he added.

Out of 854 State Police officers, there are five Native Americans, seven Asians, seven Hispanics and one Black male. "A good police department has equal representation of the community they serve. The Oregon State Police wants a better representation of our communities in Oregon," Olson added.

Among the reasons for the small number of Afro-Americans is the hardship placed on the trooper's family assigned to an isolated com-

munity or in an all-white area. "Being in uniform eight hours a day is one thing, but being out of uniform the rest of the time is quite another," Olson noted. "We are aware of these problems."

Currently, there are openings in Portland and Beaverton. The requirements for a State Police officer are to be a U.S. citizen, 21 and older, valid driver's license and a good driving record. They are looking for people in good health, those who are mature and exhibit integrity. If interested, contact Trooper Aaron Olson, 643-4702, or Trooper Gordon Kim, 229-5980. Application deadline is May 31, 1985.

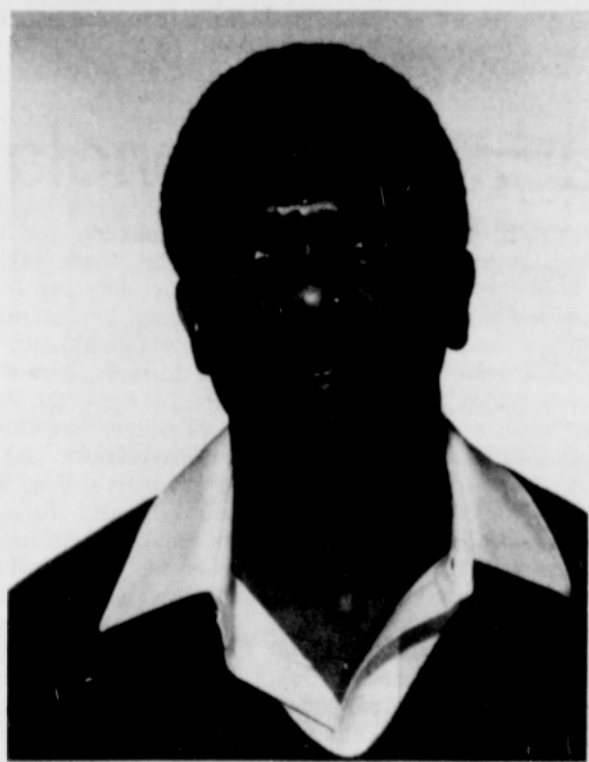


Scott Bailey and Rhys Scholes (far right) testify before the ad hoc legislative committee on Homeowners' Property Tax Relief at a public hearing on the proposed homeowners' exemption. The meeting, chaired by State Senator Jan Wyers, was held

Wednesday, March 13, at the Portland City Council Chambers. (L-r) Sen. Walt Brown, Sen. Margie Hendriksen, Rep. Dick Springer, Sen. Jan Wyers, and Rep. Dave McTeague. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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