

The outraged community claimed that they do not now, nor have they ever, burned their dead. On the other hand, bodies of those who have been tortured and killed are sometimes burned by landowners.

ONIC has said that these acts "reaffirm our decision to continue reclaiming our rights and our firm desire for unity with popular sectors, and with those who, just as we do, repudiate the terror and violence and wish profound change for Colombia."

In addition to political assassinations, many human rights violations suffered by Indians occur over land disputes, or during the military's counter-insurgency operations. Indians have been killed when would-be landowners decided to evict them from land they have farmed for centuries. Some have even been imprisoned on charges of "land invasion." More recently, the army has been abducting Indian men to use as porters or guides during their counter-insurgency operations. Some are later released; many more are executed or "disappeared." Authorities tell families that these men are helping voluntarily, or deny having seized them.

OREWA Demands Participation in Development Plans

In the Rio Pato region of the Choco, new development projects have been undertaken without consulting the communities affected. These include new roads and a hydroelectric plant. The government has turned a deaf ear to requests by OREWA, the regional Indian organization, to discuss problems these projects will present for Indian communities. Among these, according to OREWA, are an increase in colonization of Indian territories and reservations, the defiling of sacred sites such as cemeteries, damage to the ecology of the region, and the loss to Indians of land and resources. OREWA is asking for a guarantee of protection from colonization on reservations adjacent to new roads, reimbursement for damage to land and crops caused by construction, and that the government consult with Indian communities about these projects, and that it respect Indian cultural values and autonomy.

EL SALVADOR

ANIS: There is No Justice for Indian People in El Salvador

On July 1st, approximately 100 armed soldiers from the Cuartel Atonal Army Garrison entered the Indian community of Canton Las Cruces (near Santa Elena in Usulután Province), disrupting the crucial corn harvest. The soldiers arrested five members of that community who are also members of A.N.I.S. (the National Association of Salvadorean Indians), which unites 45,000 Lenca, Maya and Nahuat people. (See SAIIC "Urgent Action Bulletin" of July 7, 1988). The five are accused of being supporters of the FMLN (Faro-bundo Martí Liberation Front) which has been waging an armed struggle during nine years of civil war in El Salvador.

On July 7th they were released from custody and, according to ANIS members in Sonsonate Province, the five had been tortured. Two of them, including Jesus Mondragon, a very active member of ANIS, returned in serious condition and are currently undergoing medical treatment.

On the week of July 23rd, another two members of ANIS were taken by the army from their homes at night and murdered. This signals a worsening of conditions for Indian people in El Salvador who have continually suffered harassment, repression, and disappearance.

In addition, the Supreme Court in El Salvador again dismissed charges under the Amnesty Law against the military officers and informers