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## UD Students to Protest School of the Americas

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## NEWS TIPS

### FRIDAY, NOV. 17: UD STUDENTS TO PROTEST SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

Twenty-six students, faculty and staff members from the University of Dayton will leave campus Friday, Nov. 17, to protest operation of and U.S. tax support for the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Ga. The UD group will join the Ohio contingent of about 1,000 protestors and the total of approximately 5,000 expected to join the protest.

They'll travel in three vehicles. A van carrying 11 people is expected to leave from Liberty Hall at 9 a.m., another van carrying 11 people will leave from Liberty Hall at 1 p.m., and a car carrying four will leave from Liberty Hall at 3 p.m. Those making the trip will gather behind Liberty Hall about 10 to 15 minutes prior to departure to load the vehicles and get settled for the 11-hour drive.

According to SOA Watch, an independent organization that seeks to close the school using nonviolent means and organizes the annual protest, the School of the Americas trains Latin American soldiers in combat, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics. Graduates of the SOA have been responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America, it says, including the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980 and the El Mozote massacre of 900 civilians in 1981.

About 14 of the UD participants plan to "cross the line" to take the protest onto the grounds of Fort Benning, which houses the school. That's considered active civil disobedience, an arrestable offense. In the past, protesters who agree to leave the grounds on buses are not arrested, and all of the UD participants plan to comply with the request to leave the grounds.

Sister Nancy Bramlage, S.C., director of the Center for Social Concern at UD, said her travels in Latin America have convinced her of the connection between the SOA and violence and are behind her conviction to protest. She'll leave in the 9 a.m. van on Friday.

"Why we want to use U.S. tax money to continue to train them makes no sense to me. It's so against civil democracy and Christianity," she said.

Many of the victims of Latin American violence have been members of religious communities. "When the religious are victims, it makes the news," Bramlage said. "Hundreds of others have been killed, but they're not judged as important so they don't make the news." While she is deeply saddened by the killings of fellow members of religious communities, she said she's proud of the Catholic Church's role in "bringing to light the atrocities. But what about all those other people?"

For media interviews, contact **Sister Nancy Bramlage, S.C.**, at (937) 229-2576 or via e-mail at [Nancy.Bramlage@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:Nancy.Bramlage@notes.udayton.edu).

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