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Managua, Nicaragua: State-run Bus Company Employees Barricade Streets, Launch Work Stoppages

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On Jan. 21 in Managua, about 100 bus drivers employed by the state-run National Bus Company (ENABUS) blocked traffic by parking their vehicles in front of the Transportation Ministry's offices. Four hours after the drivers blocked the streets, anti-riot police used tear gas to dislodge the demonstrators. Eighteen people were wounded, and 48 arrested. Roberto Gonzalez, an ENABUS employee union leader, said the drivers were protesting an order issued by Minister Jaime Icabalceta to deliver 56 buses donated by the Japanese government to private bus operators. Under an April 1991 agreement between the government and ENABUS employees, the donated buses were to be turned over to ENABUS. Gonzalez said employees also planned partial work stoppages. On Jan. 23, after negotiations between union and government representatives had stalled, union leaders threatened to shut down all public transport services in Managua. Government officials said the Japanese government had not yet formally delivered the buses, and commitments to turn them over to ENABUS would be respected. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 01/21/92; ACAN-EFE, 01/23/92)

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