

Rebels cited for murder of bishop

BOGOTA, Colombia (CNS) — A Colombian bishop was kidnapped and killed, reportedly by rebels led by an ex-priest, in a rural area near the Venezuelan border Oct. 2.

The body of 73-year-old Bishop Jesus Emilio Jaramillo Monsalve of Arauca was found 24 hours after he was abducted with several other persons after being stopped on a country road. The bishop had suffered several gunshot wounds, including two to the head. It was unclear from reports whether the bishop's companions — three priests, a seminarian and the Arauca diocesan secretary — escaped or were freed by their captors.

Colombian authorities said the suspected killers are members of the rebel National Liberation Army. The unit which kidnaped the cleric was reportedly led by a Spanish ex-priest, Alfredo de la Fuente. The rebel army is headed by another former Spanish priest, Manuel Perez, authorities said.

Pope John Paul II on Oct. 4 called Bishop Jaramillo a "new victim of unjustifiable violence."

The pope condemned "actions against the life and dignity of persons, especially when a pastor of the church is involved who has given his life to evangelization work and helping the neediest."

The pope's condolences were sent to Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo of Medellin, president of the Colombian bishops' conference.



Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez of San Salvador, a mediator between El Salvador's government and leftist rebels, briefs reporters in Mexico City on the progress of preliminary talks between the two sides. "Too many things" remain under contention for peace to be realized soon, he said after initial discussions.

Local authorities in the Arauca area said the bishop was instrumental in establishing health and education programs.

The bishops' conference called the assassination "vile, despicable and sacrilegious."

"It seems incredible that the cruel violence includes among its victims bishops, the successors of the apostles," the confer-

ence statement said. It added, "the violent ones, the ones who crush life and, with a mentality darkened by hate and insensitivity, plant death, tragedy and agony — they won't triumph. The good, the love of Christ will conquer the forces of evil."

Bishop Jaramillo had been spiritual leader of the Arauca region for nearly 20 years. Arauca was an apostolic vicariate until 1984 when it was made a diocese.

The National Liberation Army, the first of the Colombian guerrilla forces, was founded in 1964. In 1965, Father Camilo Torres, a sociologist, joined the guerrilla movement after a movement of workers which he helped organize was suppressed by the government. The next year, he became the first Catholic priest in modern times to die as a combatant in a leftist guerrilla movement.

Officials consider Auschwitz link in recent murder of Jewish leader

BRUSSELS, Belgium (CNS) — Police were not ruling out political assassination in the killing of a Belgian Jewish leader, who helped mediate in a dispute over the Catholic convent at Auschwitz.

Dr. Joseph Wybran, chairman of the Coordination Committee for Jewish Organizations in Belgium, was shot in the head October 3 and died the following day.

"It is impossible to determine the exact motive at this stage of the inquiry," a police statement said. "But given the nature of Dr. Wybran's activities, a political assassination, or at least one springing from an ideological or philosophical opposition, cannot be excluded."

Wybran, 49, was shot in the parking lot of Erasmus Hospital, a remote complex on the edge of the highway that rings the Bel-

gian capital. He was head of the hospital's immunology, hematology and transfusion division.

A moderate without any known enemies, he was found lying on the ground by his car, killed by a single bullet from a 7.65-caliber pistol. Police said there were no witnesses and they had no clues to the killing.

"Everything leads one to the conclusion that one or more killers were lying in wait for the victim," the police statement said.

David Susskind, vice president of the Coordination Committee, said Belgium's Jewish community was stunned.

"What's happened is incomprehensible. He was a moderate, a pacifist in all he did and said ... We hope it's not a political crime," he said.

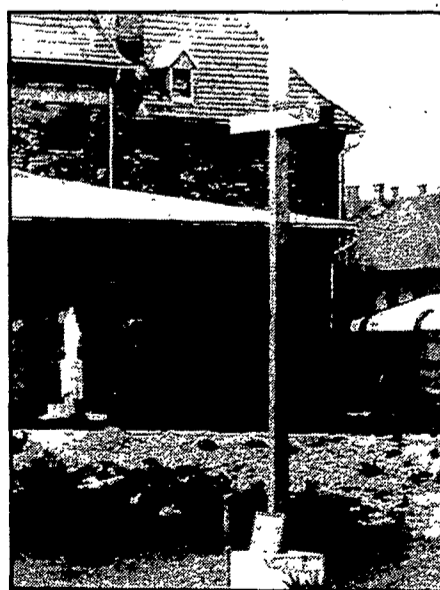
As head of the Coordination Committee for just under a year, Wybran was the secular leader of Belgium's 30,000-member Jewish community.

"He had no enemies, there had been no death threats," said lawyer Markus Pardes, who was Wybran's predecessor. "He may have been killed as a symbol because he was leader of the Jewish community."

Wybran had returned the previous week from a visit to Poland during which he discussed the convent controversy with representatives of the Catholic Church and the government.

The dispute, which has since been defused, began when Poland's Catholic Church failed to meet the deadline set by a 1987 agreement for moving the convent from the Nazi death-camp site.

Most of the 4 million people who died there during World War II were Jews. Earlier in the summer, Wybran wrote to Poland's primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, asking him to seek a solution to the convent conflict and to state clearly that the Polish church rejected anti-Semitism and racism.



Officials are investigating a possible link between the conflict of the convent at Auschwitz and the death of Dr. Joseph Wybran.



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