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Panama: Opposition Group Demands Release Of Persons Imprisoned After U.S. Invasion

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On May 28, the Political Prisoners Pro-freedom Movement (MPPP) accused President Guillermo Endara's government of "judicial terrorism" against supporters of deposed Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. The organization advocates release of persons imprisoned after the US invasion. Movement activists demonstrated in front of the Attorney General's headquarters in Panama City, and released to the press a statement asserting that the government had refused political prisoners rights of habeas corpus. In addition, the court system has not permitted the setting of bail for such prisoners. An estimated 4,000 denunciations against persons accused of criminal acts were presented against Noriega followers. Meanwhile, the number of political prisoners in Panamanian jails is unknown. Unofficial sources put the number at over 6,000. Government officials describe imprisoned Noriega supporters as common criminals. Among the detained are 21 members of the general's joint chiefs, journalists Escolastico Calvo and Luis Martinez, and Dignity Battalion commanders Enrique Thompson, Benjamin Colamarco and Arturo Marquinez. (Basic data from AFP, 05/28/90)

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