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## **Costa Rica: Human Rights Conditions Deteriorating**

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On May 13, the independent Costa Rican Human Rights Commission (CODEHU) released a report covering the March 1989- August 1990 period. According to the commission, arbitrary arrests and police brutality are on the upswing. The report said that during the period in question, the budget for police agencies increased 30%, while spending on education, health and housing remained virtually stagnant. Eight persons, including a 10-year-old child, were shot to death in May 1990 in police actions. Over 20,000 persons were illegally detained. CODEHU said that the size of the nation's 18 police corps and associated agencies which employ 28,169 persons is excessive for a population of 3 million. Next, the report emphasized an "alarming deterioration" in living standards, evidenced by the rising incidence of chicken pox and measles. An estimated 70% of all Costa Ricans are described as impoverished, result of low wages and high rates of unemployment. About 176,000 Costa Rican children are unable to attend primary school. CODEHU attributes the cutbacks in social welfare spending to austerity measures adopted to meet conditions specified by the International Monetary Fund (FMI). (Basic data from ACAN- EFE, 05/13/91)

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