

# NEWS RELEASE

From Congressman Joe Moakley, 9th District, Massachusetts

For Immediate Release  
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## STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN JOE MOAKLEY (D-MASS.) ON STATUS OF SALVADORAN JESUIT CASE

"As Chairman of the Speaker's Special Task Force on El Salvador, I sent a staff delegation to that country to gather information concerning the status of the investigation into the November 16 killing of six Jesuit priests, their cook and her young daughter. The staff delegation was in El Salvador from January 8th to 10th, and reported to me today.

Based on the information provided by the staff and from other sources, I have concluded that the investigation into the killings has made substantial progress but I worry that the possibility of a coverup remains. The nature and circumstances of the crime are such that the involvement of high level military officials, either in ordering the murders or in having prior knowledge of them, is likely. The members of our task force will not be satisfied with an investigation that is limited to the identification of those who actually did the killings. Those who ordered or otherwise consented to the crime must also be brought to justice.

To date, investigators believe they have identified the unit that carried out the killings, and the senior officer who had operational responsibility for the unit that night. Now that the investigation has a central focus, it is anticipated that the process of gathering corroborating information will go forward rapidly. President Cristiani predicts that the investigation will be completed within a week, including the identification of those implicated throughout the chain of command.

I hope the investigation will proceed rapidly, but also thoroughly. A successful investigation and prosecution in this case would constitute a significant breakthrough in the history of El Salvador and remove a serious obstacle to the development of genuinely democratic rule in that country. On the other hand, a failed investigation, or one that concludes prematurely, would seriously endanger continued Congressional support for the Salvadoran government and renew doubts about the ability of civilian leaders in El Salvador to exercise control over the armed forces.

Members of the Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador will continue to monitor closely the progress on the investigation, and will travel to El Salvador for a first hand look at the situation at an appropriate time in the near future."

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