

The human rights crisis in Nicaragua

The FIDH, considering that

In Nicaragua, seven years have passed since the citizen uprising that prompted brutal state repression that resulted in 355 documented fatalities, hundreds of injured and disappeared persons, and a regime that has institutionalised terror and impunity. The violence and political persecution caused an unprecedented mass exodus. Hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans have been forced into exile, seeking refuge mainly in the United States, but also in Costa Rica and other countries where they encounter humanitarian and security crises.

The Ortega-Murillo regime has consolidated its repressive apparatus through electoral fraud, gag laws, trials devoid of legality, and the recent reform of the political constitution that granted [the regime] control over all branches of government, made Murillo “co-president”, granted the government powers to strip citizens of their nationality, eliminated political pluralism and freedom of expression, legalized paramilitaries, and authorized the use of the army against ‘threats’ to power, thereby establishing a legal framework for new forms of repression.

In recent years, arbitrary deprivation of liberty has been systematic. Currently, 53 people across the country are being held as prisoners of conscience, seven of whom are women. They have been subjected to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, including torture. Fourteen of these individuals have been forcibly disappeared.

The regime has intensified repression through various forms of persecution. It has revoked the nationality of more than 300 people, including opponents and human rights defenders, condemning them to statelessness, civil death, and exile. Additionally, it violates the right to freedom of movement by preventing strategically key persons and those considered opponents from entering the country. The repression also affects religious freedom: processions are banned, parishioners are monitored when inside churches, and priests are threatened, criminalised, convicted, and exiled.

Civil society is the target of persecution. The legal status of more than 5,000 organisations, including NGOs, independent media outlets, and universities has been revoked, and their assets have been confiscated. Among the first victims is CENIDH, a historic organisation that, despite persecution and restrictions of all kinds, remains committed to human rights in Nicaragua.

To date, Nicaragua has failed to comply with the recommendations of international human rights bodies. On the contrary, since the beginning of the year, it has decided to withdraw from six UN multilateral organisations: the FAO, the Human Rights Council, the ILO, the IOM, UNESCO, and UNHCR, accusing them of ‘destabilisation’ and ‘interference.’ However, voluntary isolation does not exempt the State from its international obligations, nor does it deprive the population of their fundamental rights.

Clearly, the Ortega Murillo regime embodies the complete denial of human rights in the region and, why not, in the world. They have turned Nicaragua into a land of fear and relentless repression, impoverishment, and compulsory political indoctrination through the education system. The FIDH is no stranger to these situations because it has stood alongside CENIDH, a member of the Federation, on various occasions and has witnessed the cruelty that the people are experiencing.

Therefore, the FIDH meeting at its 42nd Congress,

- *Condemns* the brutal repression, violation of the rule of law and of the human rights of Nicaraguans living in the country and in exile, perpetrated by the Ortega-Murillo regime.

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- *Demands* that the Nicaraguan State cease the persecution of opponents and human rights defenders inside and outside the country, provide proof of life for the 14 disappeared persons, and release the 53 political prisoners, including those under house arrest.
- *Calls on, and expresses gratitude,* to the international community to continue to provide solidarity, shelter, and regularisation for exiled Nicaraguans. Calls on the OHCHR and the Inter-American Human Rights System to continue monitoring the Ortega-Murillo regime.
- *We join* the humanitarian outcry, demanding an end to persecution, wars, and killings around the world.