

URGENT ACTION

OVER 130 PEOPLE REMAIN IN DETENTION

A year and a half since the beginning of the crisis in Nicaragua, at least 130 people continue to be detained. Among them is Maria Guadalupe Ruiz Briceño, 22; a student who was imprisoned after participating in a protest in July 2019. We urge the Nicaraguan authorities to immediately release and drop all charges against those detained solely for exercising the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua
c/o Minister for Foreign Affairs
Del cine González 1 c. al Sur,
sobre Avenida Bolívar,
Managua, Nicaragua
Twitter: @DenisCanciller*

Dear President Ortega,

I write to express my concern about the continued persecution and criminalisation strategy in Nicaragua. A year and a half since the beginning of the crisis, at least 130 people continue to be imprisoned – including the student María Guadalupe Ruiz Briceño, who was detained with violence by the police, on July 2019 right after participating in a protest.

I urge you to immediately release and drop all charges against all those detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, since 18 April 2018, in accordance with international standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 18 April 2018, after years of institutional decline in Nicaragua, protests broke out following the government's attempt to implement unpopular and non-consulted social security reforms. These protests were met with violent repression. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the crisis has resulted in the deaths of 328 people and more than 2,000 injuries. Moreover, civil society figures state that more than 700 have been arrested. Additionally, 300 health professionals were dismissed, over 100 journalists and media workers have been forced into exile, and 144 students have been expelled from the UNAN (National Autonomous University of Nicaragua). About 80,000 Nicaraguans have fled to neighbouring countries; 68,000 of them are seeking refuge in Costa Rica until August 2019, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The government has failed so far to fulfil its commitment, made in March 2019, to release all people detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, since 18 April 2018. According to information from the Nicaraguan Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders (Iniciativa Nicaraguense de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos) and the Legal Defence Unite (Unidad de Defensa Jurídica), María Guadalupe, 22, a student and activist, was detained with violence on 13 July 2019. Authorities have not duly complied with due process standards in her case.

On 16 May 2019, Eddy Montes (57) a Nicaraguan and U.S. citizen, was shot dead at La Modelo prison in Managua. He and others who were injured were arrested for participating in the 2018 protests. An Amnesty Law was approved by the National Assembly of Nicaragua on 8 June 2019, following this approval, 56 people were released on 11 June 2019.

In the report "[Instilling terror](#)", Amnesty International concluded that one of the central plank of this repressive policy was the Nicaraguan state's persistent efforts to criminalise opponents – referring to anyone who protested against the government as "terrorists" or "coup plotters" to justify its own violent actions. Since then, protests have continued demanding substantial change to the status quo. A year and a half after the beginning of the crackdown on protests, Amnesty International continues to receive reports of arbitrary detentions and torture of persons deprived of their liberty.

Civil society organisations whose legal status have been cancelled by the government (including the Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights - CENIDH) remain unable to freely carry out their work in the country, and the harassment of journalists and human rights defenders continues. Attacks against freedom of expression and peaceful assembly indicate an ongoing strategy to suppress dissenting voices.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 29 November 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: People in jail after more than a year and a half since the beginning of the crisis (They, them, theirs); María Guadalupe Ruiz Briceño (she/her/hers).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr43/0953/2019/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS: Embassy of Nicaragua, Vicarage House, Suites 2 & 3 58-60, Kensington Church St, London, W8 4DB