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Nicaragua: Rural Workers Protest Attempts To Return Land To Previous Owners; Managua Residents Protest "urban Removal"

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Feb. 6, about 350 residents of Managua participated in a rally near the government complex to protest plans to dismantle their makeshift dwellings. The protesters reside in downtown Managua, or in the ruins of buildings and streets destroyed in the 1972 earthquake. Government officials had ordered the move as part of a "reorganization" of the capital city. Equipped with bulldozers, trucks and cranes, municipal employees commenced the clean-up operation Feb. 5. The protest had no apparent impact on their activities, as observed by reporters on Wednesday. Meanwhile, a group of rural workers representing over 1,500 households from the southern department of Carazo denounced threats to remove them from their land, obtained under the previous government's agrarian reform. Expropriated landowners have reportedly informed members of the agricultural cooperative that they are expected to move in the near future. Spokesperson for the farm workers, Carlos Useda, said the government had also cut off a \$9 million technical assistance program financed by the European Economic Community. The agrarian reform beneficiaries are working about 6,500 ha. of land. A portion of citrus products grown on their land is exported to Europe. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 02/05/91, 02/06/91; AFP, 02/06/91)

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