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Guatemala: Deposed Gen. Rios Montt Barred From Presidential Candidacy

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Aug. 22 at a news conference, national election board director Felix Castillo Milla announced that the board had ruled against the aspirations of deposed general Jose Efraim Rios Montt to run for president in the November elections. The three-party coalition supporting his candidacy had three days to appeal the ruling through the courts. In its resolution, the election board said "neither the head and leaders of a coup, armed revolution or similar movement that has altered the constitutional order, nor those who have assumed the head of government as a result, can run for president or vice president of the republic." The Supreme Court, in a nonbinding opinion sought by Congress last year, said Rios Montt cannot be president or vice president because of a constitutional proscription on the holding of those posts by people who assumed power in a coup. As of Aug. 22, the only candidate qualified by the election board to run in the presidential race is former Guatemala City mayor Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen of the National Advance Party. The election board has yet to rule on the applications of at least seven other candidates, including Jorge Carpio Nicolle, whose name was submitted by the National Center Union and the National Authentic Central. Nicolle, a journalist, lost in 1986 to incumbent President Vinicio Cerezo. (Basic data from AP, 08/22/90)

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