



Jesuit Conference

Office of Justice and Ecology



Statement of Solidarity with the People of Nicaragua from the Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology and Ignatian Solidarity Network

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:9

The Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology and the Ignatian Solidarity Network express continued solidarity with the people of Nicaragua, whose repression at the hands of the police and government-sponsored paramilitary groups has led to the deaths of more than 300 individuals since April 2018, a number that continues to increase. We unequivocally reject the violations of human rights and the blatant destruction of democratic structures that protect the rights and dignity of our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters.

Joining the International Association of Jesuit Universities, we express particular solidarity with Fr. Chepe Idiaquez, S.J., rector of the University of Central America (UCA), a work of the Society of Jesus, who has been an integral part of the Catholic Church's call for a national dialogue process. We express our solidarity as well with the broader UCA community, which includes Jesuit priests, lay faculty, staff, students, and their families. We support and uphold the autonomy of institutions of higher education, as guaranteed by Nicaragua's constitution, to serve as spaces for critical thinking, the discovery of truth, and freedom of expression.

Of specific concern is the recently approved anti-terrorism law currently being used to criminalize and imprison protesters. Equally disturbing is the warning issued by the National Police declaring public demonstrations illegal. These undemocratic measures severely infringe upon the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in ways that are incompatible with Nicaragua's obligations under international human rights law.

Moving forward, we will continue to call on all international bodies, including the governments of Canada and the United States, to urge the government of Nicaragua to dismantle paramilitary groups and respect the constitutional rights of its citizens, starting with freedom of expression and peaceful assembly; and to support the efforts of civil society and the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference to find a negotiated solution to the conflict.

We will continue to honor the dignity of the victims, political prisoners, and the disappeared through our efforts to bring awareness to the suffering of our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters and to further amplify their call for justice, peace, and democracy.

October 18, 2018

