Ortega Government Cracks Down on Peaceful Protesters, Carries Out Massive Arbitrary Detentions

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Today, March 16, 2019, Nicaraguan citizens using their constitutional right to protest, gathered in various parts of the country to peacefully protest the Ortega-Murillo regime and demand the release of all political prisoners. Protesters were met with violent repression and were assaulted by police. The current number of arbitrarily detained (as of 8:30pm EST) are over 81 confirmed cases and 164 reported, which includes leaders and civilians. Journalists were assaulted and their equipment confiscated. There are reports of shootings by paramilitary and police forces against the civilian population across the country.

Among the people arrested are members of the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy, current members of the team negotiating with the government, long-time feminist activists, human rights defenders, environmentalists, students, the former Minister of Education, former Sandinista leaders and many others (below is a preliminary list).

During the last 11 months, Nicaragua has faced the worst repression and violation of human rights of the last 40 years. Since April 2018, the grassroots peaceful uprising has been brutally repressed by the National Police and armed paramilitary forces creating a national crisis that has resulted in over 325 dead, over 80,000 people have fled the country and over 700 people are imprisoned for protesting against the regime. Daniel Ortega's strategy has been to kill, capture, torture and disappear protesters in hopes of silencing the opposition. In December of 2018, the Group of Independent Interdisciplinary Experts commissioned by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, reported that in Nicaragua the government committed crimes against humanity.

After the breakdown in the dialogue of 2018, the severity of the political, social and economic crisis as well as the pressure from the international community including US sanctions against Nicaragua, the government and the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy agreed to begin negotiations once again. On February 27th, only hours before the negotiations were about to take place, the government released approximately 100 political prisoners and put them under a form of house arrest, another form of government control. Yesterday, the government released another 50 prisoners. The release has been seen as a direct response to citizen and international pressure.

The government continues to capture civilians everyday and reports of prisoners being tortured are frequent. Within days of the renewed negotiations, the Catholic Bishops Conference withdrew as witnesses. The student movement also withdrew from the negotiating table given the government's

unwillingness to release all of the political prisoners and the lack of freedom of association, of expression and of the press. Today's massive detentions of peaceful protesters reveal the brutality of an authoritarian regime who wants to remain in power despite widespread opposition.

The Nicaraguan people are convinced that peace is the only way forward. Ortega's firepower is contrasted with the people's conviction for a free, democratic and just Nicaragua.

NICARAGUA CALLS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO DEMAND THAT THE ORTEGA REGIME IMMEDIATELY RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, STOP THE REPRESSION, AND RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

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Following is a preliminary list of those captured today March 16, 2019

1 Alejandro Cantillano Gil
2 Alexander Cruz
3 Amelia Martínez Cole
4 Ana Lucía Álvarez
5 Ana Margarita Vijil
6 Angélica Juarez
7 Azahalea Solis
8 Armando Rojas
9 Berenice Quezada
10 Carlos Iván Paredes Estrada
11 Carlos Hildalgo Granado
12 Carolina Gil Baca
13 Denis José Bracamonte Castellón
14 Eduardo Cantillano Gil
15 Elena Hendricks (USA citizen)
16 Elizabeth Díaz (USA citizen)
17 Ermis Morales
18 Ernesto Gil Baca
19 Ernesto Suárez Fuentes
20 Eyeling Joyce Aguilar Collado
21 Flor Martínez de Abarca
22 Francis Altamirano Lara
23 Francisco Samper
24 Freddy Blandon
25 Genaro Sosa
26 Gerónimo Giusto
27 Guirlanda Suárez
28 Heisel del Carmen Ruiz Villarreal
29 Heberto Incer
30 Humberto Belli Pereira
31 Humberto Incer
32 Iberson Josué Gaitán Núñez
33 Inelia Gutierrez
34 Imelda de Jesús Corea
35 Inty Basset

36 Jean Pierre
37 Jessica Lopez
38 Jorge Isaac Gonzalez Paguaga
39 Jorge Lopez
40 Jorge Ulises Gonzalez Briones
41 José Sandino
42 Juan Diego Amador (14 years old)
43 Julieta Martinez
44 Karen Celeberti
45 Karla Esquivel Sandino
46 Kthy Sevilla
47 Leila García
48 Lidia Paguaga Figueroa
49 Liliam Urtecho
50 Luis Alfredo Callejas
51 Luis Vallejos
52 Manuel Guardián
53 Marcus Vinicio Gonzalez Matamoros
54 Mariah Aguirre
55 María José Castillo
56 Maria Teresa Peralta
57 Marta Chamorro
58 Martín Argüello
59 Max Jerez
60 Mildred Rayo
61 Moises Hassan
62 Mónica Baltodano
63 Mónica Wheelock
64 Orlando Rizo
65 Padre Juan Domingo
66 Petrona Isabel Escalante Ayestas
67 Roberto Portcarrero
68 Roberto Ruiz Villareal
69 Ronald Enrique Mejia Alegría
70 Rosalinda López Miranda
71 Sandra Ramos
72 Sergio Amador
73 Sofana Arce
74 Sofia Montenegro
75 Tadeo Sequeira
76 Veronica Corea de Urtecho
77 Victor Corea
78 Virginia Amador
79 William Valdelomar
80 Yolaina Diaz
81 Yolaina Vargas Pritchard (British Citizen)