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Nicaragua: Report On Oct. 1 Protest Organized By National Workers Front (fnt)

by LADB Staff

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Since President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro took office in April, inflation has soared to 3,200%, the national currency has been devalued by 2,093%, public service subsidies have been eliminated, and unemployment has reached 40%. In response to announcements last week that 15,000 public employees and 10,000 soldiers would be dismissed in October, and that 16 enterprises confiscated by the Sandinista government would be returned to former owners, the National Workers Front (FNT) began mobilization for a nationwide 24-hour strike on Oct. 1. (See CAU 09/26/90, 09/28/90 for previous coverage.) Sept. 29: Protesters burned old tires in the streets of the capital and organized neighborhood meetings throughout the country. Shoppers filled Managua's markets attempting to stock up on foodstuffs and other consumer goods in anticipation of shortages and price hikes should the general strike extend beyond Oct. 1. Sept. 30: Thousands of shoppers again filled Managua's markets. La Barricada reported that former president Daniel Ortega sent a message to US President George Bush requesting that the international community participate in resolving Nicaragua's economic crisis as quickly as possible. Oct. 1: At dawn, over 2,000 police were in place surrounding the presidential palace complex in Managua. According to the Agence France Presse, about 1,500 people turned out to protest the high cost of living, unemployment and the absence of employment security. Dozens of old tires were burned throughout the capital city. The demonstration was organized by the National Workers Front (FNT). Notimex reported that 400 protesters marched to the palace, but made no attempt to break through the police barricade. The crowd dispersed after 30 minutes of speeches and chanting of slogans. [Basic data from Notimex, 09/29-10/01/90; Prensa Latina (Cuba), 09/29/90; AFP, 09/29/90, 10/01/90]

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