

Sweden and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, that have been stimulating the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua and the Organization MISURASATA. We wish to extend special recognition to the Government of Colombia that hosted the two first meetings of this process."

Mexico D.F., April 22, 1985

For the Government of Nicaragua,  
Comandante Luis Carrion.

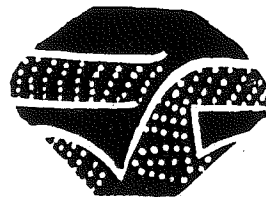
For MISURASATA,  
Brooklyn Rivera.

\*Preliminary reports on the May negotiations in Colombia indicate difficulties between the principal negotiators. SAIIC expresses the hope that the talks produce positive results soon.



#### EL SALVADOR

The National Association of Indigenous Salvadorans (Asociacion Nacional Indigena Salvadorena, or ANIS) is conducting a campaign to force a trial of government military forces who killed 74 members of an Indian farming cooperative called Las Hojas. According to an article in the New York Times on February 25, 1985, leaders of the community say the attack resulted from a dispute between the village and "two large neighboring landowners who wanted access to the Indians' lands." The landowners enlisted the aid of local military forces by claiming that the villagers were supporters of the leftist guerrillas who operate in other parts of El Salvador. About 200 soldiers entered Las Hojas early on February 23, 1983, and dragged away Indians singled-out by hooded informants who villagers claim work on the neighboring estates. The bodies of those abducted were later found scattered in the surrounding countryside, most with their arms and legs tied together and bullet wounds in their heads.



Although the identities of the army officers who commanded the attack are known, they have not been disciplined by the army or indicted by civilian courts. A lawyer for ANIS is quoted as saying that judges are afraid to pursue the case. "If they touch the army they will be threatened or killed." ANIS leaders have met with two presidents of El Salvador, the chief of staff of the army, the attorney general, and the United States ambassador in an effort to bring the killers to trial. Both the United States embassy and the Salvadoran government's official Human Rights Commission have conducted investi-

gations which support ANIS's allegations.

Although much of the population of El Salvador is descended from the people who lived in the area before the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s, membership in ANIS totals only about 8,000 people. Indian traditions have diminished widely since 1932, when the military crushed a popular uprising in the western part of El Salvador by massacring some 30,000 people. Indian communities were primary targets of the assault, and many Indians subsequently abandoned traditional customs in an effort to avoid further repression.



#### UPDATE ON GUATEMALAN REFUGEES IN MEXICO

The Mexican government has announced its intentions to relocate over 30,000 Guatemalan refugees (those still living in recognized settlements in Chiapas) to the state of Campeche and Quintana Roo on the Yucatan peninsula by the end of July. In fact, forcible relocation has already begun. On May 12, 1985, the Mexican army moved into the camp of Media Luna and rounded up and evacuated over 200 people. They were taken to Quintana Roo with none of the usual rest stops en route.

The refugees have consistently opposed relocation. Moving from Chiapas would mean abandoning the community and resources which have been painstakingly built over the past 4 years. Moving away from the border is a threat to their culture and identification as Guatemalans and as Mayan indigenous people. The move symbolizes a permanent integration into Mexican society and giving up all hope of returning to Guatemala. For more information please contact the Guatemala Relief Project, P.O. Box 7197, Oakland, CA 94601, (415) 261-5648.

