



Plenary sitting

B8-0252/2018

28.5.2018

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Nicaragua
(2018/2711(RSP))

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Ignazio Corrao
on behalf of the EFDD Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Nicaragua
(2018/2711(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the EEAS statement of 15 May 2018 on the establishment of a national dialogue in Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the declaration of the EU Delegation to Nicaragua of 20 April 2018 on the situation in Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the statement by the EEAS spokesperson of 22 April 2018 on the situation in Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the visit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to Nicaragua and the preliminary observations from that visit,
 - having regard to the preliminary report of the IACHR on Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the UN Secretary-General's declarations on Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the position on Nicaragua of the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States (OAS),
 - having regard to the OAS Charter and the American Convention on Human Rights,
 - having regard to the requests to the Nicaraguan authorities issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in November 2016 Daniel Ortega won a third term as Nicaragua's president; whereas his vice-presidential running mate was his wife, Rosario Murillo;
- B. whereas protests began in Nicaragua in April 2018 after the announcement of a law increasing social security contributions while cutting pensions; whereas the social security reform could be seen as just the 'tip of the iceberg' of a growing list of charges against Ortega, who is accused of electoral fraud, negligence over environmental disasters and attempting to create a dynasty;
- C. whereas the peaceful student-led protests were met with a violent government response and quickly escalated into rioting, with at least 76 people being killed and hundreds injured or arrested;
- D. whereas during the demonstrations the government shut down media outlets and censored online media in an attempt to cover up the protests;
- E. whereas Ortega, pressed by the protests, reversed the reform on 22 April and then

agreed to open a national dialogue with a number of different sectors;

- F. whereas notwithstanding Ortega's agreement to launch a dialogue, protests continued demanding justice for those murdered, advocating for the restoration of democracy, peace and justice, and calling for Ortega's resignation;
 - G. whereas on 17 May a national dialogue between the government, the private sector, opposition groups and NGOs, mediated by Nicaragua's Episcopal Conference, was launched in Managua;
 - H. whereas the IACHR visited Nicaragua from 17 to 21 May; whereas it documented illegal and arbitrary arrests, practice of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, censorship and attacks on the press, and other forms of intimidation such as threats, harassment and persecution aimed at dissolving the protests and inhibiting citizen participation;
 - I. whereas the national dialogue has now been suspended owing to the failure to agree on the agenda to be discussed, with violent confrontations continuing throughout the country;
 - J. whereas Nicaragua's Attorney-General has announced the opening of a formal investigation into the deaths, and the Nicaraguan National Assembly has established a national truth commission to investigate the deaths and allegations of violations of rights during the protests; whereas the members of this commission are linked to the government and to date it has not carried out any action;
1. Strongly condemns the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force against students, demonstrators and journalists that led to at least 76 deaths and the arbitrary detention of protesters; equally condemns the deaths of two police officers and the aggression against public officials; expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery to those injured;
 2. Calls on the Nicaraguan Government to ensure that lethal weapons are not used against protesters, and recalls that the use of force must in all circumstances be in accordance with the principles of exceptionality, legality, necessity and proportionality and with international standards regarding the use of force by law enforcement agents;
 3. Calls on the Nicaraguan Government to immediately cease its violent repression of the protests and to take all necessary measures to guarantee the free and full exercise of the right to protest, the right of freedom of expression, the right of peaceful assembly and the right to political participation of the population;
 4. Reminds all parties that violence is unacceptable and that differences can only be resolved through an inclusive dialogue; calls on all parties to act with restraint, stop the violence and do everything possible to de-escalate the situation; urges the state authorities to refrain from making public statements that stigmatise demonstrators, human rights defenders and journalists and from using state media to conduct public campaigns that may encourage violence;
 5. Condemns the censorship measures taken against the press and online media, as well as

the intimidation and aggression directed at journalists; reiterates that media freedom and independence are crucial components of the right of freedom of expression and play an essential role in a democratic society, and as such should always be respected;

6. Calls for the creation of an international mechanism to investigate the violence and deaths which occurred during the demonstrations, in order to identify those responsible and hold them accountable; calls for reparations to be granted to the victims of human rights violations;
7. Call on the Nicaraguan Government to facilitate the visits of all human rights organs of the Inter-American System and the UN, as well as other relevant actors of the international community;
8. Welcomes the start of a national dialogue led by the Catholic church, but is concerned that, already, an impasse has been reached on trying to set an agenda and the talks have been suspended; reminds the parties that the national dialogue is the only possible solution to the current crisis, and calls on them to engage in the process with a view to reaching a satisfactory agreement;
9. Strongly believes that dialogue is the only possible way to reconcile the aspirations of everyone and is the only solution to the crisis, but considers that it will succeed only if it is inclusive and all parties demonstrate good faith and true willingness to reach an agreement; supports the idea of setting up a mixed commission in order to seek consensus and overcome the impasse;
10. Calls on the Nicaraguan Government to adopt and implement the recommendations of the IACHR and to commit to a follow-up monitoring mechanism, as well as to decide on a concrete calendar of new visits with the IACHR; calls on the Nicaraguan authorities to protect the persons who testified to the IACHR and to refrain from engaging in or allowing retaliation against them;
11. Reiterates that acts of violence and attacks on human rights defenders seriously undermine the fundamental role of society and the rule of law; reminds the Nicaraguan authorities that they must guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their legitimate activities free of any restriction and without fear of reprisals; deplores, in this regard, the defamation campaigns against the CENIDH (Centro Nicaragüense de los Derechos Humanos / Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights) and other human rights associations;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, the Central American Parliament, and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Nicaragua.