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Nicaraguan Contra Tribunal Finds Six Guilty Of Torture & Other Human Rights Abuses

by Deborah Tyroler

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On March 26, contra spokesperson Bosco Matamoros told reporters that a contra tribunal had found six of their number guilty of torture or other human rights abuses, and ordered their expulsion from the contra movement. The tribunal comprised of seven contra military commanders was established as a result of US pressure. Matamoros said the tribunal's decision, issued March 24 in Tegucigalpa, found the six responsible for 14 crimes with 14 separate victims: 1 murder, 2 rapes and 11 instances of torture or other mistreatment of prisoners. Expulsion from the movement was considered the most severe possible penalty. The Honduran government reportedly no longer allows the contras to operate prisons on Honduran territory. Matamoros said there was no point in imposing fines because the defendants were peasants with "no economic resources." One of the offenders, "Israelita," has been deported from Honduras to Nicaragua. Matamoros said he was tried in absentia and was found guilty of murder, rape and torture. Contra intelligence chief and former Guardsman, "Commander Mack," was found guilty of covering up the murder of a contra who was suspected of being a Sandinista agent. According to Matamoros, a former Sandinista and current contra regional commander known as "Nolan," was found to be an accomplice in the crimes of murder, rape and torture. A contra called "Pandillero" was found guilty of murder and torture, Matamoros said. Two others, known as Rambo and Ali, were found guilty of torture, he added. (Basic data from New York Times, 03/27/89)

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