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Nicaragua: Government Creates High-level Commission To Settle Land Disputes

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 15, the government announced the creation of a National Agrarian Commission to resolve land disputes. Headed by Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo, commission participants include Interior Minister Carlos Hurtado, Agriculture and Livestock Minister Roberto Rondon, army chief Col. Humberto Ortega, directors of the Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA) and the Natural Resources and Environment Institute (IRENA), and representatives of groups in competition for land use. (See CAU 10/10/90 for analysis of land tenure problems in contemporary Nicaragua by William I. Robinson.) The government decree establishing the commission specifies that advisory services are to be provided by two "experts in agrarian reform topics," one appointed by the government, and the other, a "former official." According to unidentified local observers cited by AFP, the latter will likely be Jaime Wheelock, minister of agriculture and agrarian reform under the Sandinista National Liberation Front government. At least 12 Nicaraguans have been killed and dozens injured since July in clashes over the control of agricultural land. (Basic data from AFP, 10/15/90)

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