

Saturday, July 12, 2003

LIMA, Peru -- Shining Path rebels killed seven people from military patrols in the worst attacks by the group in nearly three years, the Defense Ministry reported.

The rebels attacked three patrols in a remote village in southeastern Peru, killing five members of the security forces and two civilians, the ministry said.

The fighting occurred Thursday when troops were on patrol in the zones of Matucana and Iruquis of Huanta province, 250 miles southeast of Lima.

An army major, three soldiers and a member of the navy died in the fighting, according to the Defense Ministry.

"Two brave members of the self-defense committees of the zone also died," the statement said, in reference to the civilians killed.

The Maoist Shining Path rebels -- whose actions declined sharply after the capture of their legendary leader, Abimael Guzman, in 1992 -- have been conducting raids in remote towns of southeastern Peru over the last few weeks.

-- From News Services

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