

URGENT ACTION

ATTACKS ON DEFENDERS AND JOURNALISTS INCREASE

Nicaraguan authorities continue to target journalists, human rights defenders and organizations. Recent attacks against freedom of expression and association indicate ongoing strategy to suppress dissenting voices.

Staff members of the independent news outlet and television channel *100% Noticias*, including the director **Miguel Mora**, have faced threats, harassment, and persecution online and offline from both Nicaraguan authorities and government supporters. On at least 6 occasions in recent months, police officers stopped *100% Noticias* staff at checkpoints in and around Managua (capital city). On 30 November, National Police agents told Miguel Mora to “stop screwing or we’ll go against you and your family...If you continue to report the news on your channel, you know what you’ve got coming” at a checkpoint. Following these threats, on 3 December, pro-government media published an article accusing Miguel Mora of “inciting violence” on his news channel. Miguel Mora has not received any notification from the Public Prosecutor against him. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights condemned these attacks, calling them acts of intimidation and harassment against Miguel Mora, his family, protesters and media workers in general.

The same day, staff members of the independent radio station *Radio Darío* were intimidated. The director Aníbal Toruño told Amnesty International that members of the National Police forcibly entered the radio station without a warrant in the city of León (northwest of Managua). They ordered the staff to turn off all the radio equipment, handcuffed them and took their mobile phones. Four staff members were placed in police cars and threatened to be taken to a detention centre in Managua. They were never taken anywhere, they were released almost four hours later and got their mobile phones back. During this time the radio station was forced to be off air.

Amnesty International also received information that, on 28 November, the Nicaraguan National Assembly approved a decree (not yet published online) to cancel the legal representation of the human rights organisation Health Information Centre and Advise Services (Centro de Información y Servicios de Asesoría en Salud), led by human rights defender Ana Quirós. On 18 April, she was attacked by pro-government armed groups while taking part in a demonstration. On 26 November, Amnesty International reported that she was arbitrarily detained and expelled from Nicaragua. These recent attacks against freedom of expression and association are examples of the continued strategy of repression by the Nicaraguan state against journalists and human rights defenders.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the President to immediately guarantee freedom of expression to media workers without repression, attacks, harassment and criminalisation;
- Urging the National Police to stop harassing and attacking independent media, human rights organizations, human rights defenders, and other dissenting voices;
- Urging the National Assembly to refrain from arbitrarily attacking human rights defenders by shutting down their 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

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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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 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.

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.