



Plenary sitting

B9-0397/2022

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 Rolando Álvarez**
(2022/2827(RSP))

José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, Petras Auštrevičius, Malik Azmani, Nicola Beer, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Olivier Chastel, Bernard Guetta, Svenja Hahn, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Javier Nart, Urmas Paet, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Michal Šimečka, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Ramona Strugariu, Hilde Vautmans
on behalf of the Renew Group

**European Parliament resolution on Nicaragua, in particular the arrest of the Bishop Rolando Álvarez
(2022/2827(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular that of 9 June 2022 on the instrumentalisation of justice as a repressive tool in Nicaragua,
 - having regard to the framework for restrictive measures adopted by the Council on 14 October 2019,
 - 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 UN Universal Declaration of Human rights (art 18), the Charter of Fundamental rights of the European Union (art. 10) and the American Convention of human rights (art. 12),
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules),
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 19th August 2022, the Bishop of Matagalpa, Rolando Álvarez was arbitrarily arrested and placed under house arrest by the Nicaraguan regime along with five priests, two seminarians and one cameraman, which are imprisoned in El Chipote Prison;
- B. whereas the arrest took place after being under siege by the police for 15 days; whereas Bishop Rolando Álvarez has constantly called for peaceful and reasoned dialogue in Nicaragua and criticized the closure of seven Catholic media radio stations operated by the Matagalpa diocese on 1st August 2022;
- C. whereas the police statement did not offer a reason for the arrests, but said they were a part of an investigation launched on 5th August 2022 into "destabilizing and provocative" activities in the country; whereas later the police confirmed that "legal inquiries" were underway;
- D. whereas hours later, Nicaragua's vice-president Rosario Murillo claimed in a speech that the police had been re-establishing order in Matagalpa and the Bishop's arrest was "necessary";
- E. whereas the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag was expelled in March 2022, Padre Manuel Salvador Garcia was detained in June 2022, the

Missionaries of Charity Association of the Order of St Teresa of Calcutta was illegalised and expelled in July 2022 and the National Police reportedly banned religious processions scheduled for 13th and 14th August; whereas these are only few examples of acts of repression targeting members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua;

- F. whereas the closure of the Catholic radio stations and two more community radio/TV stations shortly after, with excessive use of force, are the last in a long list of civil society organizations, several political parties, media associations and universities;
 - G. whereas these events have happened in a context of systematic acts of repression targeting members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua, due to its mediation efforts in the national talks of 2018 and its critical position to denounce human rights violations committed in the context of Nicaragua's ongoing crisis;
 - H. whereas the majority of the Nicaraguan people profess the Catholic religion according to the Vatican Ecclesiastical Statistical Yearbook 2020 and the Latin barometer;
 - I. whereas since April 2018, a framework of state repression is installed in Nicaragua, marked by the systemic impunity of human rights violations, the institutional and rule of law deterioration and the implementation of a strategy orchestrated by the Nicaraguan executive which aims at silencing any dissenting voices with a clear connivance of the judiciary that handed guilty verdicts and harsh sentences after closed-door trials that failed to uphold basic fair trial guarantees;
- 1. Urges the Nicaraguan Regime for the immediate and unconditional release of Bishop Rolando Alvarez and to annul all legal proceedings against him, including his sentences, and of all those arbitrarily detained.
 - 2. Strongly condemns the escalating repression against members of the Roman Catholic Church as well as human rights defenders, opposition figures, peasants, journalists, students and indigenous people for solely exercising their fundamental freedoms in Nicaragua.
 - 3. Urges the Nicaraguan Government to immediately end the repression and restore full respect for all human rights, including freedom of expression and religion and belief,.
 - 4. Express its concern over the worsening situation of the over 205 political prisoners in Nicaragua and calls for their immediate release; recalls the authorities the obligation to guarantee that their lives and personal integrity and dignity are protected in compliance with Nicaraguan international human rights commitments and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners -the Mandela rules.
 - 5. Rejects the arbitrary shutdowns and confiscations of assets belonging to civil society organisations, political parties, religious organisations, media associations and universities; calls on the Nicaraguan authorities to stop these actions and to restore their legal personality, as well as to return all the assets, documents and equipment that were unduly seized.

6. Condemns the cancellation of the opposition political parties and the lack of freedom to organise and participate in the Municipal Elections of 6 November 2022; urges the restoration of the legitimate administration in the jurisdiction of El Cuá, San Sebastián de Yalí, Santa María de Pantasma, Murra and El Almendro.
7. Strongly urges Nicaragua to repeal legislation passed since 2018 that unduly restrict the civic and democratic space; reiterates its call on the EU to continue supporting civil society organizations, human rights defenders and relatives of political prisoners both in Nicaragua and in exile.
8. Recalls that in the light of the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America, Nicaragua must respect and consolidate the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights; reiterates its demand that, in the light of the current circumstances, the democratic clause of the Association Agreement be triggered.
9. Reiterates that the European have to hold the Nicaraguan regime accountable, in particular its judges and prosecutors, for repression in the country and the judicial proceedings initiated against opposition figures and other critics; calls on the Council to immediately start the proceedings to include the judges and prosecutors on the list of individuals sanctioned by the EU.
10. Reiterates its call for the immediate extradition of Alessio Casimirri to Italy.

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, the Lima Group, and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Nicaragua.