



Plenary sitting

B8-0170/2019

11.3.2019

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
(2019/2615(RSP))

Charles Tannock, Karol Karski, Ryszard Czarnecki
on behalf of the ECR Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Nicaragua
(2019/2615(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America of 29 June 2012,
 - having regard to the declarations by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the situation in Nicaragua of 2 October 2018, 15 May 2018, 22 April 2018 and 15 December 2018, and that of 1 March 2019 on the resumption of the national dialogue,
 - having regard to the EU country strategy paper and multiannual indicative programme 2014-2020 on Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the Nicaraguan Constitution,
 - having regard to the report of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) of 20 December 2018 on the violent events that took place in Nicaragua between 18 April and 30 May,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Nicaragua in 1980,
 - having regard to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) of 2007, to which Nicaragua is a party,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Nicaragua has been engulfed by political unrest since 18 April 2018, after President Daniel Ortega proposed austerity measures in relation to the country's social security system;
- B. whereas the Nicaraguan Government's response was violent, with security forces around the country firing live ammunition to break up the protests, resulting in hundreds of deaths and casualties;
- C. whereas freedom of expression and assembly have been regressively suppressed in the country over the past few years, with a near total clampdown since April 2018; whereas journalists, civil society leaders, political, social and environmental activists and other civic actors have been severely harassed and persecuted; whereas thousands of Nicaraguans have fled the country owing to continued severe government repression and the resulting economic downturn;

- D. whereas numerous local and international organisations had had their legal status retracted by the Nicaraguan Government by late 2018; whereas this led to restricting the Nicaraguan population from organising, associating, participating and freely expressing their opinions by trying to silence human right defenders by a constant threat of using criminal law to retaliate against their work;
- E. whereas a national dialogue was started on 16 May 2018, with the Catholic Church acting as mediator, but was suspended shortly afterwards; whereas on 27 February 2019 new efforts to restart a national dialogue took place, but this dialogue failed on 10 March 2019 after the Civic Alliance withdrew from the negotiations;
- F. whereas more than 700 people have been detained since the April 2018 unrest; whereas 112 people were released and put under house arrest on 27 February 2019 within the wider context of the new national dialogue;
- G. whereas the unrest exacerbated economic uncertainty in the country, leading to greater social and political instability;
- H. whereas democracy and the rule of law have deteriorated in Nicaragua over recent years, as the President has solidified his grip on parliament, the judiciary, the army, the police and the media, and civil society space has been steadily narrowed;
- I. whereas an ad hoc delegation from the European Parliament visited Nicaragua in January 2019 and rejected the official government position on the unrest in the country; whereas repression in the country has intensified since this delegation visit;
- J. whereas the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms must form an integral part of the EU's external policies, including the Association Agreement between the EU and the countries of Central America of 2012;
1. Condemns the severe violence against peaceful protestors and the clampdown on the right to freedom of expression and assembly in the country; expresses its solidarity with the Nicaraguan people and offers its condolences to the families of those killed since April 2018;
 2. Urges the Nicaraguan Government to launch an impartial and independent investigation and to prosecute those involved in committing human rights abuses during the protests;
 3. Regrets the fact that efforts to conduct a new national dialogue have failed; stresses that an inclusive dialogue with representatives of all society actors and groups is the only way out of the current crisis;
 4. Calls on the Nicaraguan Government to respect freedom of expression and assembly conducted in a peaceful manner, in line with national and international law, as an essential element of a democratic society; calls, furthermore, on the authorities to respect the freedom of the press and the media as a vital element of an open society, as guaranteed by the Nicaraguan Constitution;
 5. Demands the immediate release of all political prisoners and all those who have merely

exercised their freedom of expression and assembly in a peaceful manner; calls on the authorities to ensure that the rights and integrity of political prisoners are respected;

6. Calls on the Nicaraguan Government to restore the legal status of those national and international organisations that have had it retracted since April 2018;
7. Calls for an immediate electoral reform that guarantees just, free and transparent elections; recommends that the opposition overcome internal divisions;
8. Calls on the Nicaraguan Government to fully respect democratic values, including the separation of powers; recalls that the full participation of the opposition, the depolarisation of the judiciary, the end of impunity, and an independent civil society are essential factors for the success of a democracy;
9. Supports the aspirations of the majority of Nicaraguans, who wish to establish a free, stable, prosperous, inclusive and democratic country that respects its national and international commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms;
10. Recalls that, in light of the Association Agreement between the EU and the countries of Central America, Nicaragua must respect the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights, as upheld and promoted by the EU; urges that the democratic clause be triggered, which would suspend Nicaragua from the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America;
11. Urges the EU and the Member States to continue to monitor the situation and urgently consider the implementation of targeted and individual sanctions against the Nicaraguan Government and individuals responsible for human rights breaches, in line with the Council conclusions of 21 January 2019; stresses that any sanctions should not harm the domestic population;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of Nicaragua.