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Guatemala: Cabinet Reshuffle, Resignation Of Attorney General For Human Rights

by Deborah Tyroler
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On Oct. 16, Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo presided during swearing-in ceremonies for two new cabinet members. Ariel Rivera replaced Mario Palencia as Foreign Minister, and Juan Francisco Pinto Casasola took over as Finance Minister in place of Rodolfo Paiz Andrade. According to the local media, Cerezo has selected Carlos Morales Villatoro, a general and attorney, to take over as Interior Minister, replacing Roberto Valle Valdizan. On the same day, Guatemala's first Attorney General for Human Rights, Gonzalo Menendez de la Riva, submitted his resignation. Menendez said he resigned for personal reasons linked to his advanced age. Federico Pola, head of the Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations (CACIF), described the cabinet changes as "innocuous." According to Pola, Paiz Andrade was to blame for Guatemala's current economic crisis, reflected in the high cost of living and deepening impoverishment. Since the new Finance Minister, Juan Francisco Pinto Casasola, served under Paiz Andrade as deputy minister, said Pola, Guatemalans cannot expect significant changes in the "imposition of arbitrary,...illegal laws" which has caused "chaos and uncertainty" among taxpayers. (Basic data from Notimex, 10/16/89)

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