

URGENT ACTION

DOZENS OF PEOPLE REMAIN IN DETENTION

Following the approval of an amnesty law by the Nicaraguan assembly, 56 people were released on 11 June 2019, including student leaders Amaya Coppens and Christopher Olivas, and journalists Lucía Pineda Ubau and Miguel Mora. However, dozens of people remain in prison, and the recently approved amnesty law would continue to endanger the truth, justice and reparation of the victims of the crisis. We urge the Nicaraguan authorities to immediately release and drop all charges all those detained solely on the grounds of the exercise of their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua
c/o Minister for Foreign Affairs
Del cine González 1 c. al Sur,
sobre Avenida Bolívar,
Managua, Nicaragua
nicaragua@oas.org / Twitter: @DenisCanciller*

Dear President Ortega,

I write to express my concern about the continued persecution and criminalization strategy in Nicaragua since April 2018. Following the approval of an amnesty law by the Nicaraguan assembly, 56 people were released on 11 June 2019. However, dozens of people remain in prison, despite calls from the Human Rights Council and the OAS Permanent Council for their release, and the Nicaraguan government's commitment to free them all by 18 June 2019. Furthermore, the new amnesty law would continue to endanger truth, justice, and reparation for the victims of the crisis.

I urge you to immediately release and drop all charges of all detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly since 18 April 2018, in accordance with international standards and guarantee that amnesty is not provided to any person responsible for serious human rights violations.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 18 April 2018, after years of institutional decline in Nicaragua, protests broke out following the government's attempt to implement unpopular and non-consulted social security reforms. These protests were met with violent repression. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the crisis has resulted in the deaths of 325 people, including 21 police officers and 24 children and adolescents, and more than 2,000 injuries. Moreover, civil society figures establish that more than 700 have been arrested. Besides, 300 health professionals were dismissed; 144 students have been expelled from the UNAN (National Autonomous University of Nicaragua); and over 70 journalists and media workers have been forced into exile. According to the UNHCR, about 62,000 Nicaraguans have fled to neighbouring countries, 55,000 of them seeking refuge in Costa Rica.

On 16 May 2019, Eddy Montes (57) a Nicaraguan and U.S. citizen, was shot dead at La Modelo prison in Managua. He and others who were injured were arrested for participating in the 2018 protests. An Amnesty Law was approved by the National Assembly of Nicaragua on 8 June 2019.

AI's report "*Instilling terror*" (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr43/9213/2018/en/>) concluded that one of the central plank of this repressive policy was the Nicaraguan state's persistent efforts to criminalize opponents, referring to anyone who protested the government as "terrorists" or "coup plotters" to justify its own violent actions.

Since then, protests have continued demanding substantial change to the status quo. More than one year after the beginning of the crackdown on protest, Amnesty International continues to receive reports of arbitrary detentions and torture of persons deprived of their liberty. Civil society organizations whose legal status was cancelled by the government (including the Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights - CENIDH) remain unable to freely carry out their work in the country, and the harassment of journalists and human rights defenders continues. Attacks against freedom of expression and peaceful assembly indicate ongoing strategy to suppress dissenting voices.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 29 August 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: People in jail after more than a year of protests (They, them, theirs).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr43/0406/2019/en/>