



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua

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PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT

Mr. Jan-Michael SIMON, Chair of the Group of Human Rights Experts

The findings of the Group of Experts are underpinned by more than 1,500 interviews and 7,500 documents that we scrutinised. The Experts deplore the denial of access to Nicaraguan territory; the lack of co-operation and responses to our myriad requests for information from the Government of Nicaragua; and the country's withdrawal from the Human Rights Council.

Since April 2018, President Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Rosario Murillo have pursued a repressive strategy to seize absolute control of the country. In pursuit of that aim, they have undertaken serious violations of human rights, as reported to this Council in six session documents submitted between 2023 and 2024. The state apparatus led by the President and the Vice-President has rolled out a four-phase strategy.

A repressive four-phase strategy to seize absolute power

The first phase, which ran from 2018 to 2020, was characterised by a **violent crackdown on social protest**, triggering hundreds of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, the criminalisation of social leaders, journalists and real or perceived members of the opposition.



This went hand-in-hand with the silencing of civil society organisations and the media. In June 2019, the National Assembly adopted - amongst a host of other deeply troubling pieces of legislation - an amnesty law that guaranteed impunity for the perpetrators of serious human rights violations.

This was followed by a second phase in 2021, a crucial aspect of which was the **selective and intense crackdown on political opponents** to pave the way for the unfettered re-election of President Ortega. The authorities carried out arbitrary detentions and spurious prosecutions of opponents. They abolished political parties and also undertook the arrests of presidential candidates. The shrinking of civic space and the full-frontal assault on the freedom of expression served to consolidate power in the hands of the executive.

The third phase occurred in 2022. One of its chief hallmarks was the **elimination of the few remaining pockets of political opposition** in Nicaragua. The third phase culminated in arbitrary arrests, deportations, the closure of media channels and the cancelling of the legal status of thousands of non-profit organisations, as well as of universities and media companies. The attacks targeting the Catholic Church were also ramped up exponentially in this third phase.

The fourth phase began in 2023 and continues to date. Not satisfied with silencing any remaining critical voices in the country, the authorities have also sought to **exercise control over Nicaraguans living abroad**. The authorities have expelled or banned from entry back into the country hundreds of Nicaraguans and have arbitrarily deprived of their nationality at least 453 Nicaraguan citizens. The sheer scope of the recent constitutional reform which has been in force since it was gazetted on the 18th of February 2025 strikes at the very heart of what should be a division of powers as well as at the rule of law and the institutional framework of Nicaragua.

A State-sponsored machine of persecution

The content and scope of the aforementioned reform serves to confirm one of our principal concerns to wit the reality of the total co-opting of the powers of the state in the hands of the executive alone at the beck and call of a repressive architecture which has a veneer of illegality under the new Constitution of the State. Over the last year, parastatal institutions and the governing party - the *Frente Sandinista para la Liberación Nacional (FSLN)* - have merged together in a single machine of persecution wielded against all those who are perceived to be political opponents or dissident voices. This apparatus has been further entrenched thanks to an extensive intelligence network that spies on the whole population and identifies targets for persecution - a network which provides the eyes and ears that allows the authorities to exercise and maintain complete control over persons remaining in the country.

Large-scale assaults on the human rights of the Nicaraguan people

The patterns of human rights violations and the profiles of the victims of these violations reveal a clearly defined and discriminatory objective to gain absolute control over the entire population for political ends. Alongside extra judicial executions, torture and the arbitrary detentions described as occurring during the first phase of the authorities operations, new measures are now being taken such as the confiscation of assets, the freezing of pensions, expulsions and deportations and the arbitrary stripping of nationality, all hallmarks of the fourth phase of the



government strategy. Since the crisis first began in 2018 up until today, thousands of Nicaraguans of all ages have suffered a full-fledged assault on their very lives, their physical well-being, their freedom of expression, their education, their nationality and or their right to have access to justice, to mention just some of the rights that have been violated and trampled upon.

Identifying and naming the ‘nexus in the command hierarchy’

The Group of Experts has reached the conclusion that the repressive apparatus described is directly controlled by President Ortega and by Vice President Morilla, with the direct support also of high-level civil servants in all branches of power, as well as by members of the FSLN government party. The command chains have been designed to resemble and to operate like tentacles, with the intention of guaranteeing direct control over the various links in the chain at the different levels to ensure the enforcement of centralised strategies. The Group has reasonable and credible grounds to believe that it will be possible to establish the individual responsible of some of those persons who are acting as nexuses in the command hierarchy, and their names will be duly identified in a session document to be published at the end of this 58th session of the Human Rights Council.

The international community must take action

The human rights situation and the rule of law in Nicaragua have suffered a deep-rooted deterioration. There is an urgent and pressing need for action by the international community, focused in particular on the following points. First, **strengthening support for Nicaraguan civil society**, including financial and technical assistance to civil society organisations and media companies so that they can withstand state repression.

Second, there is an urgent **need for accountability measures** before the International Court of Justice in response to Nicaragua’s violations of its international obligations with regard to the United Nations Convention against Torture and the Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as under the Convention to Reduce Cases of Statelessness.

The third urgent action that the international community should undertake is expanding **specific legal measures**, such as sanctions targeting individuals, institutions or entities identified in the reports submitted by the Group, as well as those who will be duly identified in the session document to be published before 4 April.

Fourth, we would call upon the international community to protect Nicaraguans deprived of their nationality or who have been expelled from the country or whose return to the country has been denied. In particular, we call upon the international community to **guarantee the granting of refugee status** to these Nicaraguans and a fair asylum process. In addition, the international community should facilitate the administrative process for those persons who are victims of the arbitrary refusal to issue their passport or identity documents.

Our fifth appeal to the international community is that you take steps to guarantee that **human rights considerations are duly integrated in international decisions** based on the findings of the Group. For instance, ensuring that human rights considerations are duly integrated into the consultations under article 4 of the International Monetary Fund, in particular as they pertain to recommendation 8 of the International Finance Action Group. Similar steps could be taken with



regard to trade agreements, whereby the international community should make full use of human rights conditions. For example, these could be integrated into the free trade agreement between the European Union and Central America.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ms. Ariela PERALTA DISTEFANO, Member of the Group of Human Rights Experts

As regards trade operations, States have to condition investment and cooperation to improvements in the human rights record of Nicaragua. Due diligence and exhaustive investigations have to be carried out in a manner that includes an assessment of the human rights impacts in the country before decisions are taken to invest in Nicaragua.

Recent constitutional reform subordinates the courts and the judiciary to the executive, formalising the co-opting of the courts and the Attorney-General's office by the executive via the political secretaries of the FSLN. The judiciary and judicial power has already been co-opted *de facto* and *de jure* thanks to the new constitution. The Group has documented and traced all steps that have been taken and the orders that have been issued by these political secretaries, thereby proving that they are now in control and issue orders to judges, magistrates, prosecutors and the courts. Therefore, the Group calls on the international community to take concrete steps that my Mr. Reid Broody will detail further.

With respect to cases of exiled Nicaraguans **academics and students** who have not been able to have access to their academic record, and professors who have had to leave the country with their salaries unpaid, host countries can find creative solutions to allow these persons to continue their studies and their research, duly validate and certify their academic credentials so that they can have access to studies, grants and scholarships in the countries in which they are exiled. This can contribute to the academic wealth in the host country. Continuing their research, their studies and their careers also implies that they will be able to contribute to the rebuilding of Nicaragua when they will be able to return.

The **stripping of nationality** is a sort of civil death or limbo. It is a situation of *de facto* statelessness - indeed in many instances a *de jure* statelessness – when persons are left without any identity document whatsoever and therefore, they are stripped of the protection of all their rights as nationals. The stripping of their nationality implies the loss of other rights, among which the participation in public affairs, freedom of movement, freedom to freely select their place of reside, the recognition of their legal status, and the loss of rights of their children or even access to their children. On this last aspect, the Group of Experts has documented cases where the stripping of nationality prevents the family reunification of parents with children, which by extension is a violation of the right to family life and the rights of family members and relatives of those exiled who remain in Nicaragua. This can further lead to severe economic challenges because of the confiscation of assets and goods.

The Group of Experts further stresses the importance of **economic and technical support** for civil society and NGOs. Despite being hit four-square by these reprisals and crackdown measures, civil society needs to be strengthened in order to be positioned as best as possible to support a return to democracy which hopefully will occur in the short term in Nicaragua.



Mr. Reed BRODY, Member of the Group of Human Rights Experts

The international community must not simply bear witness, but take concrete measures to hold the government and the individual perpetrators accountable. On accountability, a State or a Group of States could **hold Nicaragua accountable at the International Court of Justice (ICJ)** under the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. There is no country in the world today that practises arbitrary deprivation of nationality for political reasons at the scale that Nicaragua does. The new constitution explicitly provides for the revocation of nationality for those deemed traitors to the homeland. Who are the so-called 453 people already called traitors? Seven opposition political candidates of whom former Sandinista heroes, former vice president Sergio Ramirez, journalists, community leaders, all of them have also been expelled from Nicaragua except for one, Donna Vilma Nunez aged 86, the dean of the Nicaraguan human rights community who remains in Managua, stripped of her citizenship, her property, her pension, and her law licence. As Nicaragua's withdrawal from the Council shows, the Government has nothing but disdain for international monitoring mechanisms, but the **ICJ is a forum that Nicaragua cannot dismiss or discredit**. Since its historic case against the United States in 1984, no country has brought more cases to the ICJ than Nicaragua. Its record at the Court is a rightful source of national pride for the Nicaraguan Government. A case of the ICJ would have real meaning.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Country Concerned

The delegation of Nicaragua was not present in the room. On 27 February 2025, Nicaragua announced it would withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Luxembourg jointly with the Benelux countries regret Nicaragua's announcement to disengage from the Human Rights Council and reiterate their concern over the continuous attempts to silence dissent by targeting and criminalising the opposition, HRDs, journalists, as well as students and university professors. Threats, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, as well as citizenship removals, must end immediately. Troubled about the lack of protection for victims of rape and the current state of legislation preventing them from accessing safe abortion, including for child victims, the Benelux countries urge the government to address the plight of sexual violence and to provide women and girls with adequate abortion services, as well as sexual and reproductive health.

Regretting Nicaragua's withdrawal, **Finland and the Nordic-Baltic countries** remain deeply concerned about the ongoing series of constitutional reforms and dismantling of democratic norms and institutions in Nicaragua, including the deletion of the explicit prohibition of torture. The Government must stop the systematic repression and violations against human rights defenders, as well as political, religious and indigenous leaders; and must secure the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and allow civil society organisations and universities to operate freely and return the property that has been confiscated. The Nordic-Baltic countries urge releasing all political prisoners unconditionally and cease the practise of forced exile. Citizenship must be restored to persons who have been arbitrarily deprived of it, and



their safe return ensured. Their legal records, access to bank accounts and confiscated property should be restored in full.

Taking the floor on behalf of the **core group** on the resolution on the human rights situation in Nicaragua¹, **Ecuador** deplores Nicaragua's withdrawal and the recent reform of more than 100 articles of the constitution, which has served to undermine the fundamental and core principles of democracy, such as the elimination of the principle of respect for human dignity, the separation of powers, the ban on censorship of the media and the protection from any form of torture. While calling upon the Nicaraguan authorities to reconsider their decision to further disengage from this Human Rights Council and its activities, the core group reiterates the need for Nicaragua to cooperate fully with international human rights mechanisms, as well as to take urgent steps to restore civic space, to put an end to the perpetration of serious and systematic violations of human rights, targeting multiple different stakeholders, and to restore the full effectiveness of human rights in the country in line with the principles of a democratic state, in a state in which the rule of law prevails.

The **Group of Friends of the Charter of the United Nations through Venezuela** reiterates its categorical rejection of double standards and the politicisation of human rights, bearing in mind that such an approach is an enemy to authentic dialogue and cooperation. The Group of Friends also voices its deep-rooted concern in light of the ongoing proliferation of parallel reporting mechanisms and procedures, which claim to carry out supposedly impartial assessments and evaluations of the human rights situation in given states, such as Nicaragua. However, the aforementioned evaluations do not just lack the due consent of the state in question, but also the reports are often based on carefully selected sources, sources that are anonymous, unreliable, and of dubious veracity, biased, and lack any objectivity. The Group of Friends reiterates its robust condemnation of the sustained and growing deployment of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) aimed at furthering an interventionist agenda and a destabilising agenda, both politically and economically speaking, that has an adverse impact on the full enjoyment of human rights of the people of Nicaragua. It reiterates its call for a constructive and non-politicised approach to dialogue based on human rights, based on genuine cooperation, mutual understanding, and full respect for national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.

Regretting Nicaragua's withdrawal, **Germany** condemns in the strongest terms the widespread and systematic human rights violations committed by the State, especially its crackdown on civic and democratic space, and calls on Nicaragua to cease all reprisals against Nicaraguans for exercising freedoms of expression and opinion, assembly and association, and to release all political prisoners. It also calls on the Government to restore citizenship and property rights to those who have been deported and expropriated, and on Member States to renew the mandate of the Group of Experts.

Costa Rica expresses alarm at the ongoing arbitrary stripping of nationality and property as well as the eradication of the ban on torture from the Nicaraguan constitution - a further signal of the

¹ The core group comprises Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru.



very troubling human rights situation. Costa Rica deems it vital that the international community ramps up the attention paid to the human rights situation in Nicaragua, and that the Human Rights Council continues to wield all the tools at its disposal to bring about positive change and make a positive difference in the human rights of Nicaraguans.

Regretting Nicaragua's withdrawal, **Spain** voiced profound concern over the most recent constitutional reform, which, inter alia, has led to an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of the governing family. To avoid and prevent cases of statelessness, Spain has granted citizenship to those Nicaraguans who have been arbitrarily stripped of their nationality, and helped resettle exiled Nicaraguans. Although these cannot be long-term systematic solutions, Spain calls on Nicaragua to fulfil their international obligations and refrain from using the stripping of the citizenship rights of their people as a weapon wielded against their own population. Spain further requests Nicaragua to put an immediate end to repression. It reiterates its call for the immediate release of all political prisoners, the dismissal of their trials or the accusations against them, the restoration of the rights of all citizens, and the lifting of restrictions on civil society.

Switzerland strongly regrets restrictions on access to the country, its withdrawal from the UNHRC and the lack of cooperation by the authorities with international human rights mechanisms. Calling for perpetrators to be brought to justice, Switzerland is gravely alarmed by the constitutional reform of 30th January which establishes an executive power without any checks and balances, thereby undermining the fundamental principles of the rule of law. Therefore, it calls on the authorities to re-establish the separation of powers and guarantee fundamental freedoms. It also calls for an immediate end to the repression of civic space, closing of media and NGOs, and persecution of vulnerable groups. The authorities must guarantee the rights of persons arbitrarily detained and order their immediate release; and must collaborate immediately with OHCHR, the UN treaty bodies, and the Group of Experts.

The **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)** is deeply concerned over the continued and growing proliferation of reporting mechanisms and procedures for so-called assessments of the human rights situation in sovereign states without their consent. It is obviously a selective and politically motivated approach and proves itself that it is another attempt to manipulate the Human Rights Council in its own geopolitical interests. It reiterates our support to and solidarity with the Government of Nicaragua in its efforts to preserve national stability and reconciliation and guarantee legitimate and democratic institutions through dialogue and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders. The DPRK strongly urges the HRC to fulfil its mandate to promote and protect human rights on the basis of genuine dialogue and cooperation in strict compliance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter without resorting to cohesion, selectivity, politicisation, or double standards implied by the imposition of these hostile mandates against specific countries.

Regretting Nicaragua's withdrawal, **Chile** is deeply troubled by the constitutional reform which, represents a *de facto* dissolution of the division of powers and will have harmful consequences for democracy. It also deplores the scrapping of the ban on torture and the withdrawal of the principle of human dignity as a core and fundamental principle as well as the deprivation of liberty and nationality of many political opponents, thereby leading to a *de facto* expulsion from the



country and a loss of nationality due to the failure to grant them new passports - a crime which has cross-border impact. Chile calls on Nicaragua to take major measures to allow international oversight of the situation in the country and to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the Human Rights Council.

Peru reiterates its deep-rooted concern over the deteriorating human rights situation in Nicaragua and the recent constitutional reform which further undermines the rule of law, the separation of powers and democracy. Such steps have had a negative and adverse impact on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Nicaraguans, in particular vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant persons and those who have been the victims of gender-based and sexual violence. Peru also deplores the recent decision taken by Nicaragua to disengage from the Human Rights Council and to refuse to engage with any activity carried out under the auspices of the Council. Chile will always support all efforts aimed at restoring dialogue and understanding between Nicaraguans as a precursor to finding a peaceful and long-term solution to the crisis.

Uruguay voices once again its concern over the prolonged deterioration of the human rights situation in Nicaragua, culminating in the most recent changes to its constitution which imperil the fundamental rights of the Nicaraguan people and the separation of powers as well as democracy. Noting with concern the lack of independence and the exploitation of courts and law with the purpose of eradicating any vestiges of opposition, Uruguay condemns the crackdown on Nicaraguan citizens and the stripping of their individual freedoms, a clear violation of international human rights law. Uruguay reiterates its call on Nicaragua to open channels of cooperation and dialogue with the human rights mechanisms and to allow said human rights mechanisms and groups unfettered access to Nicaraguan territory.

Eritrea believes the actions taken by Nicaragua are an unmistakable indication of profound failure of the Council. When a nation is pushed to the brink, feeling trapped with no way to escape the suffocating grip this Council has imposed upon us, the only viable option might be to remove ourselves from the equation entirely. Eritrea explains that the Council should distance itself from politicisation, stigmatisation, and stereotyping. Politicisation of human rights only causes division and confrontation and reduces the human rights into a tool of political agendas. Eritrea opposes initiatives driven by political considerations in the Council that aim to undermine the stability of Nicaragua and obstruct its efforts for peace, reconciliation, combating poverty, and achieving development based on human dignity, and denounces the UCMs directed against it.

The **Russian Federation** notes the achievements of the Government of Co-Presidents Ortega and Murillo in promotion and protection of human rights. Russia categorically rejects the politically motivated and irrelevant documents outright condemning Nicaragua for supposed systematic violations of human rights. Their authors deliberately gloss over Managua's success in ensuring gender equality, the rights of ethnic minorities, including indigenous peoples, and workers' rights. In addition, they overlook the positive changes as a result of the socioeconomic transformation. The constitutional reform adopted by the Nicaraguan Parliament has enshrined in legislation the socially-oriented nature of the State, with guarantees of free education and healthcare, the rights of citizens to cultural, sport, and creative development, food security, access to affordable housing, and communal services. Convinced that the basis for the critical attacks towards



Managua is a desire by Western countries to destabilise the domestic political situation in the country, Russia consistently advocates for objective, impartial, and depoliticised work in the UNHRC.

China welcomes Nicaragua's constructive participation in its fourth UPR, its efforts in promoting and protecting human rights, including developing a national education plan to further protect people's economic, social, and cultural rights. China always opposes the politicisation and instrumentalization of the UNHRC and the use of human rights as an excuse to interfere in other countries' internal affairs. China calls on the international community to respect the country's sovereign independence and territorial integrity and respect the right of the people to freely choose their own path of development. The practise of imposing mandates without the concerned country's consent can only exacerbate confrontation and does not contribute to better protection of human rights. China urges countries concerned to follow the fundamental principles of objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity, and non-politicisation, immediately remove UCMs against Nicaragua, stop unfounded accusations against the country, and return back to the right path of dialogue.

Cuba argues that the report on Nicaragua does not reflect the actual state of affairs in Nicaragua as it stems from an interventionist, selective, politicised, and partisan resolution, one which Cuba rejects wholesale. The only effective way to strengthen the protection of human rights in all countries is through dialogue and cooperation, dialogue and cooperation that need to be based on respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of the United States. Nicaragua is a victim of the persistent and ongoing siege enacted by the United States and other countries who justify their actions by claiming that they are acting on the grounds of alleged concerns for human rights. Cuba supports the efforts of the Government and the people of Nicaragua as they seek to pursue sustainable development, peace, justice, and social emancipation. Cuba calls for full respect for the sovereignty of Nicaragua and an immediate cessation of the arbitrary and illegal UCMs applied against that country, measures which are detrimental to the human rights of its people.

Taking note of the continued efforts made by the Government of Nicaragua in the promotion and protection of human rights and development, the **Lao PRD** is of the view that the imposition of country-specific mechanisms without the consent of the concerned country is counterproductive and prevents genuine dialogue and cooperation. It reiterates its call for a constructive approach to the promotion and protection of human rights based on the principle of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, and respect for national sovereignty.

Paraguay voices its concern over the human rights abuses as well as the fact that crimes against humanity may have been committed. It regrets the recent adoption of a constitutional reform which undermines democratic institutions and *de facto* concentrates all power in the hands of the few, with no longer any separation of powers. Paraguay also deeply deplores the campaigns to crack down on dissident voices and the campaigns wielded by the authorities to crack down on their population, including dissidents and critical voices, both within and without the country. It is deeply concerned by the plight of the most vulnerable in society in the world of academia,



including universities. Paraguay also recalls that the right to nationality is a fundamental right to be enjoyed by every human being, whose deprivation is a clear violation of international law.

Urging Nicaragua to rejoin the Council and cooperate with UN mechanisms, **Cyprus** considers that recent constitutional amendments undermine the very essence of democracy, threaten the rule of law and severely restrict the protection and implementation of human rights. Political pluralism is severely affected, with clear attempts to stifle freedom of expression. Voices of opposition and dissent in all spheres face systemic repression. Arbitrary detentions, ill-treatment, torture and violence against women have unfortunately become commonplace. Cyprus supports all efforts towards a negotiated peaceful solution to the crisis and calls on the Government to abide by international law and human rights standards.

Deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Nicaragua, **Ireland** condemns the arbitrary detention of those exercising their right to freedom of expression and the reprisals against those former political prisoners and dissidents living in exile, including the denationalisation of such individuals. It calls on Nicaragua to uphold its international human rights obligations and to end its repression against dissenting voices, civil society organisations and religious institutions. It further calls on the Nicaraguan authorities to release all remaining political prisoners. Regretting Nicaragua's withdrawal, Ireland urges the authorities to re-engage with international human rights mechanisms and to ensure a safe and enabling environment for all human rights defenders.

The **United Kingdom** is alarmed by the findings of the Group's reports, including further reports of extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detention. It is concerned that authorities have used physical and psychological violence, including threats, rape, beatings, and prolonged solitary confinement against those who participated in the 2018 protests, and against individuals who have been accused of publicly criticising the authorities. In addition, the approval of the wide-ranging constitutional amendments passed on 30th January undermine the separation of the powers of the state and mark a further tragic development in the dismantling of the rule of law in Nicaragua. Moreover, the increase in reports of transnational repression, including intimidation and harassment of Nicaraguans in exile, represents a further attack on human rights. The ongoing limitation of Nicaraguan civil, political, and other human rights is unacceptable.

Belarus stresses that Nicaragua's UPR in November 2024 has highlighted the undisputed achievements of the country in ensuring the rights of women, enhancing the quality and availability of education, combating trafficking in person, social support to vulnerable groups, and other areas. These results were achieved in spite of the ongoing unlawful pressure on the country in the form of economic sanctions and other UCMs. The practise of politicisation, selectivity, and double standards prevalent in the HRC towards Nicaragua and other developing countries takes a lamentable toll on the work of the HRC, which is steadily losing its authority.

Georgia remains alarmed over the deteriorating human rights situation in Nicaragua, exacerbated by a multifaceted crisis and significant decline in civil and political rights. It deplores the pervasive and systematic abuses of human rights and compassing arbitrary detentions and killings, torture and ill treatment, along with infringements of the rights, freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Georgia deeply regret the recent constitutional reform, which has



entered into force in February and represents a further step away from the rule of law, in total disregard of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Georgia reaffirms its solidarity with the people of Nicaragua in their relentless pursuit of peaceful resolution of the ongoing social political crisis.

New Zealand expresses its strongest concern at the ongoing violation of human rights in Nicaragua, including increasingly severe restrictions on free and democratic expression and political participation. It is deeply concerned by the arbitrary deprivation of nationality, the increase in political prisoners, instances of torture, sexual violence, and the repression of civil society, religious, ethnic minority, and indigenous peoples. These instances of repression are taking place against the backdrop of concerning new laws that can further limit fundamental freedoms. It also remains concerned by Nicaragua's continued failure to respect its international human rights obligations, including its failure to engage with international bodies mandated to monitor human rights. New Zealand Nicaragua to re-engage with the Human Rights Council.

Venezuela considers that Nicaragua's withdrawal should serve as a wake-up call for this Council which lives or dies by its credibility and the trust that everybody reposes in its impartiality. This Council, unfortunately, has failed to uphold those hopes pinned in it. Venezuela respects the sovereign decision of Nicaragua to withdraw and hopes that this decision will contribute to this Council taking time to reflect on its role and the future of human rights. Has Nicaragua left the Human Rights Council, or was it the Human Rights Council that left Nicaragua? That is the question that needs to be answered. Venezuela fears that the spectre of the defunct Human Rights Commission has begun to stalk this chamber.

Argentina believes that the unprecedented constitutional reform just enacted sounds the death knell for the rule of law and the point of no return in the path towards the consolidation of power solely in the hands of the presidential family. The division of powers that was purely fictitious rather than factual is now definitely a thing of the past. The measures and actions undertaken by the Nicaraguan Government have severely undermined the right to life, freedom and property of Nicaraguans. The principle of non-interference in internal affairs is wielded as a pretext, used as a shield to hide from view the most aberrant crimes committed against political opponents, against critics and against persons linked to the Catholic Church, encompassing acts of torture, forced disappearances and the complete catalogue of the violations of the most fundamental human rights. For all of the aforementioned reasons, Argentina reaffirm that what should actually prevail is the principle of states not remaining indifferent to such abuses.

Sri Lanka appreciates the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua in advancing the rights to education and health and improving the living condition of its people. Action taken by Nicaragua to mitigate the impact of climate change is also noteworthy. Sri Lanka believes that country-specific initiatives which do not enjoy the consent of the country concerned are not helpful in achieving the objectives of this Council. Such measures are against the universal principles of respect for integrity, sovereignty, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states as enshrined in the UN Charter. Sri Lanka reiterates that the mandate of this Council needs to be operated through genuine dialogue in order to achieve meaningful advances in human rights. It further encourages the Council to engage with the Government of Nicaragua in a constructive approach to safeguard the human rights of its people.



Zimbabwe reaffirms its position against the adoption and implementation of politically motivated Council resolutions that target specific countries. This approach is counterproductive and it ignores the concerns of the targeted country and seeks to impose solutions on a government that has a key role in the promotion and protection of the human rights of its people. It calls on the Council to prioritise a genuine, constructive, and non-politicised dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua and that such dialogue should be guided by the principles of objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity, and non-interference in the affairs of the state. The dialogue should hinge on cooperation to support and strengthen the country's efforts towards fulfilling its human rights obligations. Zimbabwe condemns the continued application of UCMs, which have a devastating impact on Nicaragua's development efforts and the full enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights by its people.

Yemen appreciates the report presented by the Group of Experts and commends the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua in promoting human rights, most notably in health and education, and its initiatives to empower women and promote their participation in public life. It urges Nicaragua to create a free and safe environment for journalists and activists and to continue working towards guaranteeing the right to peaceful assembly and free expression, which contributes to strengthening democracy and protecting civil rights.

Ukraine believes that the alarming constitutional reforms that concentrate excessive power in the hands of the executive undermine democratic principles and dismantle institutional checks and balances. The erosion of judicial independence and the instrumentalization of state institutions for political persecution further exacerbate the country's crisis. The suppression of civil society, the closure of independent media, and the arbitrary revocation of legal status of the thousands of non-profit organisations illustrates the Government's intent to eliminate dissent, particularly disturbing the increasing cases of politically motivated arbitrary detentions and forced disappearances, the documented use of torture, food and sexual violence against those demand opponents of the Government. Additionally, Nicaragua's continued disregard of international law is evident in its maintenance of the so-called 'Honorary Consulate of Nicaragua' in the temporarily occupied autonomous republic of Crimea, in violation of UNGA's resolutions and fundamental principles of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ukraine stands with the international community in calling for full accountability for those responsible for crimes against humanity and urges Nicaragua to cooperate with international mechanisms.

Romania calls on Nicaragua to cease all human rights violations, grant reparations and ensure the respect of human rights for all Nicaraguans. Recently, the UN Human Rights Committee found that Nicaragua violated Article 6 and 7 of the ICCPR. Romania upholds the Committee's request to the authorities to combat sexual violence, ensure comprehensive health education services for girls and guarantee effective access to remedies for victims. It further calls on the Government to re-engage with the Council.

Iran believes that the people of Nicaragua have the right to determine their own national policies and they should not be subjected to hardship due to external pressures and foreign interference. Their fundamental human rights, particularly their economic, social, and cultural rights, should not be jeopardised by the imposition of UCMs. Despite the pressures caused by external interference, the Nicaraguan government has demonstrated its independent will to uphold the



right of its people to self-determination, safeguard its national sovereignty, and protect the human rights of its citizens. This must fully – this must be fully respected.

Burkina Faso commends efforts by the government of Nicaragua with a view to improving living standards for the population inter alia through the strengthening of basic social services such as education, healthcare, and housing, and by pursuing a policy to ensure food security in the country. My country believes that these efforts deserve to be recognised and supported by the international community with strict respect for the sovereignty and priorities of the country. My delegation would like to recall that the imposition of mandates without consent and motivated by political considerations are counterproductive and contrary to the spirit and fundamental principles of the Human Rights Council. Finally, Burkina Faso calls on responsibility in the Human Rights Council on the need to promote a climate for sincere and constructive dialogue, which is the only way to ensure confidence and full cooperation between states and human rights mechanisms.

Views Expressed by intergovernmental Organizations

The **European Union** expresses concerned over the rewriting of the constitution, which is another step away from democracy and the rule of law, consolidating the conservation of powers and further undermining human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU calls for the end of repression, including transnational repression, against dissenting voices, political opponents, journalists, civil society, NGOs and religious institutions. It also calls for the release of all those arbitrarily arrested. The EU deplores reports of torture and degrading treatment of these prisoners, the targeting of their relatives, forced expulsions, stripping of citizenship and confiscation of property. We call for the full adherence of international law and obligations. While regretting the country's decision to withdraw from the UNHRC, the EU urges Nicaragua to receive and cooperate with international human rights organisations, the Group of Experts and OHCHR.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **Right Livelihood Award Foundation** explains that by allowing illegal cattle breeding, logging, and mining by the colonists on indigenous lands, the Nicaraguan government is an accomplice in human rights violations. They are bringing the indigenous and Afro-descendant communities on the Caribbean coast on the brink of genocide. In 2024 only, over a thousand human rights violations were reported, including widespread violence and documented cases of abduction targeting specifically women and girls. This has led to widespread forced displacement. It condemns the continued oppression of critical voices, targeting human rights defenders inside and outside Nicaragua and its engagement in a campaign to strip indigenous peoples of their land rights. Besides establishing parallel authorities in previously protected lands, the recent constitutional reform has restricted self-determination rights, the exercise of autonomy, and the right to communal property and natural resources. Right Livelihood urges the Council to renew the mandate, strengthening its provisions on indigenous people and ensuring that they are provided with adequate resources to fulfil their fundamental role.

The **Centre for Justice and International Law** is deeply alarmed by the plight of the 47 political prisoners in Nicaragua and also alarmed by a growing pattern of forced disappearances, with 12 victims of this crime recorded to date. It sounds the alarm about the case of Jaime Navarrete,



who has been a political prisoner for the last seven years and whose health has deteriorated seriously in a context of harassment and isolation. It calls upon the Council to renew mandate for a further two years and to redouble efforts to guarantee the release of all political prisoners and ensure that they have access to justice in the national and international courts.

The **Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development** takes the floor through a member of the Human Rights Collective in Nicaragua to explain it has documented 229 cases of torture and 61 cases of *de facto* stateless persons. They have been refused re-entry into Nicaragua or have been refused their identity documents, leading to a form of civil limbo for thousands of Nicaraguans. There is a need to renew their mandate and the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to be activated to investigate extraterritorial crimes such as prosecution and persecution - some of which has occurred in States which are party to the state of Rome, targeting Nicaraguan citizens.

Alongside RIDE and the Retro de Paz Nicaragua, **Aula Abierta** denounces the ongoing state policy targeting academic freedom and university independence in Nicaragua. In 2025, they have already documented complaints on radicalisation and indoctrination that has become entrenched in universities, which have suffered for years from interference and meddling by the Executive via the National Universities Council and have been further weakened by reforms which have eradicated the last vestiges of their independence. This reality has been further exacerbated by the constitutional reform promoted by the Executive and adopted by the National Assembly, which subordinates fundamental rights to the so-called 'supreme values of peace and security', diffuse and indeterminate constants which are wielded arbitrarily to justify violations of human rights. The production and dissemination of any criticisms or calls for academic freedom may lead to the possibility of offices and academic spaces being shut down further. The reform referred to also provides that those who promote foreign meddling will be considered traitors to the fatherland and will lose their nationality, increasing the risk of an arbitrary deprivation of nationality for university staff, human rights defenders and critics of the state who participate in national bodies such as this one. This has already occurred to 200 Nicaraguans. Such reforms also give rise to serious concerns about the rule of law and the rights of vulnerable groups such as the LGBTQI groups and Indigenous Peoples. They call upon the Council to condemn these violations and call upon the state of Nicaragua to fulfil its international obligations.

The **International Federation for Human Rights Leagues** explains that for the last seven years, Nicaragua has also witnessed a deterioration in transparency, with systemic corruption that has taken root, which limits access to basic services for normal citizens, but also serves as a vehicle to further repression. Support for victims and Nicaraguan civil society and monitoring by the international community of events in the country is more vital than ever before in light of Nicaragua's withdrawal. While calling for an extension of the Group's mandate, the Federation calls upon states and international financial institutions to include human rights guarantees and conditions in any investment and cooperation agreements.

Speaking on behalf of **Peace Brigades International**, a Chorotega Indigenous person from the north of Nicaragua raises some concerns over his Indigenous Afro-descendant peoples in the wake of a constitutional reform which is considered harmful to our peoples. Nicaragua is a signatory to ILO Convention 169. Nonetheless, the newly adopted constitution lacks any



procedures for free, prior and informed consent with our peoples. In Nicaragua, there is no law for the protection of Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific, Central and Northern regions of the country, who are still awaiting justice for the events of the 'Red Christmas', the invasion by settlers into our lands led to death, displacement and exile. Since 2015 to date, we have reported more than 80 community leaders murdered. The state of Nicaragua has also failed to comply with the reparation process established in Law 445, nor has it allowed for the effective exercise of the rights of our Peoples. Any constitution needs to be respectful of the human rights of native and Indigenous Peoples who existed before the concept of the state of Nicaragua.

Speaking on behalf of the **World Organisation Against Torture**, Ms. Eugenia Valle Olivares explains that her husband of Victor Boitano Colman, a Nicaraguan citizen, was arrested in our village on the 23rd of April 2024 by armed state agents and police officers. There was no arrest warrant held by the police officers. They simply violently broke into our house. Her husband was abducted and his whereabouts unknown. She spent six months looking for her husband in different detention centres. No authority was able to provide her or her family with any information about his whereabouts or his state of health. Under threats and persecution that we suffered from state agents, in response to her search for her husband, she was forced to leave the country. She has been in exile ever since, despite the fear, despair and lack of hope. Speaking on behalf of the 47 families of the 47 political prisoners who have been and continue to be tortured in the prisons and jails of Nicaragua, she calls upon the Council and the international community to strengthen all necessary bodies and tools, such as the Group of Experts, so that one day they all can go back to Nicaragua and live free of fear, and that the interim measures dictated by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights be implemented to protect them and other citizens.

International Service for Human Rights explains that since the constitutional reform came into force in Nicaragua on 19th of February, all human rights of the citizens have been scrapped and public freedoms annulled, including habeas corpus, the right to be free of torture and any provision that refers to human dignity and the respect, therefore, has also been scrapped. Civic space has been closed and shuttered and criminalised. There are more than 46 political prisoners in jail today, deprived of all rights, including HRDs forcibly disappeared. Several others remain in prison despite the fact that they have served their sentences. Political imprisonment is used to impose fear and political prisoners are used as bargaining chips. Defenders also face restrictions on their freedom of movement. They must report daily to police stations without any court order or prior trial requiring them to do so. In addition, in the first two months of 2025, around 200 citizens have been prevented from returning to the country, turning them into *de facto* stateless persons.

CIVICUS condemns that the new constitution imposed by the Government of Nicaragua, under reform of more than 60% of the articles therein, was not consulted with the citizens of the country, which means it lacks any legitimacy. Article 45 of the aforementioned constitution restricts and limits the right to freedom of association, compelling organisations to integrate in their rules and regulations and stated purposes the so-called fundamental principles. It is deeply troubling that the Government seeks to subordinate international instruments to this amended constitution, as is made abundantly clear in Article 182 thereof. The Government continues to take steps to restrict civic space in the country, leading to the arbitrary closure of 80% of existing civil society



organisations. Many of the development and care programmes for vulnerable groups that were spearheaded by these organisations have not been replaced by the State. The State has rather expropriated the assets of the organisations it has closed, and its members have been criminalised. It calls for the immediate release of at least eight indigenous forest rangers and land defenders who were detained and sentenced arbitrarily by the Government.

Ingenieurs du Monde explains that at least 450 of them have been stripped of our nationality, but the real number of stateless Nicaraguans is far higher. Thousands have been denied re-entry to our own country, and religious persecution also continues. Over 50% of the Catholic clergy has been forced into exile, and entire Protestant communities are also being harassed. Ortega continues to shut down independent organisations while confiscating private properties. It urges the Council to explore alternative international mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

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