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Deborah Tyroler

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## **Panama: 15,000 Public Employees Dismissed Since U.S. Invasion**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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In an interview with daily newspaper La Prensa (05/27/90), Joaquin Olivella, leader of the National Council of the Dismissed (CONADE), said some 15,000 public employees have been dismissed since President Guillermo Endara took power after the US invasion. Olivella said, "Although the Constitution stipulates that Panamanians must take arms to defend the country in the event of an invasion, they have been dismissed by those who think that persons fulfilling a patriotic duty cannot work for the present government." The Dignity Battalions were created in 1988 by former Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega to counter US aggression. The Endara administration argues that the dismissed persons had been accused of human rights violations and vandalism.

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