



Plenary sitting

B9-0273/2023

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))

Tilly Metz, Saskia Bricmont, Hannah Neumann, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Malte Gallée, Jordi Solé, Bronis Ropé, Francisco Guerreiro, Ignazio Corrao, Nicolae Ștefănuță
on behalf of the Verts/ALE 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 9 June 2022 on the instrumentalisation of justice as a repressive tool in Nicaragua¹ and of 15 September 2022 on Nicaragua, in particular the arrest of the bishop Rolando Álvarez²,
- having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service (EEAS) of 16 February 2023 on the revoking of Nicaraguan citizenship of political opponents,
- having regard to the statement by the EEAS Spokesperson of 4 August 2022 on the closure of radio stations and shutdown of civil society organisations in Nicaragua,
- having regard to the Council regulations and decisions concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses in Nicaragua,
- having regard to the report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua of 2 March 2023,
- having regard to Chapter IV.B on Nicaragua of the 2022 annual report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,
- having regard to the press release of the US Department of the Treasury of 19 April 2023 on the sanctioning of three Nicaraguan judicial officials involved in human rights abuses,
- having regard to the press release of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of 19 August 2022 on the repression and arrests of members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules),
- having regard to the American Convention on Human Rights (the 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 (the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America)³,

¹ OJ C 493, 27.12.2022, p. 100.

² OJ C 125, 5.4.2023, p. 76.

³ OJ L 346, 15.12.2012, p. 3.

- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in its report presented to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2023, the UN Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua concludes that the Ortega-Murillo regime is committing widespread and systematic, politically motivated human rights violations that constitute crimes against humanity towards the civilian population, and called on the international community to impose sanctions on the institutions and individuals involved;
- B. whereas the human rights violations and abuses perpetrated since April 2018 are not an isolated phenomenon, but rather the product of a dynamic process to dismantle the separation of powers and democratic guarantees and to thoroughly concentrate power in the figures of the President and Vice-President of the Republic of Nicaragua;
- C. whereas on 9 February 2023, the Ortega-Murillo regime released 222 political prisoners and deported them to the United States, labelling them as ‘traitors’, stripping them of their nationality, leaving most of them stateless and confiscating their assets; whereas an additional 94 individuals had their citizenship revoked and were declared ‘traitors’ and ‘fugitives of the law’;
- D. whereas on February 10, following his refusal to leave Nicaragua along with the other 222 detained political prisoners, Bishop Rolando José Álvarez Lagos of Matagalpa was sentenced, without due process, to more than 26 years in prison during a court hearing in Managua; whereas a judge on the Appeals Court of Managua also announced that Bishop Álvarez would be fined and stripped of his Nicaraguan citizenship;
- E. whereas on 19 April, the US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control designated three Nicaraguan judicial officials involved in human rights abuses conducted by the regime of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and the broader oppression of Nicaraguan citizens who oppose his regime; whereas the three designated individuals are judges or presiding magistrates in the Managua District Court of Appeals, the Second District Trial Court in Managua and the First Criminal Appeals Court of Managua; whereas these courts affirmed decisions that revoked the citizenship of more than 300 Nicaraguan citizens;
- F. whereas in recent years, the Nicaraguan regime has adopted an increasingly repressive regulatory framework; whereas the ongoing deterioration of human, civil and political rights is taking place in a context of systematic persecution, criminalisation, harassment, police hounding and general acts of repression targeting human rights defenders, journalists and others who express dissenting opinions against the Nicaraguan regime;
- G. whereas attacks on freedom of expression, conscience and religion have intensified, with threats by the Public Prosecutor’s Office against several journalists, human rights defenders and religious leaders prompting many of them to leave Nicaragua to seek international protection;
- H. whereas since April 2018, the Nicaraguan regime has shuttered more than 3 300 non-profit organisations and foundations, including women’s organisations and organisations related to the Catholic Church, and has revoked the legal status of several

universities in order to quash student dissent;

- I. whereas in 2022, the flow of Nicaraguans migrating to other countries as a consequence of the political, social, human rights and economic crises increased; whereas more than 192 000 Nicaraguans have fled to Costa Rica since 2018, either as asylum seekers or as refugees; whereas this trend could undermine the Costa Rican asylum system and overburden support networks in the country;
 - J. 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 2012 Association Agreement between the EU and Central America;
1. Condemns the systematic repression and arbitrary detentions committed against members of the opposition, students, civil society organisations and religious leaders in Nicaragua;
 2. Stresses that Nicaragua's judicial system lacks independence from the executive branch; expresses concern about the use of the criminal law to persecute real or perceived opponents, to suppress any criticism or opposition and to criminalise the exercise of civil and political rights, such as the freedoms of expression, conscience and religion, as well as the defence and promotion of human rights;
 3. Condemns the fact that at least 317 individuals have been arbitrarily deprived of their Nicaraguan citizenship; urges the Nicaraguan regime to ensure full access to and enjoyment of the right to nationality and to take measures to prevent and eradicate statelessness; urges the Nicaraguan regime to guarantee family reunification, by facilitating the issuance and validation of basic official documentation in order to allow those affected by the violations to exercise their citizenship rights; urges the Nicaraguan regime to close the judicial proceedings against those released from prison and banished, erase their criminal records and cease persecuting their families;
 4. Calls for the immediate release of all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty; calls on the Nicaraguan regime to immediately cease its politically motivated persecutions, including criminalisation and arbitrary detention, arbitrary deprivation of nationality and forced deportation;
 5. Calls for the repeal of the restrictive laws passed since 2018 that unduly encroach on civic and democratic space; calls on the Nicaraguan regime to, in particular, repeal recent legislative changes that violate the applicable international and inter-American standards, to provide comprehensive reparations and redress and to introduce guarantees of non-repetition;
 6. Expresses its concern for the lives and the physical and psychological integrity of the 47 remaining political prisoners, in particular for those who are suffering abusive treatment in detention that may amount to torture; expresses deep concern at the situation of women prisoners who face additional acts of aggression owing to their gender; underlines the increase in acts of intimidation and aggression and the 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;

7. Strongly condemns the increasing legal restrictions on civic space and on expressions of dissent in Nicaragua, which are taking place in a broader context of growing polarisation and a climate of intimidation and threat in the country; condemns the pattern of serious violations of civil and political rights, in particular the worrying increase in acts of intimidation, stigmatisation, threats, asset confiscation and arbitrary arrests levelled against opposition parties, journalists and other media workers, students, indigenous people, human rights defenders and religious leaders in the country;
8. Calls on the Nicaraguan regime to guarantee the life and integrity of human rights defenders who remain in Nicaragua, including, among others, Vilma Nuñez de Escorcia;
9. Highlights the key role that civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and religious leaders play in Nicaragua; calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide support to all the victims of human rights violations and arbitrary detentions in the country and to take actions and implement programmes aimed at improving the security situation of all exiled persons, including those currently stateless persons who have been deprived of their nationality;
10. Calls on the Nicaraguan regime to cease its policy of isolation from the international community and to urgently allow the return of international organisations 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;
11. Calls on the Nicaraguan regime to implement the recommendations issued by the UN Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua in its report, as well as those issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; calls on the Nicaraguan institutions to stamp out impunity for the serious violations and abuses of human rights and to provide the victims with access to justice and full reparations;
12. Calls on the Nicaraguan regime to initiate an inclusive national dialogue in order to ensure a peaceful and democratic solution to the political, social and human rights crises; calls on Nicaraguan authorities to implement legislative and public policy measures in order to guarantee democratic principles and the separation of the executive, legislative, electoral and judicial branches of government;
13. Calls for the EU to urgently hold the Nicaraguan regime accountable, in particular its judges, for repression in the country and for the judicial proceedings initiated against opposition figures, their relatives, other critics and social leaders; calls on the Council to immediately start the proceedings to update the list of individuals sanctioned by the EU;
14. 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;
15. Supports the efforts of the EU Delegations to Nicaragua and Costa Rica to closely monitor developments that are taking place in Nicaragua, including by monitoring trials and visiting opposition leaders and government critics in prison or under house arrest;

16. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase support for the members of the Nicaraguan opposition still in the country, as well as those currently in exile;
17. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase support for countries receiving substantial numbers of migrants fleeing the Nicaraguan regime, in particular Costa Rica, in order to maintain stability in the region;
18. Calls on the Commission to ensure that its cooperation assistance enhances its support for civil society, notably human rights defenders, and that it does not in any way contribute to the current repressive policies of the Nicaraguan authorities;
19. 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.