

10-1-1998

Ex-Sandinista Eden Pastora Wins Electoral Concession After Hunger Strike

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Ex-Sandinista Eden Pastora Wins Electoral Concession After Hunger Strike." (1998). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/8467>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Ex-Sandinista Eden Pastora Wins Electoral Concession After Hunger Strike

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Nicaragua

Published: 1998-10-01

Former guerrilla leader Eden Pastora went on a 34-day hunger strike demanding that the government restore his political rights so that he could run in the 2001 presidential election. With support from the two major political parties, the National Assembly has promised to review his status. Pastora, known as Comandante Cero, became a national hero when he stormed the Palacio Nacional in Managua in 1978. He later held posts in the revolutionary Sandinista government.

In 1981, Pastora broke with the Sandinistas and joined the US-backed contras, establishing his base of operations in Costa Rica, where he assumed citizenship. Pastora was prevented from participating in the 1996 presidential election. The Consejo Supremo Electoral (CSE) ruled he was ineligible because he had renounced Nicaraguan citizenship (see NotiSur, 07/26/96).

Although the Constitution denies political rights to Nicaraguans who renounce their citizenship, Pastora argued that another section of the Constitution provides for dual citizenship for Nicaraguans who become nationals of another Central American country. He began an "indefinite" hunger strike Aug. 22 in the same building he had stormed 20 years earlier, now renamed the Palacio de la Cultura. Later, he took up a position in front of the CSE headquarters where journalists lined up to interview him.

During the hunger strike, Pastora appealed to the Corte Suprema de Justicia with documents showing he no longer had Costa Rican citizenship and had never renounced Nicaraguan citizenship. Hoping for a favorable ruling from the court, Pastora then planned to ask the National Assembly to restore his political rights and dismiss the CSE magistrates, who, he said, had misinterpreted the law. After Pastora spent nearly a month on the hunger strike and was hospitalized briefly for treatment of kidney failure, the Assembly agreed to his demands.

Attending an Assembly session Sept. 24, Pastora announced the end of his 34-day protest after deputies agreed to consider his interpretation of the citizenship law. Both the governing Alianza Liberal and the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) supported the Assembly's initiative.

President Arnoldo Aleman and Daniel Ortega support Pastora

Soon after the hunger strike began, both President Arnoldo Aleman and FSLN general secretary Daniel Ortega announced their support for Pastora's efforts to change the CSE ruling and restructure its membership. Their support coincided with a denunciation in early September by Noel Vidaurre, president of the Partido Conservador de Nicaragua (PCN), who said the two leaders had worked out a secret power-sharing pact which included giving a fixed quota of seats on a restructured CSE to the FSLN (see NotiCen, 08/27/98).

Pastora told the Spanish news service EFE that Aleman and Ortega were attempting to use his protest for their own political purposes. He said the purpose of his hunger strike was to restore his political rights and, although the CSE needed reforming, that was not his goal. [Sources: La Prensa (Nicaragua), 08/23/98. 09/16/98; Spanish news service EFE, 09/23/98; Notimex, 09/24/98; La Nacion (Costa Rica), 09/26/98]

-- End --