

Investigation sought in death of U.S. priest in Honduras

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Quito, Ecuador--A United States congressman, Robert Torricelli, has asked for an investigation into the death of a U.S. Jesuit priest who joined a Honduran guerrilla group in 1983.

The National Commission for the Protection of Human Rights said that Torricelli wants a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of Father James Carney.

Carney, also known as Father Guadalupe, died in 1983 in the mountains of Olancho Department close to the center of activities of a leftist Honduran rebel group. His death was never fully explained, nor was his body returned to his family.

The priest was among 184 people who disappeared in Honduras during the 1980's. Human Rights group say the missing disappeared at the hands of military groups working under a banner of "national security."

National Commission spokesman Leo Valladares charged last year that military death squads were trained by agents of the CIA and by Argentinian military advisors.

"Congressman Torricelli is interested to know what was the possible involvement of the CIA in human rights violations," Valladares said.

The Honduran human rights group met with Torricelli in Washington on June 27. The congressman offered his help in the investigation of those who disappeared.

Valladares said he raised the issue of Father Carney because the priest's family had visited Honduras in a search for information and the body.

Valladares said that the Honduran government had asked the State Department to declassify documents to substantiate charges against the military and civilian death squad leaders supposedly responsible for the disappearance of the 184 leftists.

Private human rights groups have said that Carney was picked up by Honduran forces along with other insurgents.

A former member of a Honduran military battalion, now in exile in Canada, who carried out torture on prisoners had confirmed that Carney was captured by military forces and was tortured and murdered.

Honduran military officials, however, said that Carney and other rebels headed by Doctor Jose Maria Reyes died in combat in the Olancho mountains.

Carney arrived in Honduras in 1968 and became a naturalized Honduran citizen. He was accused of subversion and deported from the country in 1979. In 1982 he joined an insurgent group in Nicaragua, the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers.

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