

Concern over attacks on Catholic churches in Nicaragua

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Quito, Ecuador--Church and police officials in Nicaragua are concerned about a growing wave of dynamite attacks against Roman Catholic churches.

The Nicaraguan government has formed a special commission to investigate the attacks which began in May.

The Minister of Government, Sergio Narvaez said that president Violeta Barrios de Chamorro had specifically directed him to form the commission to uncover who was behind "these deplorable and repugnant acts."

Over a dozen attacks have left churches damaged, along with one rectory and a church-related high school in the city of Leon, 90 kilometers (54 miles) west of Managua.

The commission will be directed by DIA, Nicaragua's intelligence organization, and will involve members of the national police, the army and the government.

The most recent attacks involved a bomb which exploded in the early hours of July 13 in the parish church in El Comejen in Masaya department, and another explosive device detonated the day before in a rectory of the San Antonio church in Jinotepe.

Another bomb exploded on July 13 in the Pureza de Maria high school in Leon, damaging a portion of the building.

Officials said they have no clues as to who is behind the series of attacks or why they are occurring.

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