

# *Nicaragua Ready to Settle Border Disputes with Costa Rica*

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Managua, December 22 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The Nicaraguan government said Monday it is prepared to admit defeat and open dialogue with Costa Rican officials over a long-standing border dispute.

The announcement comes after the International Court of Justice last week ruled in favor of Costa Rica in the territorial dispute and follows a request from Pope Francis that both nations work to resolve their differences.

"We are fully prepared to meet using the different mechanisms. And we are in fully prepared for dialogue and to contribute to ensure respect, tranquility and peace between our two peoples," said Rosario Murillo, Nicaragua's Coordinator of Communications and Citizenship.

Last week, the ICJ ruled in favor of Costa Rica on two territorial dispute cases raised by the two countries. The ruling closed the five-year long dispute over the territory of Calero Island, as Costa Rica calls it -- or Harbor Head, as it is known in Nicaragua -- which lies next to the San Juan River between the two countries.

The ICJ also ruled that Nicaragua must pay Costa Rica compensation, with the amount to be decided by the international court if both countries cannot come with an agreement within 12 months.

“We want to reiterate that from the day the International Court of Justice ruled, our government published and released a statement... the last two paragraphs refer specifically to the commitment of Nicaragua in that direction,” said Murillo, referring to the state's commitment to cooperate with Costa Rica.

The comments come after Pope Francis “expressed his desire” Sunday for the two nations to “collaborate.”

“I hope that a renewed spirit of fraternity will further strengthen the dialogue and mutual cooperation” of these two countries, “and between all countries of the [Central American] region,” he said.

Costa Rican officials expressed their gratitude for the pope's message Sunday.

The Nicaraguan-Costa Rica border has historically been a site of tension. During the Nicaraguan Revolution, U.S.-backed anti-communist Contra forces operated from bases in Costa Rica, with the San Juan River border region was one area where Sandinista guerrillas and Contras clashed during the war in the 1980s.

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