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Panama: Chinese Residents Occupy Office Of U.N. High Commissioner For Refugees

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Sept. 21, 500 Chinese demanding an end to "official persecution" occupied the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Panama City. Protests outside the building commenced Sept. 20 in response to a new government program to repatriate undocumented residents, many of whom are Asians. Lee Tu Hing and Huan Quin Sen, spokespersons for the demonstrators, accused the police of "insulting and persecuting" them, and demanded "protection and security." According to officials, in the past decade some 40,000 Chinese have entered the country by paying bribes of up to \$20,000 for visas and passports. President Guillermo Endara's government has pledged to end this "trafficking in nationalities." (Basic data from AFP, 09/21/90)

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