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## **Costa Rican Court Reads Five-year Prison Term Sentence For 11 Mercenaries Engaged In Attacks On Nicaragua**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Sept. 25, the supreme court of Alajuela province sentenced 10 foreigners and one Costa Rican mercenary to five years imprisonment for "hostile acts damaging to the country." The 11 mercenaries were captured alongwith two other men on April 25, 1985, on national territory near the Nicaraguan border by the Costa Rican Rural Guard. The Guard also seized a large quantity of heavy weapons from the mercenary camp. The ten foreigners included two Europeans, Frederick Gilberry (English) and Claude Chaffard (French), and eight Nicaraguans: Santos Julio Centeno, Juan Antonio Flores, Francisco Aguilar, Ignacio Peres, Jesus Rodriguez, Salvador Lazo, Daniel Antonio Mendoza, and Freddy Benevidez. The Costa Rican receiving a prison term was Mauricio Hernandez. The 13 mercenaries arrested last April were linked to the Nicaraguan Democratic Front (FDN) through relationships with US citizen John Hull. Hull has been accused by two US reporters of being a CIA officer and of engaging in several illegal activities. As a result of considerable turmoil, including shots in the street, surrounding the trial, Costa Rican authorities attempted to keep reporters out of the court room. Judge Carlos Manuel Villalobos, who also presided over the sentencing of two other escaped mercenaries, announced he would read the court's verdict on Sept. 30.

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