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Nicaraguan Appeals Court Upholds 30-year Sentence For Hasenfus; Formal Request For Pardon Imminent

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Dec. 11 an appeals court in Managua upheld the 30-year prison sentence handed down to US citizen Eugene Hasenfus by the Anti-Somocista Peoples Tribunals. On Nov. 15 Hasenfus was convicted of violating public security laws, terrorism and criminal association. Although his Nicaraguan attorney, Enrique Sotelo Borgen, did not appeal the conviction, Nicaraguan law provides for an automatic review by an appeals court. Sotelo Borgen told reporters he would likely request a pardon for Hasenfus next week. A pardon could be requested from the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights or from President Daniel Ortega. Once the formal request for pardon has been issued, approval by the National Assembly is required. However, according to Nicaraguan law, in the event the Assembly is in recess (such as at present), the president is empowered to grant pardons. (Basic data from PRENSA LATINA, 12/11/86)

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