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Nicaragua: Regional Autonomy Legislation Goes To National Assembly For Approval

by Deborah Tyroler

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After three days of debate in Puerto Cabezas, on April 25 delegates of the country's six ethnic minorities residing on the Atlantic coast completed the final touches on regional autonomy legislation. The 43-article draft has been presented to President Daniel Ortega, who will formally introduce it for debate and approval by the National Assembly. According to the draft document, candidates in future elections to regional government bodies must be Nicaraguan citizens, over 21 years of age, and residing in the area for a year prior to elections. Dates for elections were not established, pending a census of eligible voters in the coastal region. Delegates to the assembly in Puerto Cabezas failed to arrive at a consensus on renaming the two regions currently known as Zelaya North and Zelaya South, opting instead for further "consultations" with residents. Suggested names for the two regions that won the most support from assembly delegates were simply "North Atlantic Coast," and "South Atlantic Coast." (Basic data from PRENSA LATINA, 04/26/87)

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