

Salvadorans' deaths remain a mystery

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SAN SALVADOR - (AP) -- President Tony Saca on Tuesday condemned the grisly killings in Guatemala of three Salvadoran members of the Central American Parliament, including the son of the alleged mastermind of El Salvador's 1980s death squads.

Police discovered the lawmakers' charred bodies Monday on a rural road near El Jocotillo, about 20 miles southeast of the Guatemalan capital, after they failed to show up as expected at their hotel. It was not clear if the killings were politically motivated, although Guatemalan President Oscar Berger said that was being investigated.

"It was not by chance," he said. "We have various theories, and we are not ruling out the possibility that it was a political crime."

The dead legislators were identified as William Pichinte, Ramón González and Eduardo D'Aubuisson, the 32-year-old son of the founder of El Salvador's ruling party. All three represented El Salvador at the Central American Parliament, based in Guatemala's capital of Guatemala City. Their driver, who was not identified, was also killed.

An autopsy confirmed that two of the three legislators had been shot in the head.

"D'Aubuisson and Pichinte had bullet wounds to the skull, one each," medical examiner Mario Guerra said. The injuries to the other two victims "could not be determined, because they were so badly burned."

The killings took place on the eve of the 15th anniversary of the death of Roberto D'Aubuisson, the charismatic leader of the Salvadoran right whom human rights groups accused of helping form death squads responsible for the kidnap, torture and murder of tens of thousands of civilians during El Salvador's civil war. He died of throat cancer at age 48 on Feb. 20, 1992.

Speaking at the elder D'Aubuisson's grave at a prescheduled event commemorating his death, Saca called the killings in Guatemala premeditated but would not speculate on who might be responsible.