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Nicaragua: 11 Killed In Occupation Of Police Station By Former Contras

by Deborah Tyroler

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Dec. 16: About 60 former contras seized police headquarters in Jalapa, Nueva Segovia department, demanding land promised by the government and the removal of police and soldiers from the region. In the battle to oust the occupiers, 11 persons were killed, and between 20 and 30 injured. Military sources reported that 30 people had been arrested. The Interior Ministry announced the formation of a special anti-terrorism unit. Dec. 17: Jalapa police chief Lt. Eddy Peralta told the Agence France Presse that the former contras had been forcibly removed. He said that many local residents "do not like the police." In a televised interview, Interior Ministry spokesperson Frank Cesar said that the government was investigating the incident. Cesar also denounced a series of attacks on elected United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) officials which began during the weekend. (See article in this issue.) Dec. 18: Some of the former contras involved in the confrontation in Jalapa fled to nearby mountains, taking with them a large quantity of weapons. A regional military commander said the former contras arrived at the police headquarters equipped with at least 60 rifles, an M-79 machine gun, and other weapons which presumably had been destroyed by the disarmament commission. Soldiers were reportedly on the trail of the former contras. The Interior Ministry announced that Jalapa had been placed under strict military control. A government commission headed by deputy interior minister Jose Pallais traveled to the area to investigate the incident. (Basic data from EFE, ACAN-EFE, AFP, 12/17/90; AP, Notimex, 12/17/90, 12/18/90)

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