



Plenary sitting

B9-0272/2023

12.6.2023

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 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Nicaragua
(2023/2743(RSP))

Leopoldo López Gil, Gabriel Mato
on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Nicaragua
(2023/2743(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nicaragua, in particular those of 16 December 2021 on the situation in Nicaragua¹, of 9 June 2022 on the instrumentalisation of justice as a repressive tool in Nicaragua² and of 22 September 2022 on Nicaragua, in particular the arrest of the bishop Rolando Álvarez³,
 - having regard to the Council regulations and decisions concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses in Nicaragua, in particular Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/24 of 10 January 2022 amending Decision (CFSP) 2019/1720 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Nicaragua⁴ and Council Regulation (EU) 2019/1716 of 14 October 2019 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Nicaragua⁵,
 - 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 (the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America)⁶,
 - having regard to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 10 October 2022 on the latest diplomatic developments and to the statements by the Spokesperson of the High Representative of 10 February 2023 on the release of political prisoners and of 16 February 2023 on revoking the citizenship of political opponents,
 - having regard to the report by the UN Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua of 2 March 2023,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since 2018, the Nicaraguan regime has systematically, repeatedly and arbitrarily incarcerated, harassed and intimidated presidential pre-candidates, opposition leaders and religious leaders, in particular from the Roman Catholic Church, as well as student and rural leaders, journalists, human rights defenders, civil society

¹ OJ C 251, 30.6.2022, p. 134.

² OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 100.

³ OJ C 125, 5.4.2023, p. 76.

⁴ OJ L 51, 10.1.2022, p. 13.

⁵ OJ L 262, 15.10.2019, p. 1.

⁶ OJ L 346, 15.12.2012, p. 3.

organisations, business representatives and any other critical voices in the country; whereas the situation in Nicaragua continues to deteriorate;

- B. whereas since 2018, state repression has become embedded in Nicaragua, characterised by systemic impunity for human rights violations, the deterioration of state institutions and the rule of law and connivance between the executive and the judiciary;
- C. whereas on 9 February 2023, the Nicaraguan regime deported 222 political prisoners, including journalists and human rights defenders, and stripped them of their Nicaraguan citizenship for having committed ‘treason against the homeland’; whereas a week later, the Nicaraguan regime stripped a further 94 dissidents of their citizenship and confiscated their property;
- D. whereas since then, the Nicaraguan regime has been relentlessly harassing and persecuting the lawyers of political dissidents and has revoked up to 25 of their licences;
- E. whereas arbitrary arrests of political dissidents and human rights defenders continue to be the norm in the country; whereas as recently as May 2023, according to the UN, up to 63 people were arbitrarily arrested on political grounds; whereas, furthermore, the regime has developed new forms of repression by conducting ‘express trials’, which is further evidence of the judicial system’s complicity with the regime;
- F. whereas the Catholic Church, which played an important role as a mediator in the 2018 National Dialogue and has continually called for calm and reasoned dialogue in Nicaragua, has been subject to increasing attacks and repression at the hands of the Nicaraguan regime; whereas Bishop Álvarez remains in prison despite numerous calls for his release; whereas on 12 March 2023, the Nicaraguan regime announced that it would cut ties with the Vatican; whereas, in reaction, the Vatican decided to close its embassy;
- G. whereas on 2 March 2023, the UN Group of Human Rights Experts published its conclusion, which stated that widespread human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity are being committed against civilians by the Nicaraguan Government for political reasons and that the alleged abuses include extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, torture and the arbitrary deprivation of nationality and of the right to remain in one’s own country;
- H. whereas since 2018, the Ortega-Murillo regime has closed down more than 3 000 civilian organisations;
- I. whereas Nicaragua and Russia are close allies; whereas since the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified Russian war of aggression against Ukraine began, the Ortega-Murillo regime has systematically supported the Russian regime in UN resolutions; whereas on 19 April 2023, during his official visit to Nicaragua, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov thanked the Nicaraguan regime for backing Russia’s candidacy as observer in both the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Central American Integration System; whereas Russia has supported Nicaragua with military equipment and continues to maintain a Russian military presence in the country, which is clear evidence of the strong relationship and mutual support between the Ortega-

Murillo and Putin regimes;

- J. whereas the Nicaraguan regime took the unjustified decision to expel the Head of the EU Delegation to Nicaragua and cut diplomatic ties with the Kingdom of the Netherlands; whereas the EU responded reciprocally by declaring the Head of the Mission of the Republic of Nicaragua to the EU *persona non grata*;
1. Condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the continued and relentless repression orchestrated by the Ortega-Murillo regime against the Nicaraguan people and reiterates its continued and unwavering support for the Nicaraguan people;
 2. Reiterates that a peaceful solution to the deep political crisis in Nicaragua should be an inclusive and meaningful national dialogue; regrets the repeated disengagement of the Nicaraguan regime and its unwillingness to start such a process; notes that the holding of free, fair and transparent elections, the restoration of the rule of law and freedoms, the cessation of repression and fear, the release of arbitrarily detained political prisoners, the re-establishment of the legal status of the political parties that were arbitrarily outlawed, the return of exiles without exception and with full guarantees and the return of international human rights bodies to the country are essential prerequisites for any dialogue with the Nicaraguan regime; calls for the EU and its Member States to accompany current and future efforts of civil society to create the conditions for a dialogue leading to a democratic transition, in line with what was established in the March 2019 agreements;
 3. Deplores the enforced exile of political prisoners in February 2023 and the revoking of their nationality, which is in clear breach of Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which protects everyone's right to a nationality and prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of a person's nationality;
 4. Condemns the abusive detention, lack of trial guarantees and illegal convictions of political prisoners that have been taking place in Nicaragua since the deportation of the 222 prisoners in February 2023; 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;
 5. Strongly condemns the arbitrary suspension of lawyers' legal licences by the Nicaraguan authorities; underlines that this further undermines the already dismal state of the rule of law and guarantees for due process; draws attention to the continued instrumentalisation of the judicial system and the complicity of the judges in this; reiterates its call for Nicaraguan judges and prosecutors to be swiftly included on the list of individuals sanctioned by the EU and for the list of sanctioned individuals and entities to be expanded to include Daniel Ortega and his inner circle;
 6. Highlights the key role played by civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua;
 7. Call for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and dissidents, in particular Bishop Álvarez;
 8. Calls on the Nicaraguan regime to urgently allow international organisations to return to

the country, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in order to monitor the human rights situation in the country;

9. Reiterates its call on the Nicaraguan regime to implement UN Human Rights Council Resolution 49/3 of 31 March 2022, which establishes, for a period of 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; welcomes, in this context, the fact that this group of experts has been able to carry out its mandate, culminating in the publication of its report on 2 March 2023; underlines that its findings established that widespread human rights violations that amount to crimes against humanity are being committed against civilians by the Nicaraguan Government; calls on the EU Member States and the UN Security Council, in the light of these findings and in accordance with Articles 13 and 14 of the Rome Statute, to open a formal investigation through the International Criminal Court into Nicaragua and Daniel Ortega for crimes against humanity;
10. Calls on the Nicaraguan regime to stop arbitrarily closing down non-governmental and civil society organisations and to reinstate the legal charter of all organisations, political parties, religious organisations, media associations and outlets, universities and human rights organisations that have been shut down arbitrarily, as well as to return all their property, assets, documents and equipment that have been unduly seized and to re-establish their legitimate legal status;
11. Condemns the Nicaraguan regime's unconditional support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; stresses that Nicaragua is one of Russia's closest allies in the region and that it is benefiting from Russian military assistance in order to further repress its population;
12. Urges the presidency of the European Council, which is organising a summit of EU and CELAC heads of state and government, not to invite representatives of the Ortega-Murillo regime to take part in the event; calls on the presidency of the European Council to commit to issuing a statement demanding due respect for human rights in Nicaragua and to propose a roadmap towards democracy in the country;
13. Calls for the EU 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 Nicaragua to closely monitor developments in the country, including by monitoring trials 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 for civil society, in particular human rights defenders, and that it does not in any way contribute to the repressive policies currently being pursued by the Nicaraguan authorities;
14. 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 must be triggered;

15. Asks its Conference of Presidents to authorise a fact-finding mission to monitor the situation in Nicaragua;
16. 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, the Vatican and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Nicaragua.