

CLASSIFICATION: SECRET
Page 1 of 3

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From: Galimba, Norman
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Subject: Fraijanes II Prison Riot Forces Relocation of High Profile Inmates

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RELEASED IN PART
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Subject: Fraijanes II Prison Riot Forces Relocation of High Profile Inmates

DECONTROLLED

1. (SBU) Summary. A riot in Guatemala's Fraijanes II nominally maximum-security prison on November 19 damaged the interior of the prison and all of the inmates were transferred to other locations. The government of Guatemala is working to rebuild the prison, but until then, there remains a heightened risk that several high-profile inmates might attempt to escape.

B1
1.4(D)
B7(A)

2. (SBU) On November 19, inmates of the Fraijanes II nominally maximum-security prison rioted and took eight prison employees hostage. The prisoners are reported to have rioted to protest limited visitation rights and poor treatment by prison guards. The prison contains over 150 inmates including several high-profile drug traffickers and members of the Zetas, Mara 18, and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gangs. The prisoners surrendered peacefully to authorities about 24 hours later. During the riot, the prisoners damaged much of the prison, rendering it uninhabitable. No American citizen prisoners were housed in Fraijanes II at the time of the riot; however, the uncertainty of the situation in the days immediately following the incident led the directors of two nearby prisons to ask the Consular Section to postpone previously scheduled visits to AmCit prisoners in those facilities until things had quieted down.

B1
1.4(D)

3. (C) Minister of Government (MoG) Mauricio LOPEZ Bonilla speculated to reporters that one of the possible motives of the riot was to have the prisoners transferred to a less secure prison where it would be easier for them to escape. Lopez Bonilla said the government has increased security in the nearby Fraijanes I prison where many of the Zeta and Mara 18 prisoners were transferred. MS-13 members were transferred to the Pavon Prison, also located near Fraijanes II.

B1
1.4(D)
B7(A)

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CLASSIFICATION: SECRET
Page 1 of 3

CLASSIFICATION: SECRET

Page 2 of 3

B1
1.4(D)
B7(A)B1
1.4(C)
1.4(D)

5. (SBU) On December 3, the Public Ministry announced that it was investigating the possible involvement of a handful of penitentiary guards in the Fraijanes II riot. The same day, a high-risk court ruled that two former investigators from the Ministry of Government (the government ministry responsible for the penitentiary system), Axel MARTINEZ Arreaza and Emanuel Rivera, should be sent to trial for their involvement in the escape of three prisoners from the El Infiernito prison in 2005 who were later found dead. In addition, the high-risk court ruled that Aldo Estefano FIGUEROA Diaz, the brother of Former Deputy Police Director Javier Figueroa, should be sent to trial for his involvement in the extrajudicial killing of nine inmates in the Pavon prison in 2006. Note: the UN-led International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) has been working closely with the Public Ministry (MP) on the Pavon and El Infiernito cases, in which former Minister of Government Carlos Vielmann and former Police Director Edwin Sperisen have both been charged with the extrajudicial killing of inmates. Vielmann fled to Spain and now is being tried on those charges there; Sperisen fled to Switzerland and is being tried on those charges there. Both are dual nationals of the country to which they fled. End note.

7. (SBU) Attacks on penitentiary workers who do not provide special benefits to members of organized criminal groups are common. In the last 45 days, six penitentiary workers have been killed, including the Deputy Director of a prison in Guatemala City, Santos Benjamin GONZALEZ Yanes.

B1
1.4(D)

9. (C) Comment, continued. Ironically, Fraijanes II, while meant to be a maximum security prison, never was built to the correct standards. In yet another CICIG-MP case, the owners of the firm which built Fraijanes II were convicted of fraud and embezzlement due to the problems in its construction.

B1
1.4(D)

Juan Diego Lainfiesta, was recently extradited from Costa Rica to Guatemala to face embezzlement charges in the same case.

CLASSIFICATION: SECRET
Page 2 of 3

CLASSIFICATION: SECRET
Page 3 of 3

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Page 3 of 3

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