

# Violence mars election maneuvers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Concerns about sloppy voting practices in El Salvador, the brutal assassination of a Catholic presidential candidate in Mexico, and violence at a South African demonstration marred election-related developments worldwide in late March.

In El Salvador's March 20 polling, slipshod procedures, long lines and names missing from registers were among several problems demanding correction before the April 24 presidential runoff, said international observer and U.S. Catholic Conference official Thomas Quigley.

One of 3,000 observers of the Salvadoran polling, Quigley is USCC adviser on Latin America and was a member of the nongovernmental American delegation present for the election.

He said that despite the fact that representatives of the country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal and of the United Nations were at each polling station, there was no "adequate procedure for taking care of" people who said their names did not appear on lists.

Quigley said members of his delegation, which included members of the U.S. Congress, agreed on how "sloppy many of the aspects of voting turned out to be."

In the runoff, Armando Calderon Sol, candidate for the ruling right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance, will face opposition leader Ruben Zamora, whose leftist coalition is dominated by ex-guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National

Liberation Front. They are taking part in elections for the first time since disarming 15 months ago under U.N. peace accords.

Questions also arose of whether the ruling party, called ARENA, skewed the elections through undemocratic practices.

Later in the week, Mexico mourned the violent loss of its leading presidential candidate, cut down by assassination in the northern border city of Tijuana March 23.

Mexican church leaders expressed outrage and sadness over the slaying of Luis Donaldo Colosio, 44, in the Aug. 21 elections, for the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party. Described by one archbishop as "a man of faith" who worked for the people, Colosio was shot as he campaigned for votes in a poor neighborhood of Tijuana, some 20 minutes south of San Diego.

Church sources said Bishop Emilio Berlie Belaunzaran of Tijuana spent the evening at the hospital and administered the sacrament of the sick to Colosio, who was a Catholic.

Archbishop Carlos Quintero Arce of Hermosillo, next to Colosio's home state of Sonora, told Catholic News Service in a telephone interview from Los Angeles that he spent most of the same evening in Hermosillo with Colosio's father and brothers and sisters, praying the rosary while the politician was undergoing surgery.

"This crime is a totally reproachable

act," said the archbishop, a friend of the Colosio family. Calling the murder a "great loss" for the country, he said Colosio was "a man of faith."

The candidate also had demonstrated "a real desire to work for Mexico and, above all, to help the neediest, to eradicate poverty, increase the salaries of workers — and not because he wanted to make an impression (on voters) but because he really believed in these things," Archbishop Quintero said.

Archbishop Adolfo Suarez Rivera of Monterrey, president of the Mexican bishops' conference, told CNS he was filled with "great pain and sadness" over the news of Colosio's murder.

In other developments in March, the Mexican government reacted quickly to demands by insurgents in the southern state of Chiapas for electoral reform.

But it appeared to balk at other rebel demands for constitutional guarantees of land and cultural liberty for indigenous people and peasant farmers nationwide. Organizations representing such groups across the country have allied themselves with those demands.

The administration of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari also responded to the Zapatista National Liberation Army call for greater clean elections by convening a special congressional session to reform the federal electoral code.

Leaders of the surprise rebellion by some 2,000 mostly Indian Zapatistas had questioned whether the upcoming Au-

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AP/Wide World Photos  
Della Castro de Niebles cries and prays after Luis Donaldo Colosio's body is carried away from Mexico City March 25.

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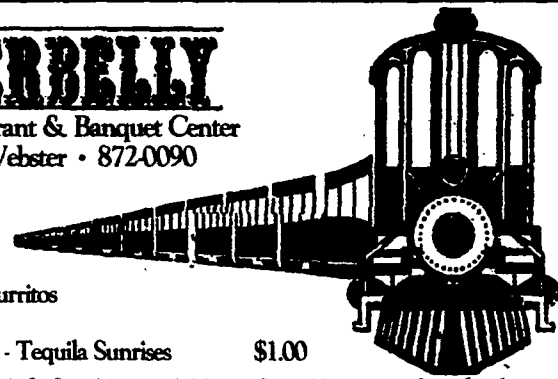
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