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Nicaragua: Report On Recent Abductions Of Civilians & Destruction Of Civilian Property By Contras

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

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Nov. 3: At about 8:00 a.m., five civilians were abducted by contras from a public transport truck traveling from Wiwili to Esteli. All passengers on the civilian truck were unarmed. The vehicle was stopped about three miles outside of Wiwili, according to passengers interviewed by Witness for Peace. The five young men have not been heard from since. Nov. 2: WFP volunteers in Chontales reported that contras attacked the El Juste cooperative, just outside of Villa Sandino, on the Rama road. Initial reports indicate that at least one woman and a two-month-old child were wounded. Oct. 30: One mile outside of Quilali, contras destroyed two electricity pylons, according to residents interviewed by WFP. Oct. 20: Approximately 60 contras entered the small town of Cerro Colorado in central Matagalpa at 2:45 a.m. According to witnesses, after stealing medicines stored in a health clinic sponsored by the CEPAD (Evangelical Committee for Aid and Development), they set off two mines which totally destroyed the building. After destroying the clinic the contras asked for clinic head Emiliano Lopez. When Lopez, 20, heard them calling his name, he ran from his house and hid in the nearby hills until the next morning. The contras eventually left, but forced two men to accompany them to carry packs. One was released the same day, but the whereabouts of the other are unknown. Since its establishment in 1982, Lopez has worked at the health clinic as a CEPAD employee. He told WFP that Cerro Colorado, as well as four other local communities, will now have to travel at least eight miles to the nearest clinic for health care. Cerro Colorado has no local self-defense militia. (Lopez's name has been changed at his request.) Also on Oct. 20, contras attacked the National Bank and the local militia post in La Esperanza, a small town located just outside of the cease-fire zone. They wounded a woman, who is currently awaiting surgery to remove a bullet that perforated her lung and lodged under her shoulder. The contras totally destroyed the bank; damage was estimated at 400 million cordobas (about \$44,000). The bank's rural credit program served residents of five local communities, all of whom will have to travel an extra day into Nueva Guinea for banking services. Electrical power was cut off during the attack, and had not yet been restored eight days later when WFP visited the town. All medicines under refrigeration at the health center were spoiled. [WFP newsbrief, 11/06/87. Witness for Peace is a church-sponsored research group with offices in Washington and Managua. WFP volunteers are posted in communities throughout Nicaragua. WFP is the only private organization that attempts systematically to investigate every significant armed confrontation in Nicaragua.]

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