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Colombia: National Assembly Approves Ban On Extradition As First Step In Constitutional Amendment Process

by Barbara Khol
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On May 15, members of the National Assembly approved in a secret ballot a ban on extradition of Colombian nationals to face criminal or political charges abroad. The proposal must yet be approved in two rounds of voting in the full constituent assembly to become part of the nation's new constitution. Extradition had been reintroduced in 1989 by former President Virgilio Barco after suspected hired killers for the drug traffickers shot to death a leading presidential candidate. Drug barons then launched a campaign of violence to pressure the government into halting extradition. President Cesar Gaviria's administration opposes the idea of making a ban on extradition a constitutional clause. Gaviria said, however, that if the constituent assembly approves such a clause, his administration would respect it. (Basic data from AFP, 05/15/91)

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