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## **Nicaragua: On Delays In Resettlement Of Former Contras**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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According to a recent report by Witness for Peace, thousands of former contras and their families have not yet been "resettled" in so-called rural development poles, the Nicaraguan government's program for reintegrating the demobilized contras into civilian life. As of mid-August, the only functioning development pole is located near El Coral, Chontales department. In this area, the plan is to distribute 11,400 ha. of arable land to 3,000 former contras. Local officials say that finding vacant or unused land is a time-consuming process. Meanwhile, "large numbers" of former contras are observed in nearby El Almendro hanging about on the streets gambling and drinking to pass the time. Plans to resettle contras and families in other rural areas of the country are proceeding at a slower pace. A development pole is to be constructed near Rio Blanco (central Nicaragua). To the present, scattered patrols of "rural police" staffed by former contras constitute the only evidence of the eventual resettlement effort. The rural police corps is charged with maintaining order in the development poles. An estimated 1,200 to 2,000 former contras are currently waiting to set up housekeeping in this development pole. [Basic data from 08/15/90 report by Witness for Peace (Washington, DC)]

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