

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AT RISK

As the National Assembly approved cancelling the legal registration of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH), the National Police broke into their offices, and the premises of other three human rights organisations and an independent newspaper. These recent attacks are examples of the continued strategy of repression by the Nicaraguan state against journalists and human rights defenders.

On 12 December, the National Assembly approved a decree to cancel the legal registration of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH - Centro Nicaragüense de los Derechos Humanos), alleging that the organisation has not presented finance reports since 2017, that it is “partial towards one social sector”, that it has “not acted in accordance to their objective of reaching peace with justice” and that the board of directors has “expired”. However, CENIDH has not been notified of any administrative process against it and its right to defence was denied.

On 14 December, members of the National Police broke into the office of CENIDH without a warrant and took a car and some documents that belong to the organisation. They also broke into the offices of the human rights organisation Popol Na, entering without a judicial order, and harmed the mothers of detainees who were taking shelter there. According to the information received, they hit the security guard of the building, and took computers, documents, mobile phones and vehicles belonging to staff and to the organisation. They also broke into the offices of the Segovias Leadership Institute (Instituto de Liderazgo de las Segovias), the River Foundation (Fundación del Río) and the independent newspaper *El Confidencial* known for its critical and investigative journalism.

This is another example of the strategy of repression led by president Daniel Ortega and vice president and first lady Rosario Murillo against civil society organisations defending human rights in Nicaragua.

Several international organisations have publicly denounced this attack, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Center for Justice and Internacional Law (CEJIL, Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional) and the World Organisation Against Torture. CENIDH has been defending human rights in Nicaragua for 28 years, has a strong trajectory and legitimacy in the region, and is a long-standing partner organisation of Amnesty International in Nicaragua.

Please write immediately in Spanish, or your own language, to the Nicaraguan authorities:

- Urging them to guarantee freedom of expression to human rights defenders and media workers without repression, attacks, harassment and criminalisation;
- Urging them to stop harassing and attacking human rights organizations, human rights defenders, independent media and other dissenting voices;
- Urging them to halt the strategy of repression by shutting down human rights organisations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JANUARY 2019 TO:

President of Nicaragua
Daniel Ortega Saavedra
Presidencia de la República, frente a
Palacio Nacional, calle 4 Noroeste,
Managua, Nicaragua, 11001
Fax: +505 2228 9090
Twitter: @DanielOrtega_Ni
Salutation: Dear Mr President

National Police Director
Francisco Javier Díaz Madriz
Metrocentro, 2 cuadras al Este, edificio
Faustino Ruiz, Plaza del Sol,
Managua, Nicaragua
relacionespublicas@policia.gob.ni,
seguridadpublica@policia.gob.ni
Salutation: Dear Mr Director

National Assembly President
Diputado Gustavo Porras Cortés
Complejo Legislativo Carlos Núñez,
Avenida Peatonal General Augusto
Sandino, Managua, Nicaragua
gporras@asamblea.gob.ni
Salutation: Dear Mr Deputy

And copies to: equipoca@amnesty.org

This is the first update of UA 160/18. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr43/9514/2018/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has published two reports documenting the persecution and repression strategy carried out by the Nicaraguan State since the beginning of protests on 18 April 2018. On 29 May, Amnesty International launched the report [Shoot to kill: Nicaragua's strategy to repress protest](#) which documents how, in response to social protests during April and May, the Nicaraguan government adopted a strategy of violent repression not seen in the country for years, with more than 70 people reportedly killed by the state during the first weeks of the protests. On 18 October, the second report [Instilling terror: from lethal force to persecution in Nicaragua](#) was launched to mark the six-months anniversary of the beginning of the protests. It documents several human rights violations committed between 30 May and 18 September, and details the different elements that make up the state strategy of repression to suppress dissent and protests.

Amnesty International believes that these violations were carried out not only with the knowledge of the highest authorities of the Nicaraguan state, including the President and Vice-President of the Republic, but also on their orders and under their command in many cases.

Amnesty International also received information that, on 28 November, the Nicaraguan National Assembly approved a decree (not yet published online) to cancel the legal registration of the human rights organisation Health Information Center and Advise Services (Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud), led by human rights defender Ana Quirós. On 18 April, human rights defender Ana Quirós was attacked by pro-government armed groups while taking part in a demonstration. Amnesty International reported this in the above-mentioned report *Shoot to kill: Nicaragua's strategy to repress protest*. On 26 November, Amnesty International reported that Ana Quirós was arbitrarily detained, taken to El Chipote prison, driven to the border crossing point with Costa Rica with a deportation order, and expelled from Nicaragua. Ana has been a Nicaraguan national for 21 years through naturalisation.