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El Salvador: Legislative Assembly Approves Constitutional Reforms Of Judicial System

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 31, government spokespersons told reporters that the Legislative Assembly had unanimously approved several constitutional reforms affecting the judiciary as outlined in the April 1990 agreement between the government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). The reforms are summarized below. * Increased reliance on civilian juries as opposed to military tribunals. * Members of the National Judicial Council will henceforth be elected by a two-thirds majority of the national congress. The Council, an independent institution, nominates candidates for the position of judge, and supervises the nation's judiciary training program. * Supreme Court justices approved by the legislature will serve nine-year terms. The legislature is to retain the right to recall members of the high court. * Implementation of measures to provide adequate protection for judges to enable them to work in "complete freedom, impartially and without interference." * Judges are to earn a salary commensurate with responsibilities. * Implementation of martial law under a state of emergency cannot exceed 30 days. An additional 30-day period may be decreed if emergency conditions continue. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, AFP, 10/31/91)

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