



Plenary sitting

B9-0279/2023

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))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0279/2023

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Nicaragua,
- having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and his spokesperson about Nicaragua, in particular the statements of 10 February 2023 on the release of political prisoners, of 16 February 2023 on the revocation of the citizenship of political opponents, and of 18 April 2023 on the fifth anniversary of the nationwide protests,
- 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 other¹,
- having regard to the Council regulations and decisions concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses in Nicaragua and to the Council decision of 13 October 2022 renewing these sanctions until 15 October 2023²,
- having regard to the report of the UN Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua (GHREN) of 2 March 2023,
- having regard to the statement by the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of 2 June 2023,
- having regard to the decision of 8 February 2023 by the First Criminal Chamber of the Managua Court of Appeals on the deportation of 222 traitors to the homeland and the statement of 15 February 2023 by the presiding magistrate of the Managua Court of Appeals on the accusation of 94 traitors to the homeland,
- having regard the statements of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, in particular those of 13 February 2023 welcoming the release of political prisoners in Nicaragua but rejecting the arbitrary deprivation of nationality, of 17 February 2023 condemning the escalation of human rights violations in Nicaragua and of 18 April 2023 marking five years since the start of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua,
- having regard to the reports by the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
- having regard to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984,

¹ OJ L 346, 15.12.2012, p. 3.

² OJ L 268, 14.10.2022, p. 22.

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas five years after the start of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua, the state continues to respond repressively and violently to protests and dissent; whereas Nicaragua’s regime has intensified its political crackdown, stripping 317 dissidents of their citizenship through illegal constitutional changes in order to force opponents to flee the country; whereas over several years, opponents of the regime have been subjected to many human rights violations;
- B. whereas on 9 February 2023, Ortega’s regime deported 222 arbitrarily detained political prisoners to the United States, including political figures and pre-candidates in the 2021 presidential elections, journalists, human rights defenders and demonstrators in the 2018 protests; whereas all of them were declared ‘traitors to the homeland’;
- C. whereas Bishop Rolando Álvarez refused to be exiled from Nicaragua and, as a punishment, was sentenced on 10 February 2023 to 26 years’ imprisonment and the deprivation of his nationality and political rights following his conviction on charges of ‘treason’, ‘undermining national integrity’ and ‘spreading fake news’; whereas Rolando Álvarez is currently in La Modelo prison and has not been permitted any visits since 25 March 2023; whereas the crackdown on the church continues, with the expulsion of nuns and the arrest of several priests and church employees;
- D. whereas in addition to Rolando Álvarez, as at 30 April 2023 at least 46 political prisoners, including some who have been detained since 2018, remain imprisoned in unacceptable conditions, without access to a fair trial; whereas Parliament has consistently called for the release of all political prisoners;
- E. whereas on 15 February 2023, 94 additional political opponents were stripped of their nationality and had their property seized after being accused of conspiring to undermine national integrity and of spreading misinformation; whereas about a third of them remain in Nicaragua, including prominent activists such as the president of the Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights, Vilma Núñez;
- F. whereas several countries have offered nationality to the Nicaraguan citizens made stateless by the regime of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo;
- G. whereas in May 2023, 63 people throughout the country were reported to have been arbitrarily detained and charged with ‘conspiring to undermine national integrity’ and ‘spreading fake news’, charges that the regime is using to silence its critics;
- H. whereas on 9 and 11 May 2023, the Nicaraguan Supreme Court ruled that 26 lawyers and notaries critical of the regime, including some of the country’s most prominent human rights defenders, could no longer practise law in Nicaragua;
- I. whereas since 2018, more than 3 200 national and international non-governmental organisations have been shut down and have had their assets confiscated, leaving countless people without access to their services or assistance; whereas media outlets have also been forced to close;

- J. whereas 150 Nicaraguan students have been arbitrarily expelled from their universities for participating in the 2018 protests; whereas they are unable to complete their degrees;
- K. whereas on 19 May 2023, the Nicaraguan regime ordered the confiscation of all real estate belonging to the 222 political opponents who were released and deported to the United States on 9 February 2023;
- L. whereas, as stated by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the revocation of the citizenship of human rights defenders and dissidents on arbitrary grounds breaches international law, specifically Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; whereas Nicaragua is a party to all of the above-mentioned instruments;
- M. whereas the GHREN has published its first report on the situation in Nicaragua, documenting how agents of the police and the National Penitentiary System and members of pro-regime armed groups committed extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detention and acts of physical and psychological torture, including sexual and gender-based violence, in the context of the apprehension, interrogation and detention of political opponents;
- N. whereas on 18 April 2023, following an EU statement condemning the systemic repression faced by Nicaraguans since the outbreak of nationwide protests five years previously, Nicaragua withdrew its approval of the EU's ambassador to the country, stating that this decision was due to the EU's 'interventionist, reckless and insolent' position on Nicaragua; whereas Nicaragua had declared the EU's previous ambassador to the country *persona non grata* in September 2022;
1. Strongly condemns the Nicaraguan regime's widespread perpetration of systematic and deliberate human rights violations against its population for purely political reasons; stresses that these violations amount to crimes against humanity, as stated by the GHREN; condemns the practices used by regime to silence the population; reaffirms its solidarity with the Nicaraguan population;
 2. Welcomes the release of political prisoners, but rejects their deportation, the decision to strip them of their nationality and their civil and political rights, the freezing of their assets and the confiscation of their property; reminds the Nicaraguan authorities that the arbitrary deprivation of nationality is prohibited by international law and calls on the Nicaraguan authorities to immediately reverse these steps and to cease its politically motivated persecution of and reprisals against dissidents and human rights defenders;
 3. Expresses its concern about the state of civil death endured by those who have been deprived of their nationality but have remained in Nicaragua;
 4. Expresses its concern about the situation of the relatives in Nicaragua of those who have been deported and the situation of those who remain in the country and are being persecuted, as well as their families; underlines the need to facilitate family reunification processes; stresses, furthermore, the importance of monitoring the wellbeing of the 222 Nicaraguans who were initially deported to the US and of those who were stripped of their nationality; welcomes the solidarity shown by the states,

both in Europe and in Latin America, that have offered citizenship to Nicaraguans who have been deprived of their nationality;

5. Calls for proof that Bishop Rolando Álvarez is alive; reiterates its call for his immediate and unconditional release and that of all arbitrarily detained political prisoners, opposition activists, human rights and environmental defenders, members of the Catholic Church and journalists, and for the annulment of the legal proceedings against them; condemns the continued psychological and physical abuse they face at the hands of police and prison authorities, of which women and members of the LGBTI community are particular targets, and the situation of incommunicado detention in which some of them are being held, without access to their lawyers, families or medical care; requires that families be kept informed of the state of health of their loved ones in detention;
6. Calls on the Nicaraguan authorities to uphold and respect human rights and to allow the Nicaraguan people to exercise their civil and political rights; urges the Nicaraguan authorities to allow international organisations and civil society organisations unrestricted access to the country;
7. Urges the restoration of the legal status of those organisations and media outlets that have been arbitrarily shut down since 2018;
8. Reiterates its condemnation of the continued attacks and acts of aggression against the indigenous people of Nicaragua and against their land;
9. Calls for the EU and its Member States to include specific guarantees of compliance with human rights regarding European funds allocated, including where these funds are allocated through multilateral and financial institutions such as the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and to carry out strict monitoring to ensure that these funds do not contribute to strengthening the Nicaraguan regime;
10. Highlights and commends the key role played by civil society, human rights and environmental defenders, the Catholic Church and journalists in Nicaragua; asks the European External Action Service and the Commission to reinforce their regular dialogue with them and to strengthen mechanisms to support their vital work; calls for the EU to use all the tools at its disposal, including visas, to facilitate the mobility of human rights defenders in exile and ensure the continuity of their work ;
11. Requests that the Commission and the Member States establish and facilitate, through their development cooperation agencies, specific programmes to support the educational development of Nicaraguan youth and students who have been deprived of their right to education;
12. Calls for the EU to support any prospect of meaningful national dialogue and to further insist on *sine qua non* conditions for dialogue, including the release of arbitrarily detained political prisoners, the restoration of the rule of law and freedoms, the cessation of repression and fear, the re-establishment of the legal status of the political parties and organisations that were arbitrarily outlawed, the return of exiles without exception and with full guarantees, the return of international human rights bodies to the country and the holding of free, fair and transparent elections;

13. Takes note of the conclusions of the first report of the GHREN; stresses the critical importance of making further progress in investigations that would contribute to ending impunity for the crimes perpetrated by the Nicaraguan regime and its authorities; welcomes the renewal of the GHREN's mandate and requests that the EU and its Member States continue to support its vital work;
14. Deplores the increasing isolation of Nicaragua from the international community; condemns the aggressive rhetoric of the Nicaraguan authorities; reiterates that the principle of universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international law;
15. Calls on the VP/HR to consider all the instruments available when taking additional measures, including measures that may go beyond individual restrictions; reiterates its call for 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;
16. Stresses that the upcoming summit between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States is an opportunity to uphold the principles of the rule of law, democracy and human rights and points out that this will not be possible without the truly transparent, comprehensive and meaningful inclusion of civil society; recalls that in the light of the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America, Nicaragua must respect and consolidate these principles; reiterates its demand that, in the light of the current circumstances, the democratic clause of the Association Agreement be triggered;
17. Calls on the Member States to build on the evidence collected by the GHREN regarding the crimes against humanity committed by the Nicaraguan authorities and to support the end of impunity in Nicaragua, including by opening formal investigations and taking legal action against those responsible through the exercise of universal jurisdiction; encourages the Member States to bring Nicaragua before the International Court of Justice for the violation of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Nicaragua is a party;
18. Reiterates its call for the immediate extradition of Alessio Casimirri to Italy;
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, the Lima Group and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Nicaragua.