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## **Nicaragua: Report On Former Contras' Actions To Protest Government Delay In Providing Land & Other Benefits**

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Nov. 1: A group of former contras armed with rifles blocked the Rama Road, the only overland route into southeastern Nicaragua. According to the Associated Press (11/06/90), the group numbered 200. The protesters staged the blockade to demand land, credit, food disarmament of the civilian population and reinstatement of Erwin Barberena as chief of the rural police, a force created by the government on request by the former contras to patrol areas settled by them and their families. Nov. 3: The former contras occupying the Rama Road called on Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo to visit them and intervene on their behalf with the government. A delegation of representatives from the archbishop's office, the government, and the Organization of American States International Verification and Support Commission (CIAV). The protesters, however, said they wanted the archbishop to make a personal appearance. Nov. 4: During his Sunday sermon in Managua, Obando y Bravo criticized the former contras for using force. He asked that the ex-contras behave like "civilized people," and commence a dialogue with the government to discuss their demands. Seven members of the so-called Southern Front occupied the Santo Domingo church in Managua and commenced a hunger strike. They said they were protesting government delays in turning over land to the disbanded contra army. Nov. 6: In Managua at a press conference, Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo said former contras had seized the regional government office in Bluefields, calling on the government minister to resign, and the local Sandinista police force to disband. He told reporters that the action was in solidarity with counterparts who occupied the Rama Road. Another group of former contras had stormed the offices of Radio Zinica, a Bluefields radio station linked to the former Sandinista regime. Regarding the hunger strikers in the Santo Domingo church, Lacayo said banks were still determining who owned the land in question. (Basic data from EFE, 11/04/90; AFP, 11/02/90, 11/04/90, 11/06/90; ACAN-EFE, 11/04/90; AP, 11/06/90)

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