

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

### Oral update by the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua

10 September 2024

**Mr. Jan-Michael Simon, Chair of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua**, provided an updated report on the situation in the country by virtue of Human Rights Council resolution 52/2. The successive findings by the Group of Experts were based on more than 1,200 interviews and more than 5,000 documents.

On the reporting methodology, the Group of Experts informed on the establishment of facts and circumstances constituting *prima facie* crimes against humanity, notably persecution for political reasons and facts qualifying as serious human rights violations and abuses. Among these, the Chair emphasized the stripping of nationality for political reasons, without any reparation and in full impunity. The Group of Experts had reasonable grounds to believe that the President of Nicaragua and the Vice-President were the main individuals responsible, as the concentration of all political and public powers in the hands of the President and the Vice-President continued to be of serious concern, especially with respect to the judiciary. The latter did not comply with very minimal standards of independence.

The State was being instrumentalized more and more, including with the involvement of parastate elements. The Group of Experts had identified more than 60 individuals at the middle and superior levels of the government structures as a kind of apparatus that continued to facilitate, coordinate and carry out serious human rights violations and abuses. Arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment as well as the instrumentalization of criminal law continued unabated with the aim of annihilating any real or potential opposition to the Government. In summary, victims were obliged to choose between prison or to flee the country, as illustrated by the recent fleeing of more than 135 persons detained for political reasons, including some indigenous political prisoners.

Transborder incidents involving more than 700 registered victims outside the country continued to be recorded. They represented just a fraction of the dimensions of these ‘violations by extension.’ A particular pattern of serious human rights violations of a transborder nature was the so-called ‘violation by association.’ Family members of opponents to the Government or of those perceived as such continued to be persecuted just for having such family ties. A very serious aspect of this pattern was the situation of more than 100 children. Furthermore, the Group of Experts was looking into different methods of transnational repression against Nicaraguan citizens living outside of the country. This transborder nature offered another example of the systemic logic of impunity.

Persistent violations were involving entire sectors of the population that remained defenceless. The forced takeover of universities and violations committed against student leaders and professors considerably affected the higher education of thousands of students, besides having a serious impact not only on their future life projects, but also on the development of the whole country.

Indigenous peoples and people of African descent continued to suffer from serious violations of their right to free self-determination and their right to land. Leaders and activists were systematically persecuted by the State just for defending their own rights. Due to the lack of preventive and investigative measures, the State was also responsible for violations committed by private individuals, particularly in cases related to gender-based violence and assassinations.

Waves of repression against members of the Catholic Church and other Christian confessions seriously affected the right to freedom of worship of thousands of persons and further undermined their freedom of opinion and expression. Against this backdrop, the wounds in society were deepening with each passing day. It would take generations to heal such profound wounds.

With respect to the relations of international financial institutions with Nicaragua mentioned on previous occasions, more than 1,800 nonprofit organizations were dissolved and their assets were arbitrarily confiscated. This clearly illustrated that the right to effective legal remedies was not granted during legal proceedings relating to the right to property, in disregard of the recommendations addressed by the IMF in its latest report on Nicaragua related to article 4.

The Group of Experts reiterated the recommendations put forward on previous occasions to the Human Rights Council. Furthermore, the Group of Experts recommended that the Council look at the human rights situation in Nicaragua under Agenda Item 4 of the Human Rights Council, as it required its full attention.

**Nicaragua (Concerned country)** addressing the Council via video message, **H.E. Mrs. Wendy Morales Urbina, Attorney General of Nicaragua**, stated that the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity did not accept and would not accept any report by any group of experts that was created to allegedly monitor the human rights situation in the country. The clearly manipulated and distorted information contained in the report presented by the Group of Experts runs counter to the supreme interest of Nicaragua to ensure the well-being of all its citizens. Nicaragua would continue to denounce such reports that undermined the sovereignty, independence and self-determination of the people of Nicaragua, due to the fact such reports were overlooking these inalienable rights of its people. While reiterating that international organizations having drafted such reports did not respond to the interests and realities of the country, the Attorney General stated that such organizations were working under the directives of powers that spread hatred against countries willing to move forward in an independent way.

Nicaragua would continue to ensure the defence of its full independence, sovereignty and, most importantly, peace and security for the well-being of its people. Nicaragua would stand up against any interference in its internal affairs. While urging an end to unilateral coercive measures, Nicaragua reaffirmed its commitment to its model of governance where individuals, families and communities were the origin and the purpose of the State in order to ensure a bright future for all Nicaraguan citizens.

To watch the full meeting refer to [UN WEB TV](#)