

Nicaragua Dispatch (<http://nicaraguadispatch.com/2011/11/6-dead-in-post-election-violence/>)

6 dead in post-election violence

CENIDH: 'this is state violence. The elections were fraudulent, and now they're bloody'

By: **TIM ROGERS/ NICARAGUA DISPATCH** | November 9, 2011

Six people have reportedly been killed and dozens more arrested in the past 48 hours in bouts of political violence in Masaya and various parts of northern Nicaragua, where citizens report a tense atmosphere amid allegations of police repression and rumors of rebellion.

Residents in the rural northern border community of Cusmapa, Madriz, tell The Nicaragua Dispatch that five people died last night in a bout of street fighting between **Sandinistas** and the opposition, amid claims of **electoral fraud** and drunken triumphalism following **President Daniel Ortega's** announced victory. Apparently three people were killed in the street, and two died later in a state hospital in Somoto.

Human rights workers from the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) went to the hospital to investigate, but were reportedly denied entry and not given any information.

Meanwhile, a Sandinista political leader was reportedly killed in the rural community of Coperna 2, Siuna (part of Nicaragua's "mining triangle"), when he was allegedly ambushed last night by a group of 30 opposition party members who had been chased off by riot police earlier yesterday.



Numerous people have been injured in post-electoral fighting. This man, and unidentified member of the PLC, was allegedly attacked by "Sandinista gangsters," according to the PLC (photo/ PLC)

like this," Alvarez said over the phone. "Everyone knows the elections were not transparent and they feel like their right to vote has been taken away."

In Chinandega, Ada Mejia reports that the situation is equally tense, though all is calm on the streets for the moment. "The police are threatening people; it's very tense here."

In the community of La Concha, Masaya, there have also been political clashes during two of the past three nights, and

The Nicaragua Dispatch called nearly a dozen citizens in various communities in Chinandega, Matagalpa, Madriz and Masaya. Their accounts of the last 48 hours are strikingly similar: Sandinistas are celebrating in the streets and using the police to control and intimidate the opposition.

"The police are being ordered around by the Sandinista CPCs (Councils of Citizen Power)," says Azucena Sotelo, who runs a small business in Somoto, Madriz. "And the anti-riot police are hiding in the houses of Sandinistas to come out at night and attack people. It's very tense and very ugly here."

In Matiguas, Matagalpa, Elvin Alvarez, a 45-year-old technician, says there's a tense calm as police and army surround government buildings. He says tensions are being exacerbated by rumors that the opposition is planning to fight back.

"Everyone is saying that this is not over—that it won't end

reports that police were trying to control who enters the city.



A Sandinista activist fires off a homemade mortar. So far, only members of the opposition have been arrested for shooting mortars (photo/ Jessica Phelps)

police officers injured in the line of duty since the elections, including six cops who were shot.

While there has been some violence, he said, overall there is “a general situation of control and order.”

Human rights leaders, however, claim the situation is anything but calm.

“This has become a situation of institutional violence, state violence. The police are working with government paramilitaries to repress the opposition and preventively detain people to keep them from protesting. And that’s only throwing more gasoline on the fire,” CENIDH’s Gonzalo Carrión told The Nicaragua Dispatch.

“The violence has started. And it started because of an election that wasn’t an election,” he charged. “The elections were fraudulent, and now they are bloody.”

Opposition activist Rodrigo José Gizaguirre says the streets of La Concha are also quiet today as a tense calm settles in after two nights of fighting.

“The police are on the side of the Sandinistas,” he says. “They are protecting them and intimidating us.”

Gizaguirre says the CPCs—neighborhood Sandinista groups— are reportedly telling the police what to do, and giving them false tips about alleged plots by the opposition to burn the police station. In video of the street fighting, the police can be seen fighting alongside the Sandinistas as they push back opposition protesters. At the end of the first night, there were 20 Liberals detained by police for “disturbing the peace” by firing homemade mortars. Not a single Sandinista was arrested.

“The first two nights of fighting was all emotion, there was no organization,” he says. “But now people are meeting and organizing. This is will not stand. This is not over.”

The National Police deny being under the influence of the ruling party.

Police Commissioner Fernando Borge, spokesman for the National Police, told The Nicaragua Dispatch that police have been working to “provide security to everyone in Nicaragua, without political distinction.”

He said the police’s response to the elections has been “professional and respectful.”

Police claim there are only four people dead. A police report released Wednesday afternoon also say there have been 46