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Deborah Tyroler

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Salvadoran Refugees In Honduras Reject Government Conditions For Repatriation

by Deborah Tyroler
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According to a report by Notimex dated Oct. 9, several weeks ago Salvadoreans residing at the Colomoncagua refugee camp in Honduras announced their intent to return to their places of origin, and rejection of an offer by the Salvadoran government for relocation at the Normandia and Nancuchiname farming communities in Usulutan department. On numerous occasions, Salvadoran officials have accused refugees residing in Honduran camps of collaborating with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Salvadoran Vice President Francisco Merino has said the refugees' continued insistence on repatriation without government direction and assistance demonstrates their links to the FMLN. Members of a commission representing the UNHCR, the Honduran and Salvadoran governments were scheduled to visit the camps at Colomoncagua, San Antonio, and Mesa Grande, where 13,000 refugees reside. They will discuss relocation to Normandia and Lancuchilame, Usulutan department. On Oct. 9, some 1,500 Salvadoran refugees postponed their return to El Salvador which had been scheduled for Oct. 10, after the government reiterated its refusal to permit them to return to their places of origin. The Christian Pro-Displaced Committee (CRIPDES) announced that the repatriation would be delayed until the government, refugee representatives, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) establish an agreement guaranteeing the refugees' safety. In the first week of October, Deputy Interior Minister Col. Carlos Humberto Figueroa announced that 13,000 Salvadoran refugees in Honduras will be repatriated in January to the Nancuchiname and Normandia farms, regardless of refugees' relocation preferences. The Patronato para el Desarrollo Comunal (PADECOES) announced in the same week that 8,000 residents at the Colomoncagua camp have opted to begin repatriation on Nov. 15 to their places of origin in Los Hatos and El Barrial del Cerro Pando, Manguera jurisdiction, Morazan department. The refugees plan to return in groups of 2,000 at 15-day intervals. (Basic data from Notimex, 10/09/89; 10/10/89 weekly summary by FMLN's Centro de Documentacion e Investigacion)

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