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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0387/2022**

12.9.2022

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on **Nicaragua, in particular the arrest of the bishop Ronaldo Álvarez**  
(2022/2827(RSP))

**Jordi Solé, Tilly Metz, Eleonora Evi, Ignazio Corrao, Ernest Urtasun,  
Rosa D'Amato**  
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**European Parliament resolution on ◀Nicaragua, in particular the arrest of the bishop  
Ronaldo Álvarez▶  
(2022/2827(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nicaragua, in particular that of 9 June 2022,
- having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the HR/VP of 4 August 2022 on the closure of radio stations and shutdown of civil society organisations,
- having regard to the Council regulations and decisions concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses in Nicaragua,
- having regard to the Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua,
- having regard to the press release of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of 19 August 2022,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules),
- having regard to the American Convention on Human Rights “Pact of San Jose”,
- having regard to the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and Central America on the other (Association Agreement between the EU and Central America),
- having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas on August 19, national Nicaraguan police forcibly raided the Matagalpa diocesan curia to arbitrarily arrest Bishop Rolando Álvarez and other clerics, due to its mediation efforts in the national talks of 2018 and its critical position to denounce human rights violations;

B. Whereas, in recent years, the Nicaraguan government has adopted an increasingly repressive regulatory framework; whereas the ongoing deterioration of human rights and civil and political rights is taking place in a context of systematic persecution, criminalization, harassment, police hounding and, more generally, acts of repression targeting human rights defenders, journalists and others expressing dissenting opinions of the Nicaraguan Government such as members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua;

C. Whereas attacks on freedom of expression, conscience and religion have intensified and threats by the Public Prosecutor's Office against several journalists, human rights defenders and

members of the Roman Catholic Church have prompted many of them to leave Nicaragua to seek protection; whereas, since April 2018 the Nicaraguan government has ordered the closure of Catholic radio stations and has cancelled more than 1700 non-profit organizations and foundations, including at least 40 women's organizations and they have also cancelled the legal status of several universities to quash student dissent;

D. Whereas the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an integral part of the EU's external policies, included in the Association Agreement between the EU and the countries of Central America of 2012;

1. Condemns repression and arrests of members of Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua in particular the arrest of Bishop Rolando Álvarez; calls on the government of Nicaragua for the immediate release of Bishop Rolando Álvarez and the other detainees who are being arbitrarily deprived of liberty in the country;

2. Stresses that the judicial system lacks independence from the Executive branch; expresses concern about the manipulation of criminal law and the use of the justice system as a tool to criminalise the exercise of civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, conscience and religion and protection of human rights;

3. Calls for the repeal of restrictive laws passed since 2018 that unduly restrict the civic and democratic space;

4. Expresses its concern for the life and physical and psychological integrity of political prisoners in particular expresses deep concern for those who are suffering abusive treatment in detention which may amount to torture; expresses deep concern at the situation of women prisoners who face additional aggressions due to their gender; underlines the increase in intimidation, aggression and ill-treatment of prisoners' families, especially during visiting hours; recalls that Nicaragua must comply with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules);

5. Strongly condemns the increasing legal restrictions on civic space and expressions of dissent taking place in a broader context of growing polarisation and a climate of intimidation and threat in the country; condemns the existence of a pattern of serious violations of civil and political rights with a worrying increase in acts of intimidation, stigmatization, threats, confiscations of assets and arbitrary arrests against opposition parties, journalists and other media workers, students, indigenous people, human rights defenders and the Roman Catholic church in the country;

6. Highlights the key role played by civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua and calls on the European Commission and Member States to agree and deliver support to all the person victims of arbitrary detentions in the country and to implement actions and programmes aimed at improving the security situation of all exiled persons;

7. Calls on the government of Nicaragua to urgently allow the return of international organizations into the country, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to monitor the human rights situation in the country;

8. Calls on the government of Nicaragua to implement the UN Human Rights Council resolution that establishes for one year a group of human rights experts to oversee credible, impartial and exhaustive investigations, preserve evidence and ensure accountability for the serious violations that have occurred since 2018; calls on the Nicaraguan institutions to ensure that impunity does not persist with respect to the serious human rights violations and abuses that have occurred, providing victims with access to justice and full reparation;

9. Calls on the Government of Nicaragua to initiate an inclusive national dialogue to ensure a peaceful and democratic solution to the political, social and human rights crisis;

10. Calls on the European Union to continue prioritising, through its external action and dialogue, the promotion of democracy, the rule of law, equality and media freedom and to work with the international community to defend dialogue, democracy and human rights in Nicaragua; asks the EU Delegation to closely monitor developments that are taking place in the country, including trial monitoring and visiting opposition leaders and government critics in prison or under house arrest; calls on the Commission to ensure that its cooperation assistance enhances support to civil society, notably human rights defenders, and that it does not in any way contribute to the current repressive policies of the Nicaraguan authorities;

11. 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 Organization of American States, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly, the Central American Parliament, and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Nicaragua.