

ETA FINDS NEW WAY OF OPPRESSING BASQUES

San Sebastian, March 21, 2001



Eta, the Basque pro-independence terrorist organisation, was blamed yesterday for the killing of another local politician in the Basque region.

Froilán ELESPE, 54, Socialist deputy mayor of a small town near San Sebastián was shot dead in a bar - the 29th victim of Eta violence since the end of the ceasefire. The outrage followed car bomb attacks in the south of Spain at the weekend.

In a developments which is no less insidious, it now emerges that terrorists are putting pressure on Basque sportsmen. A Basque radio station reported yesterday that Eta had confirmed it last year demanded money from the French football international Bixente LIZARAZU.

The radio station said it had seen an Eta document dated last month accusing Basque sportspeople of "assuming the public representation of Spain and France when both states are responsible for the oppression of Euskal Herria (*the Basque homeland*)".

Eta threatened to adopt "measures against him (Lizarazu) or his possessions" if he refused to pay, and attacked the player for singing the French national anthem with his hand on his heart at the start of international matches. Last month Lizarazu announced he was considering retiring from the French national team.