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Former Contras Take Over Agricultural Land In Northern Nicaragua

by Deborah Tyroler

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In its Sept. 10 issue, La Prensa reported that last week former contras occupied more than 3,000 ha. of agricultural land in the El Cua area of Jinotega department. The occupation of four estates three private holdings, and an agricultural cooperative set up during the previous Sandinista administration was led by former contra commander Kaliman (Simeon Aguirre). Local residents were quoted by La Prensa as saying that Aguirre justified the takeover by claiming President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's government has not delivered all the assistance promised to former contras. The three private estates occupied by Aguirre and followers are known as Santa Elena (1,260 ha.); La Flor (2,100), and Los Milagros (291 ha.). The cooperative's land area totaled 221 ha. Former contra commander Franklin (Israel Galeano) has called on the government to deliver 1 million ha. of cultivable land to his counterparts. In response, Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo said that under existing agreements, the government is obligated to turn over no more than 50,000 ha. to the former contras. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 09/10/90)

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