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Nicaragua: Police Begin Searches Of Public Transport Vehicles To Collect Weapons From Civilians

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On Aug. 24, the Agence France Presse reported that it had confirmed police were conducting search and seizure operations of public transportation vehicles in Managua as part of the government's ongoing civilian disarmament program. The Interior Ministry has announced that persons found carrying illegal weapons will face sanctions of up to six months in prison. According to government officials, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) distributed "more than 100,000 rifles" among supporters before President Violeta de Chamorro took power in April. The local press reported that the Sandinista Popular Army is also participating in the weapons collection effort. During the FSLN's tenure in power, the army had distributed weapons to many Nicaraguans to defend themselves against contra attacks. In the first two weeks of the weapons collection effort, which began Aug. 1, the police had reportedly seized 972 heavy firearms in the country's major cities.

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