



## Février 2023 / N° 803a

## Table of contents

1. Deprivation of nationality and exile	3
2. Arbitrary detentions on political grounds continue and must not be met with impunity	4
3. Political prisoners subjected to torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment	5
4. The judicial system: another instrument of repression	7
5. Absence of freedom of expression: severe and frequent attacks on the press and the right to information	8
6. Attacks on the church and clergy	9
7. Shrinking space for civil society and social structure	10
8. Municipal elections, another electoral masquerade	10
9. Call for a strong response from the international community to address the crisis in Nicaragua	11

In 2022, the regime led by Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo intensified repression and continued to violate the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Nicaraguans, with the aim of closing all democratic spaces and sowing terror.<sup>1</sup> The year 2023 began with a new wave of repression, with 317 Nicaraguans being stripped of their nationality. This aberrant measure had previously only been used against nine people in the region by the Pinochet dictatorship. This demonstrated that the regime has no limits and is prepared to do anything to remain in power. For this reason, FIDH and CENIDH have prepared this note summarising the serious human rights violations that have occurred in Nicaragua in recent months, and offering recommendations to the international community in order to give a clear and firm response to these violations.

## 1. Deprivation of nationality and exile

On 9 February 2023, without warning, the Ortega Murillo regime released 222 political prisoners from prison and exiled them.<sup>2</sup> They were flown out of the country to Washington in the United States. According to the Resolution issued by Judge Octavio Rothschu of the Court of Appeals of Managua, all these individuals were “deported” and their citizenship rights were suspended for life. Deportation is a legal concept that is only applicable to foreigners who commit crimes in another country. This is a case of exile, which is prohibited under international human rights law.

At the same time, the regime rushed through a constitutional reform with the aim of depriving all political prisoners of their nationality. Article 20 of the Nicaraguan Constitution expressly prohibits the deprivation of the nationality of Nicaraguan nationals. According to the procedure set out in the Constitution itself, such a reform could only enter into force after approval during a second legislature scheduled to begin on 9 January 2024. The National Assembly therefore began the urgent approval of secondary legislation to implement this illegal and unconstitutional reform.

The following day Bishop Rolando Alvarez was also deprived of his nationality and is currently being held incommunicado in prison (see box p. 9).

On 15 February 2023, human rights defender Vilma Núñez de Escorcía, along with 93 other people, was accused and convicted of “treason”, without trial and without any legal basis. The same decision revoked their Nicaraguan nationality permanently, disqualified them from holding public office and ordered the confiscation of their assets in favour of the Nicaraguan state. Among these 94 people are well-known members of Nicaraguan civil society, who since 2018 have spoken out for human rights and democracy in Nicaragua. Almost all of them are currently outside Nicaragua, having taken the painful decision to leave the country to protect their personal safety.

FIDH and CENIDH call for the safety and security of Vilma Núñez de Escorcía, who remains in Nicaragua asserting her right to defend victims of human rights violations. Vilma is the President and founder of CENIDH. She has been a human rights defender for more than 60 years, having confronted the Somoza dictatorship and survived the Student Massacre of 1959. Imprisoned, tortured and tried by a military tribunal at that time, she later became one of the first women judges in the Nicaraguan High Courts and was Vice President of FIDH for 10 years.

---

1. This note summarises the findings and analysis of the CENIDH Report, Nicaragua: Se impone el Terror Persiste la Resistencia. Situación de Derechos Humanos (Nicaragua: Terror reigns, Resistance persists. Human Rights Situation), 2022 Report, Managua, Nicaragua, January 2023, <https://www.cenidh.org/recursos/143/>

2. See FIDH, CENIDH, “Nicaragua: 222 political prisoners released from jail and banished from the country”, <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/americas/nicaragua/nicaragua-222-political-prisoners-released-from-jail-and-banished>

## 2. Arbitrary detentions on political grounds continue and must not be met with impunity

As of 9 February 2023 there were more than 230 political prisoners in Nicaragua. On that day, 222 political prisoners were exiled, bringing an end to the subhuman conditions in which they were held. However, the violations that these individuals and their families suffered and continue to suffer show the gravity and arbitrariness of the regime's actions and the human rights violations documented by FIDH and CENIDH herein, which must not be met with impunity.

These people were protesters, political leaders, including individuals running to become candidates in the 2021 presidential elections, social leaders, businessmen, students, farmers, human rights defenders, journalists and, more recently, priests of the Catholic Church as well as relatives of those persecuted.

As of 10 February 2023, according to the Mechanism for Recognition of Political Prisoners in Nicaragua, **there were still 35 political prisoners in Nicaragua**<sup>3</sup>:

### Segunda actualización: Son 35 personas presas políticas que continúan en cárcel al 10 de febrero de 2023 en Nicaragua

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Jonathan Snyder López Guzmán       | 18. Rolando José Álvarez Lagos            |
| 2. Jaime Enrique Navarrete Blandón    | 19. Beyker Enrique Ferreti Hernández      |
| 3. Rodrigo José Navarrete Vanegas     | 20. José Leonardo Urbina Rodríguez        |
| 4. Eliseo de Jesús Castro Baltodano   | 21. Juan Ramón Mena Galarza/Garza         |
| 5. Fanor Alejandro Ramos              | 22. Jeffrey José Ortega Orozco            |
| 6. Bismark Antonio Sándigo Sándigo    | 23. Axel Manuel González Garay            |
| 7. José Manuel Urbina Lara            | 24. Daniel Agustín Serrato/Cerrato Garay  |
| 8. Maycol Jhon Herrera Gutiérrez      | 25. Víctor Manuel Carranza Silva/Espinoza |
| 9. Misael de Jesús Escorcía Rugama    | 26. Wilfredo José Balmaceda Castrillo     |
| 10. Eddy Danilo Melendez Lacayo       | 27. Walter José Balmaceda Ruiz            |
| 11. Kevin Emilio Castillo Prado       | 28. Zacarías Isabel Cano Angulo           |
| 12. Walner Antonio Ruiz Rivera        | 29. José Ricardo Cortez Dávila            |
| 13. Edder Oniel Muñoz Centeno         | 30. Eddy Antonio Gutierrez Delgadillo     |
| 14. Carlos Alberto Vanegas Gómez      | 31. Rosendo Antonio Huerta Gonzalez       |
| 15. Fernando José Acevedo Hernández   | 32. José Olivar Meza Raudez               |
| 16. Manuel Salvador García Rodríguez  | 33. Jairo Alberto Obando Delgadillo       |
| 17. Martha Candelaria Rivas Hernández | 34. Leonel Antonio Póveda Palacios        |
|                                       | 35. Marvin Vargas Herrera                 |

MECANISMO PARA EL RECONOCIMIENTO DE  
PERSONAS PRESAS POLÍTICAS EN NICARAGUA



**All of them should be released immediately.**

3. Mecanismo para el reconocimiento de personas presas políticas, tweet published on February 10, 2023, see in: <https://twitter.com/MPresasPresosNi/status/1624158940454871040>

## **Arbitrary detentions in 2022**

In the course of 2022, arrests continued with the clear intention of annihilating any possible internal political opposition.

A new pattern of actions aimed at terrorising and punishing opponents of the regime was also observed: the abduction of family members in order to capture the person targeted by the authorities.

Faced with increased repression and numerous arrests, many fearful families decided not to file complaints, in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid further reprisals by the regime.

During the municipal elections, further arrests were made. At the conclusion of this latest electoral masquerade of so-called municipal elections, 62 members of the opposition were arrested,<sup>4</sup> among them 19 young people from the Northern Caribbean Coast who protested against electoral fraud. All those arrested were later released.

On 25 November, police raided the home of Rodrigo Navarrete, uncle of political prisoner Jaime Navarrete, and arbitrarily arrested him, both are still in prison.

## **3. Political prisoners subjected to torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment**

### **Torture in “La Modelo”**

The majority of political prisoners were held in “La Modelo”, in Tipitapa, Managua.<sup>5</sup> The prison block has cells as small as 2m<sup>2</sup>, which are entirely sealed, without toilets, with a hole in the floor where the prisoners relieve themselves and wash. Prisoners have no access to drinking water.

CENIDH documented the following cases of torture:

- **Fanor Ramos**, who remains in prison, in a bolted, barred cell, was beaten by prison guards. A police dog reportedly bit his leg, causing a 5-centimeter tear.
- **Jaime Navarrete**, has been held in a maximum security cell at La Modelo since he was recaptured on 24 July 2020. The cell is 2m x 2.3m, has poor ventilation and little sunlight. The cell door is iron-clad, sealed and bolted, so there are no bars. Since his arrest he has been in total isolation in his cell and other detainees are not allowed to approach his cell. He sleeps on a concrete slab, has no sheets, no pillow and no blankets to protect him from the cold. As a result, his situation has worsened as he has fallen ill several times with flu, coughs and other illnesses that attack the respiratory system, including Covid-19. He is only allowed to go out in the daylight for 10 to 15 minutes, once or twice a month. He is not allowed books or recreational activities, and he was even deprived of the Bible, which was the only book he had been allowed to read.

**FIDH and CENIDH call for an end to conditions of detention that could cause irreparable and irreversible physical and psychological harm to political prisoners, and for their immediate release.**

---

4. <https://www.articulo66.com/2022/11/18/denuncian-62-detenciones-en-el-contexto-electoral-en-nicaragua/>

5. See <https://presasypresospoliticosnicaragua.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/b2a54ec9-be29-41e1-af81-af52aaae83ab.pdf>



Other cases of people released from prison who had been detained in La Modelo have been documented by CENIDH and are described in their 2022 Annual Report.<sup>6</sup>

## Torture in El Chipote

All the political prisoners held in El Chipote were released. Many of them have since publicly confirmed the events denounced here,<sup>7</sup> others say they are not yet psychologically ready to speak<sup>8</sup> about the torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment they suffered and witnessed during their captivity.

During their detention in the *Dirección de Auxilio Judicial* (Judicial Assistance Directorate - DAJ), better known as El Chipote, they were subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment:

- Lack of communication with families: A total of only eleven visits by family members were authorised in El Chipote during 2022. In one instance authorised visits were 84 days apart, causing serious psychological, physical and emotional harm to prisoners, nervous breakdowns and high blood pressure, heart disease, insomnia, loss of appetite, crying and despair as a result of prolonged solitary confinement.

This isolation changed in December 2022, according to a statement from relatives, published on 4 January 2023. At that point, most of the political prisoners with young children living in Nicaragua were allowed to meet, and several of those abroad were able to communicate by video-call. Prisoners were also allowed to receive letters and photographs. Despite the apparent calm of relatives, individuals and organisations monitoring the cruel and degrading treatment of political prisoners question the motivations behind the regime's apparent change of approach. These doubts are supported by the insistence on exposing prisoners and their families to photo shoots showing joy and happiness. The recent release of the prisoners suggests that the regime had been preparing this action for some time.

- Severe physical deterioration due to weight loss from lack of food, medical care or decent conditions of detention. Prisoners were not allowed to receive bedding, coats or blankets from their relatives to protect them from the cold, they lacked adequate lighting conditions in cells and access to sunlight.
- Denial of specialised medical care, putting lives at risk, especially in the case of elderly prisoners.
- Permanent detention in punishment cells: As in the case of Medardo Mairena, who spent up to 14 months in a punishment cell.
- Permanent solitary confinement: It was applied only against women and therefore constituted gender discrimination.

---

6. CENIDH, Nicaragua: Se impone el Terror Persiste la Resistencia. Situación de Derechos Humanos (Nicaragua: Terror reigns, Resistance persists. Human Rights Situation), 2022 Report, Managua, Nicaragua, January 2023, <https://www.cenidh.org/recursos/143/>

7. Confidential testimonies by Dora Maria Tellez, Medardo Mairena and Juan Sebastian Chamorro. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqw\\_JsVJ2Kc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqw_JsVJ2Kc)

8. CNN, Felix Madariaga, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuJbLnJ4I2Y>

**Dora María Téllez**, an emblematic figure of the Sandinista revolution and political leader of the Nicaraguan opposition, was arrested on 23 June 2021 for denouncing abuses committed by the regime. She endured more than 18 months of torture and solitary confinement in the El Chipote detention centre, with insufficient food, in a cell in permanent darkness, in the men's block, without regular access to sunlight or adequate medical care. In September 2022, she went on hunger strike demanding an end to her solitary confinement and access to reading material. The Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris awarded her an honorary doctorate in November 2022 in recognition of her “exceptional political and academic career, and for her contributions to international social progress”. She was exiled on 9 February 2023.

- Hunger strikes, to be allowed to communicate with minor children or to have a bible, among other reasons.
- Cruel public exposure through “informative hearings”: On 30 August 2022, 27 people were exposed to public humiliation and mockery by the pro-government media, who branded them criminals and terrorists and repeatedly emphasised that they were in excellent health, in an attempt to deny all the allegations made by relatives. It was not only the legal aberration introduced by the regime that had a major impact, since such a “hearing” has no legal basis, but seeing the political prisoners after a year in deplorable physical condition, extremely thin, pale, with dark eyes, ill, but with their dignity and courage intact, in spite of the questions and slanderous comments of pro-government journalists.
- Family members subjected to extensive and demeaning searches, violating their physical integrity and intimacy. They were forced to undress, their genitals and breasts were touched, and some of them even had limited physical contact with their relatives.

## 4. The judicial system: another instrument of repression

Forty-six (46) detainees faced trial in the DAJ facilities (*Nuevo Chipote*): 35 of them were in the cells of this police complex and 11 were under house arrest. Most of them were charged with conspiracy, undermining national integrity, money laundering and cybercrime.

The so-called “*juicios nulos*” (mock trials) took place amid numerous legal aberrations and human rights violations that CENIDH documented and presented publicly in its report [Mock trials: an aberrant and cruel action by the Ortega Murillo regime](https://www.cenidh.org/media/documents/docfile/JUICIOS_NULOS_UNA_ACCI%C3%93N_ABERRANTE_Y_CRUEL_DEL_R%C3%89GIMEN_ORTEGA_MURILLO.pdf).<sup>9</sup> CENIDH found that the Ortega Murillo regime committed 16 different human rights violations during the so-called mock trials:

1. The right to physical, mental and moral integrity
2. Right to individual liberty
3. Respect for their honour and reputation
4. Respect for the inviolability of the home and communications of all kinds
5. The right to equality before the law
6. Principle of legality
7. Arbitrary imprisonment. Searches can only be carried out with a written order from a competent judge.
8. Right to due process:

9. CENIDH. “Juicios Nulos: Una acción aberrante y cruel del Régimen Ortega Murillo”, [https://www.cenidh.org/media/documents/docfile/JUICIOS\\_NULOS\\_UNA\\_ACCI%C3%93N\\_ABERRANTE\\_Y\\_CRUEL\\_DEL\\_R%C3%89GIMEN\\_ORTEGA\\_MURILLO.pdf](https://www.cenidh.org/media/documents/docfile/JUICIOS_NULOS_UNA_ACCI%C3%93N_ABERRANTE_Y_CRUEL_DEL_R%C3%89GIMEN_ORTEGA_MURILLO.pdf)

- a. Presumption of innocence: the Public Prosecutor's Office issued a statement prior to the start of the trials in which it referred to the prisoners of conscience as criminals.
- b. Right to trial without delay by competent authority: In October 2021 trials were suspended citing judicial burden.
- c. Publicity and place of the trials: all procedural acts were carried out in private and in the DAJ facilities (*Nuevo Chipote*).
- d. Right to be represented by a defence counsel of one's choice and right to effective judicial protection.
- e. Right to a defence: the lawyers were only allowed to communicate with their clients for approximately three minutes each day of the hearings.
- f. Substitute defence counsel: the judge imposed public defenders as substitutes for private defence counsel, even against the wishes of defendants and their lawyers.
- g. To have adequate time and means to prepare a defence.
- h. Principle of equality: the partiality of the judicial authorities was evident.

## 5. Absence of freedom of expression: severe and frequent attacks on the press and the right to information

- **Destruction of *La Prensa* and mass exile of its team of journalists:** On 7 July 2022, the daily newspaper *La Prensa* denounced the persecution of its team by the Ortega Murillo regime. Faced with the imminent threat of arrests, the entire staff had to go into exile, with more than 15 people (journalists, camera crews and editors) forced to leave the country in an irregular manner. In October 2022, the Attorney General's Office charged four employees of *La Prensa*, including two imprisoned drivers, a journalist and an administrative assistant, with conspiracy to undermine national integrity and spreading false news. On 23 August 2022, the regime completed the theft of all the facilities of *La Prensa*, and confiscated them.
- **Country closed to international media:** In September 2022, Nicaragua joined Venezuela in blocking the cable signal of the news channel *CNN en Español*. In December 2022, the regime banned Nicaraguan journalist Luis Felipe Palacios, correspondent of the *EFE* News Agency, from entering the country. The agency explained that the ban was imposed after Palacios had tried to return to Nicaragua following a work trip to Panama. While at Panama Airport, he received an electronic notice from the Avianca Airline stating that he could not travel because the Nicaraguan immigration authorities had not authorised him to enter his country. The same happened to Tifani Roberts, a correspondent for the US network *Univisión*.
- **Closure of alternative media:** Catholic media and feminist and community radio. On 12 August 2022 the regime reported the closure of *Radio Darío*. The radio had been in existence for more than 70 years and had been rebuilt after being burned down on 20 April 2018.

*Voces del Sur* stated, in its annual report 2022, that, due to persecution, harassment and lack of spaces to carry out their work, at least **93 Nicaraguan journalists had gone into exile in 2022** and at least 4 journalists were prevented from entering the country on orders of the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners. In addition, a total of 104 alerts were documented, representing 703 cases of violations of press freedom.<sup>10</sup>

10. See <https://vocesdelsurunidas.org/2022-en-nicaragua-ano-de-autocensura-agresiones-a-mujeres-periodistas-y-hostilidad-gubernamental/>



## 6. Attacks on the church and clergy

In 2022 religious persecution intensified and the Ortega Murillo regime continued with its perverse aim of destroying the authority of the church due to the support it provided to Nicaraguan citizens, as part of its pastoral work, following the social rebellion initiated in April 2018.

This pattern of repression ranged from damage to church infrastructure and sacred images, to harassment during masses, persecution, death threats, assault, arbitrary detention, criminalisation and prosecution of priests.

On 4 August 2022, **Bishop Rolando Álvarez** publicly urged the police and paramilitaries to cease attacks on the church and its facilities. The police refused to allow him to officiate mass and he was held hostage in the bishop's quarters for 15 days with 11 other people: five priests and six lay people.<sup>11</sup> In the early hours of 19 August, the police violently stormed the bishop's quarters and forcibly removed the individuals. The Bishop was transferred to Managua and held under house arrest, while the other detainees were taken to the DAJ, or *Nuevo Chipote*.

On 13 December, after 130 days of disappearance, Bishop Rolando Alvarez appeared on pro-government media. That day, the regime brought him to the Managua Court Complex, charging him with the crimes of conspiracy to undermine national integrity and propagation of false news.

After it became public that Bishop Alvarez had decided not to join the list of political prisoners to be released, the regime lashed out at him. He was transferred from house arrest to the Jorge Navarro Penitentiary in Tipitapa. His current conditions remain unknown.

All normative and procedural logic was violated in the criminal conviction announced against Bishop Alvarez. On 11 February, without a preliminary hearing or trial, the President of the Court of Appeal, Octavio Rotschuht, announced that Bishop Alvarez had been sentenced to a 26-year prison term and, among other penalties, to permanent disqualification from holding public office and deprivation of his nationality.

**FIDH and CENIDH call for the immediate release of Bishop Rolando Álvarez and for his safety and security to be guaranteed.**

Other priests have also been persecuted. The Ortega Murillo regime even charged some of them with common crimes, without presenting any consistent and credible evidence, in order to tarnish their image due to their struggle for justice and respect for human rights. **Parish priest Manuel Salvador García**, of the Jesús de Nazareno church in Nandaime, was among them. He was sentenced to two years in prison for the alleged offence of making threats with a weapon after going out with a machete in a defensive posture in reaction to a group of pro-regime villagers who were shouting "assassin" at him.

So far, nine priests have been convicted and members of the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa of Calcutta Order were expelled from the country on 6 July 2022.

11. See [https://www.cenidh.org/media/documents/docfile/CENIDH\\_lanza\\_grito\\_de\\_auxilio\\_por\\_monse%C3%B1or\\_Rolando\\_%C3%81lvarez\\_.pdf](https://www.cenidh.org/media/documents/docfile/CENIDH_lanza_grito_de_auxilio_por_monse%C3%B1or_Rolando_%C3%81lvarez_.pdf)

## 7. Shrinking space for civil society and social structure

Since November 2018, the Ortega Murillo regime has arbitrarily cancelled the legal status of **3,046** civil society organisations (CSOs). In the year 2022 alone, 2,972 CSOs were closed down, including 314 foreign NGOs. They include Nicaraguan and foreign private universities, cultural associations, think tanks, medical associations, institutions linked to the Catholic Church, human rights organisations, women's organisations, children's organisations, tourism organisations, environmental organisations, business organisations, etc.

These large-scale closures affected not only members of CSOs, but also thousands of people in Nicaragua who benefited from their work.

As denounced by FIDH and CENIDH in their report [\*Las Nuevas Leyes de la Represión\*](#) (The New Laws of Repression),<sup>12</sup> the regime sought to establish an official narrative in which human rights defenders, journalists and opponents are seen as internal enemies, in an attempt to deter individuals from defending human rights, to intimidate those who criticise the regime and to silence them. Following this logic, on 5 April 2022, the National Assembly approved the General Law for the Regulation and Control of Non-Profit Organisations (Law No. 1115), repealing Law No. 147 regulating Non-Profit Legal Entities. The new law introduced extensive registration and reporting requirements for non-profit organisations, as well as severe administrative sanctions for the organisations concerned, including the seizure of their assets and their allocation to the State.

On 11 August 2022, the National Assembly approved the bill to amend Article 1 of Law No. 1115, granting the power to cancel legal personality to the Ministry of Interior, by way of a simple ministerial resolution. This reform is at odds with the provisions of Article 138(5) of the Constitution, which establishes that the granting and cancellation of legal personality is a function of the National Assembly.

The panorama for civil society is bleak. There is every indication that brutal repression will persist. The Ortega Murillo regime will continue to massively shut down organisations. It will not re-establish legal personality, nor will it return appropriated property. Nevertheless, defenders who were part of these organisations, including members of CENIDH, continue to support the victims and defend human rights.

## 8. Municipal elections, another electoral masquerade

On 6 November 2022, elections were held in the 153 municipalities of the 15 departments and 2 autonomous regions on the Caribbean Coast, in which the ruling party, declared itself the "ONLY WINNER". The results were made official on 15 November in *La Gaceta*. The Supreme Electoral Council attributed 73.70% of the total votes to the FSLN. The party's total control at the national level and now also in local administrations shows that Nicaragua has become a dictatorship.

According to the regime there was a 57.09% turnout and an abstention rate of 42.51%. These figures contradict those of [\*Urnas Abiertas\*](#), an independent civil society organisation, which observed a 17.3% turnout and an abstention rate of 82.7%, which even exceeded the 81.5% rate observed in the 2021 general elections.<sup>13</sup>

---

12. OBS (FIDH-OMCT) and CENIDH, Nicaragua: Las Nuevas Leyes de la Represión, November 2021: <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/nicaragua-repressive-machinery-used-against-human-rights-defenders>

13. Urnas Abiertas, "Es oficial: Las alcaldías bajo control totalitario del FSLN" (It's official: Municipalities under totalitarian FSLN control), 14 November 2022, <https://urnasabiertas.com/es-oficial-las-alcaldias-bajo-el-control-totalitario-del-fsln/>

As documented by Urnas Abiertas, the reform to Electoral Law No. 331, enabled the regime to exercise greater control over electoral processes and limited citizen oversight, contrary to recommendations made by civil society, political and international organisations. The reform also allowed changes to nine articles to be made unilaterally. These changes reduced time for election campaigning, formation and the work of the intermediate electoral bodies.

A few months before the municipal elections, the FSLN committed another violation of the electoral process by arbitrarily taking over five mayoral offices under the Nicaraguan opposition (El Cuá, San Sebastián de Yalí and Santa María de Pantasma, in the jurisdiction of Jinotega-Norte; Murra, in the department of Nueva Segovia-Norte; and El Almendro, in Río San Juan). The FSLN decided to take over the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, appointing its members to these positions, with police forces occupying the offices with anti-riot forces.

## 9. Call for a strong response from the international community to address the crisis in Nicaragua

In 2022, the regime refused to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations treaty bodies and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), thus failing to comply with Nicaragua's international commitments.

In a clear response, in March 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Council renewed [Resolution 49/3 of 2022](#)<sup>14</sup> on Nicaragua, for the fourth consecutive year, and established a group of three experts, the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua, with a relatively broad mandate ranging from thoroughly investigating all human rights violations committed in Nicaragua since April 2018 and their structural causes, to formulating recommendations with a view to improving the situation, by addressing the impacts of multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination.

The positions expressed by the European Union and the resolutions adopted by the European Parliament in June<sup>15</sup> and September<sup>16</sup> 2022 were also significant. They denounced, in particular, the conditions of torture to which political prisoners are subjected in detention, and called for their release.

Despite this, the regime repeatedly attacked the international community in the course of 2022. For example, in March, the resident delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Thomas Ess was expelled from Nicaragua; in April, the mission of the Organisation of American States was expelled and its headquarters seized by the regime, violating its international immunity; and in September, the European Union ambassador Bettina Muscheidt was expelled from the country.

The 46/2 Collective, made up of various civil society organisations, including FIDH and CENIDH, [denounced](#)<sup>17</sup> Nicaragua's lack of cooperation with the United Nations system, including its refusal and rejection of any action or visit by the Group of Human Rights Experts

---

14. See: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/303/69/PDF/G2230369.pdf?OpenElement>

15. See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0238\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0238_EN.html)

16. See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/es/press-room/20220909IPR40149/nicaragua-el-pe-reclama-la-liberacion-inmediata-del-obispo-rolando-alvarez>

17. The 46/2 Collective, bringing together 21 human rights organisations, produced the Marco de Evaluación de la Resolución 49/3 del Consejo de Derechos Humanos de Naciones Unidas sobre la situación de Nicaragua (Framework for the Evaluation of Resolution 49/3 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on the situation in Nicaragua), available at: [https://www.mecanismo-paranicaragua.org/\\_files/ugd/9168ca\\_335bfb65e1734a4eb8044be36e4c1478.pdf](https://www.mecanismo-paranicaragua.org/_files/ugd/9168ca_335bfb65e1734a4eb8044be36e4c1478.pdf)

on Nicaragua in June 2022. In July, Nicaragua left the review by the Committee against Torture, describing the process as a “provocation”. In August it failed to attend the review of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and in October it [did not participate](#) in the review of the Human Rights Committee.

## **This cruel human rights situation, which has led to a permanent state of terror in Nicaragua, must not be normalised**

FIDH, together with CENIDH, documents and denounces these serious violations, some of which, including [extrajudicial executions](#), constitute crimes against humanity, and supports victims in their search for justice.<sup>18</sup>

The thousands of human rights violations perpetrated in Nicaragua in total impunity are an affront to the international community's commitment to democratic values and the rule of law. We therefore call on states and international organisations to:

- Continue to support independent Nicaraguan civil society in Nicaragua and abroad;
- Firmly reject the Ortega Murillo regime's attacks against the Nicaraguan population and its affronts to the international community;
- Call for the release of all political prisoners in Nicaragua, the restitution of nationality to the 317 Nicaraguans and an end to the repression of independent civil society;
- Continue to closely monitor the situation in Nicaragua, in particular in relation to Vilma Núñez de Escorcia and other individuals who remain in Nicaragua, ensuring that their freedom and their physical and psychological integrity are respected.
- Actively participate in the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council to:
  1. Reiterate concerns and calls on the Nicaraguan regime in relation to the grave human rights situation and insist on the immediate release of all political prisoners in Nicaragua and an end to the repression of independent civil society;
  2. Support the renewal of UN Resolution 49/3 of 2022 on Nicaragua and renew the mandate of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua for two years, in order to fully implement the mandate given by the Council and thus make progress on exhaustive and independent investigations into the other human rights violations that were not initially prioritised, as well as the gender and intersectional dimensions of such violations and their structural root causes.

---

18. FIDH, CENIDH, Executive Summary, Accountability now! Extrajudicial executions and repression in Nicaragua, 2018-2020, February 2021: <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/americas/nicaragua/nicaragua-report-as-impunity-for-crimes-against-humanity-reigns>





# Keep your eyes open

**fidh**

**Establishing the facts** - Investigative and trial observation missions

**Supporting civil society** - Training and exchange

**Mobilizing the international community** - Advocacy before intergovernmental bodies

**Informing and reporting** - Mobilizing public opinion

**For FIDH, transforming societies relies on the work of local actors.**

The Worldwide Movement for Human Rights acts at national, regional and international levels in support of its member and partner organisations to address human rights abuses and consolidate democratic processes. Its work is directed at States and those in power, such as armed opposition groups and multinational corporations.

Its primary beneficiaries are national human rights organisations who are members of the Movement, and through them, the victims of human rights violations. FIDH also cooperates with other local partner organisations and actors of change.

**Director of publication:**

Alice Mogwe

**Editor:**

Éléonore Morel

**Authors:**

FIDH, CENIDH

**Design:**

FIDH/CB



**CENIDH** is a non-governmental social, humanitarian and non-partisan organization devoted to the defense and promotion of human rights. Its objective is peace with social justice, through respect of the Constitution

Centro Nicaraguense de Derechos Humanos -CENIDH

Managua-Nicaragua

[www.cenidh.org](http://www.cenidh.org)

Twitter: @cenidh

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Cenidh>

E-mail: [cenidhdenuncias@gmail.com](mailto:cenidhdenuncias@gmail.com)

**fidh**

## CONTACT

FIDH

17, passage de la Main d'Or

75011 Paris - France

Tel: (33-1) 43 55 25 18

[www.fidh.org](http://www.fidh.org)

Twitter: @fidh\_en / fidh\_fr / fidh\_es

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/FIDH.HumanRights/>



FIDH is an  
international human rights  
NGO  
federating 188 organisations  
from 116 countries

**fidh**

## ABOUT FIDH

FIDH takes action for the protection of victims of human rights violations, for the prevention of violations and to bring perpetrators to justice.

### **A broad mandate**

FIDH works for the respect of all the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

### **A universal movement**

FIDH was established in 1922, and today unites 188 member organizations in 116 countries around the world. FIDH coordinates and supports their activities and provides them with a voice at the international level.

### **An independent organization**

Like its member organizations, FIDH is not linked to any party or religion and is independent of all governments.