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Panama: Hundreds Demonstrate Demanding U.S. Compensation For Destroyed Homes

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On May 20, hundreds of Panamanians staged a rally outside the US Embassy to demand compensation for thousands of people whose homes were destroyed in the Dec. 20 US invasion of Panama. The protesters carried banners and shouted slogans against US-installed President Guillermo Endara. The rally was organized by the Committee for War Refugees of El Chorrillo, a Panama City neighborhood destroyed in the US invasion and since transformed into a vacant lot. El Chorrillo was located next to the headquarters of the now defunct Panama Defense Forces. Former inhabitants sent a letter to President George Bush complaining that five months after the invasion they have received no help from Washington. An estimated 25,000 people, most of them El Chorrillo residents, were left homeless by the US invasion. The El Chorrillo homeless said they want Washington to set up an office in Panama City to process damage claims. On the same day, some 300 relatives of Panamanian civilians killed in the invasion attended an outdoor mass at a cemetery with a common grave holding the remains of 106 invasion casualties. (Basic data from AFP, 05/20/90)

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