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Last Nicaraguan Refugee Camp In Costa Rica Closed

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 28, President Rafael Calderon and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata attended a ceremony marking the formal closing of Alvaperal, the last remaining Nicaraguan refugee camp in Costa Rica. Located in Pocosol de San Carlos near the Nicaraguan border, Alvaperal housed 2,500 refugees. The UNHCR estimates that 48,000 Nicaraguans resided in refugee camps in Costa Rica during the contra war. About 18,000 voluntarily returned to their homeland. Nearly half of the remaining 30,000 who opted to settle permanently in Costa Rica are children born in the camps and who thus hold Costa Rican citizenship. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, ACAN-EFE, 10/28/91)

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