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## **Guatemala: Rios Montt Committed To Presidential Candidacy Despite Court Ruling**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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According to a Sept. 2 report by Notimex, former general Efraim Rios Montt remains committed to running for president in November, despite recent decisions by the Supreme Court and national elections board to bar his candidacy. (See CAU, 08/24/90.) Rios Montt has asserted that he will use all available legal resources to have the decisions overturned. According to the Mutual Support Group (GAM), Rios Montt's 16-month presidency (1982-83) was characterized by extreme brutality. In a public statement, GAM said Rios Montt "governed under a permanent state of siege, razed many villages in the highlands, and thousands of Guatemalans were abducted, tortured, disappeared, imprisoned and exiled. Human rights organizations have issued numerous reports on Rios Montt's counterinsurgency campaigns. Over 400 villages were destroyed during his tenure in office, and tens of thousands of Guatemalans fled into Mexico. In late 1982, the UN Subcommittee on Human Rights condemned "frequent acts of repression, murders and mass displacement of rural and indigenous populations." In July 1982 Rios Montt established "special forum tribunals," condemned by international human rights defense groups, and dismantled in September 1983. Of the over 450 Guatemalans subjected to trials under the special tribunals, 300 were subsequently disappeared. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/02/90)

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