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The situation in Nicaragua is extremely worrying

April 18th 2018 marked the beginning of political crisis in Nicaragua. Ortega-Murillo's authoritarian regime, a regime that ignores the human rights of the Nicaraguan people, is still in power. Hundreds of victims have been the result of the repression imposed by the Nicaraguan government. According to the report published on December 21st 2018 by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), whose task is to investigate the events that took place in Nicaragua, the consequence of these violent acts has been over 350 deaths, more than 1,400 casualties and almost 700 prisoners.¹ This report reveals that the Nicaraguan government's application of this repressive and murderous strategy has brought about the commission of crimes against humanity.²

Even though the political crisis started last April, the demands against the Ortega-Murillo administration of the different sectors of the Nicaraguan population had begun before. In 2012, the project to build an interoceanic canal with Chinese private funds giving them the right to exploit it for 50 years, with the possibility of a 50-year extension, pushed a sector of the Nicaraguan peasantry to organise and create the Nicaraguan Peasants' Movement—National Council in Defence of our Land, Lake and Sovereignty. Similarly, the feminist movement rose against Ortega from the very beginning of his administration because of his ban on therapeutic abortion. Several ecologist movements also rose against the big extractive projects (intensification of mineral extraction) and against the cutting down and burning of trees in several nature reserves. Even if all these sectors demonstrated for different causes, the response of the Ortega administration was always the same: repression. The caravans of peasant who marched on Managua were never able to reach it because the police blocked their way. The students and old age pensioners who demonstrated in 2013 against the social security reform were violently repressed. At the beginning of April 2018, the government prevented students from demonstrating against the fires in the Reserve Indio Maíz, in the southwest of the country. Faced with the governments' increasing use of violence, several social sectors unified to constitute a bloc against Ortega and his repressive policy. Since then, repression has increased and has adopted different forms.

Since April 18th, the Nicaraguan government has developed four stages of repression. The first stage goes from April to July 2018. This was the most brutal stage, and was characterised by the unbridled use of force against pacific demonstrations. The police and the paramilitary groups trained by the National Police, had orders to shoot against the demonstrators, the casualties had no access to medical attention in hospitals because the government gave the order not to give them medical assistance, and the citizens who wanted to support the demonstrators were threatened. The rise of violence grew between May, June and July. One of the emblematic examples was the attack against the "Mother of all the demonstrations" on Mother's Day, May 30th. On that day, Nicaraguans decided to march in support of the mothers of people who had been killed by the government so far. This attack caused 15 deaths. Another example is the attack against the Autonomous National University of Nicaragua, when the students who had entrenched themselves in the building had to take refuge in a church to escape the assault of paramilitary forces. During this assault, the population who tried to

¹ http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/bbc-mundo/informe-considera-que-gobierno-nicaragua-violo-durante-protestas_264190

² <http://gieinicaragua.org/#section00>

mobilise to give the students their support were prevented by the police, who established a “safety” perimeter around the students which was impossible to go through. Several organisations which carried out an investigation on these events have confirmed that the police and the paramilitary shot to kill, since they shot at the neck, the trunk and the head. Amnesty International’s second report on the situation in Nicaragua is, precisely, called “Shoot to Kill”.³

The second stage in the repression took place in July, when the country was already submerged in a profound crisis. Most roads and streets were blocked by barricades built by demonstrators to protect themselves against the police and the paramilitary. At the end of this month, the government decided to impose the “return to normality” by means of a so-called “Cleaning Operation”. This operation consisted in a series of armed attacks against the people who demanded the resignation of Daniel Ortega and his government. This operation caused 38 deaths in only one day in the region of Carazo. During this period, the government started a witch-hunt against those who opposed the government and their families. This forced numerous people to flee the country in a clandestine way. Since the beginning of the crisis, more than 30,000 people have crossed the southern frontier of Nicaragua to take refuge in Costa Rica.

The third stage of repression was marked by the criminalisation of actions and demonstrations carried out by the population. During this stage, violent attacks diminished to be replaced by a different type of repression. The government passed an anti-terrorist law, followed by the banning of demonstrations. The police and the paramilitary started to occupy public spaces with the purpose of preventing any individual or collective demonstration against the government. Since then, all people who demonstrate are detained and charged with terrorism or any other invented crime. It is important to emphasize that the most elementary human rights are not respected at any time during the application of this judiciary process: people are violently detained and taken to “El Chipote” detention centre, where they suffer violent interrogations and torture. The prisoners’ relatives have little or no information about the detentions and visits are rarely permitted. In the few cases when relatives have been allowed to visit, they talk about many types of unjustified violence like rape, torture, subhuman living conditions and refuse of medical assistance.

The fourth stage of repression started in October. It is characterised by the multiplication of attacks against the representatives of civil society and non-governmental organisations, and against those journalists the government considers emblematic figures of the rebellion. In December 2018, the Nicaraguan government directly attacked several organisations who fought for the respect of human rights. Among these organisations we can name the Nicaraguan Centre of Human Rights (Cenidh), founded by Vilma Núñez, former president of the Supreme Court of Justice from 1980 to 1987. The Cenidh accompanied Zoilamérica in 1998, when she accused her stepfather, Daniel Ortega, of rape. The Cenidh had its legal status withdrawn and its head office was raided by the National Police without a search order. Several independent media like *Esta Semana*, *Esta Noche*, o *Confidencial* were also victims of the same treatment. Environmentalist NGOs like Popol Na or the Rio Foundation had their legal identities cancelled and their head offices raided. ⁴ On December 23rd 2018, *100% Noticias*, one of the last television chains which does not belong to the Ortega-Murillo family, was raided by the police and its director, Miguel Mora, as well as its editor in chief, Lucía Pineda, were arrested and charged with terrorism and conspiracy. These two people are now under police custody.⁵ Since then, the television channel has ceased to work. Most Nicaraguan journalists have had to go into exile. This hinders the access of the population to independent sources of information, since most of the population have no access to internet and their only means of access to information is radio and television. In the meantime, the government is still kidnapping and repressing all those who criticise or resist its policies in all manners possible, with the only purpose of staying in power.

The present situation in Nicaragua is extremely worrying. Several national organisations for the defence of human rights (Cenidh and ANPDH) have had to leave the country, and the capacity for action of those that are still in Nicaragua—like the CPDH—has been particularly limited by the government. The Ministry of Foreign Relations has suspended or expelled several international

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr43/8470/2018/en/>

⁴ <https://100noticias.com.ni/nacionales/95335-policia-allanamiento-saqueo-cenidh/>

⁵ <https://www.lanouvellerepublique.fr/france-monde/nicaragua-une-2e-journaliste-critique-du-regime-d-ortega-accusee-de-terrorisme>

missions from Nicaraguan territory. The first was the Mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on August 31st. In December, it was the turn of the International Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) and of the Special Mechanism for Monitoring Nicaragua (MESENI).⁶ Both missions had been sent by the Organization of American States through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH).

To justify violence and repression the government says that the different sectors that oppose it (demonstrators, the independent media, human rights and environmentalist organisations) are trying to promote a coup d'état financed by the United States and the opposition parties. However, in his letter of resignation published on January 10th, Rafael Solís, ex judge of the Supreme Court of Justice and former representative of the FSLN, denies the government's arguments. Solís denies the existence of an attempted coup and denounces the government's use of the judiciary to blame demonstrators of a "series of absurd accusations of crimes that were never committed". He also states that the government has lost "the reason and the right"⁷ to rule.

Les organisations membres du Réseau syndical international de solidarité et de lutte

Organisations syndicales nationales interprofessionnelles

- Central Sindical e Popular Conlutas (**CSP-Conlutas**) - Brésil.
- Confederación General del Trabajo (**CGT**) - Etat espagnol.
- Union syndicale Solidaires (**Solidaires**) - France.
- Confédération Générale du Travail du Burkina (**CGT-B**) - Burkina.
- Confederation of Indonesia People's Movement (**KPRI**) - Indonésie.
- Confederación Intersindical (**Intersindical**) - Etat espagnol.
- Confédération Générale Autonome des Travailleurs en Algérie (**CGATA**) - Algérie.
- Batay Ouvriye - Haïti.
- Unione Sindacale Italiana (**USI**) - Italie.
- Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs - Solidarité Ouvrière (**CNT SO**) - France.
- Sindicato de Comisiones de Base (**CO.BAS**) - Etat espagnol.
- Organisation Générale Indépendante des Travailleurs et Travailleuses d'Haïti (**OGTHI**) - Haïti.
- Sindacato Intercategoriale Cobas (**SI COBAS**) - Italie.
- Confédération Nationale du Travail (**CNT-f**) - France.
- Intersindical Alternativa de Catalunya (**IAC**) - Catalogne.
- Union Générale des Travailleurs Sahraouis (**UGTSARIO**) - Sahara occidental.
- Ezker Sindikalaren Konbergentzia (**ESK**) - Pays basque.
- Confédération Nationale de Travailleurs du Sénégal Forces du Changement (**CNTS/FC**) – Sénégal
- Sindicato Autorganizzato Lavorator COBAS (**SIAL-COBAS**) - Italie.
- General Federation of Independent Unions (**GFIU**) - Palestine.
- Confederación de la Clase Trabajadora (**CCT**) - Paraguay.
- Red Solidaria de Trabajadores - Pérou
- Union Syndicale Progressiste des Travailleurs du Niger (**USPT**) - Niger.
- Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal (**UNSAS**) - Sénégal.
- Unión Nacional para la Defensa de la Clase Trabajadora (**UNT**) - El Salvador.
- Solidaridad Obrera (**SO**) - Etat espagnol.
- Confederazione Unitaria di Base (**CUB**) - Italie.
- Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (**IWGB**) - Grande-Bretagne.
- Ogólnopolski Związek Zawodowy Inicjatywa Pracownicza (**OZZ IP**) - Pologne.
- Centrale Démocratique des Travailleurs de Martinique (**CDMT**) – Martinique.

Organisations syndicales nationales professionnelles

- National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (**RMT/TUC**) - Grande-Bretagne.
- Centrale Nationale des Employés – Confédération Syndicale Chrétienne (**CNE/CSC**) - Belgique.
- Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Sistema Agroalimentario (**SINALTRAINAL/CUT**) - Colombie.
- Trade Union in Ethnodata - Trade Union of Employees in the Outsourcing Companies in the financial sector - Grèce.
- Syndicat national des travailleurs des services de la santé humaine (**SYNTRASEH**) - Bénin
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores da Fiocruz (**ASFOC-SN**) - Brésil.
- Organizzazione Sindicati Autonomi e di Base Ferrovie (**ORSA Ferrovie**) - Italie.

⁶ <http://www.rfi.fr/ameriques/20181220-nicaragua-expulsion-observateurs-droits-homme-meseni-giei-oea>

⁷ <https://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/483132-rafael-solis-renuncia-corte-suprema-justicia/>

- Union Nationale des Normaliens d'Haïti (**UNNOH**) - Haïti.
- Confederazione Unitaria di Base Scuola Università Ricerca (**CUB SUR**) - Italie.
- Coordinamento Autorganizzato Trasporti (**CAT**) - Italie.
- Syndicat des travailleurs du rail - Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Mali (**SYTRAIL/UNTM**) – Mali.
- Gıda Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası - Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (**GIDA-IŞ/DISK**) – Turquie.
- Syndicat National des Travailleurs du Petit Train Bleu/SA (**SNTPTB**) - Sénégal.
- Asociación Nacional de Funcionarios Administrativos de la Caja de Seguro Social (**ANFACSS**) – Panama.
- Palestinian Postal Service Workers Union (**PPSWU**) - Palestine.
- Union Syndicale Etudiante (**USE**) - Belgique.
- Sindicato dos Trabalhadores de Call Center (**STCC**) - Portugal.
- Sindicato Unitario de Trabajadores Petroleros (**Sinutapetrolgas**) - Venezuela.
- Alianza de Trabajadores de la Salud y Empleados Públicos - Mexique.
- Canadian Union of Postal Workers / Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes (**CUPW-STTP**) – Canada.
- Syndicat Autonome des Postiers (**SAP**) - Suisse.
- Federación nacional de trabajadores de la educación (**SUTE-Chili**) - Chili.
- Plateforme Nationale des organisations professionnelles du secteur public - Côte d'Ivoire.
- Fédération nationale des ouvriers et collectivités locales - Union Marocaine du Travail (**UMT-Collectivités locales**) - Maroc.
- Centrale Générale des Services Publics FGTB, Cheminots (**CGSP/FGTB Cheminots**) - Belgique.
- Botswana Public Employees Union (**BOPEU**) - Botswana.
- Organisation Démocratique du Travail – Organisation Démocratique du Travail (**ODR/ODT**) – Maroc.
- Federacao Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Transportes Aéreos do Brasil (**FNTTA**) - Brésil.
- Federação Nacional dos Metroviários (**FENAMETRO**) - Brésil.
- Namibia Football Players Union (**NAFPU**) – Namibie.
- Palestinian Electricians' Trade Union (**PETU**) – Palestine.

Organisations syndicales locales

- Trades Union Congress, Liverpool (**TUC Liverpool**) - Angleterre.
- Sindacato Territoriale Autorganizzato, Brescia (**ORMA Brescia**) - Italie.
- Fédération syndicale SUD Service public, canton de Vaud (**SUD Vaud**) - Suisse
- Sindicato Unitario de Catalunya (**SU Metro**) - Catalogne.
- Türkiye DERİ-İŞ Sendikası, Tuzla et Izmir (**DERİ-İŞ Tuzla et Izmir**) - Turquie.
- L'autre syndicat, canton de Vaud (**L'autre syndicat**) - Suisse
- Centrale Générale des Services Publics FGTB, Ville de Bruxelles (**CGSP/FGTB Bruxelles**) – Belgique.
- Arbeitskreis Internationalismus IG Metall, Berlin (**IG Metall Berlin**) - Allemagne
- Sindicato Unificado de Trabajadores de la Educación de Buenos Aires, Bahia Blanca (**SUTEBA/CTA de los trabajadores Bahia Blanca**) - Argentine
- Sindicato del Petróleo y Gas Privado del Chubut/CGT - Argentine.
- UCU University and College Union, University of Liverpool (**UCU Liverpool**) - Angleterre.
- Sindicato di base Pavia (**SDB Pavia**) - Italie.
- United Auto Workers local 551 Ford Chicago (**UAW Ford Chicago**) – Etats-unis.
- Sindicato Uno Prodinsa, Maipú – Chili.
- Asociación Gremial de Trabajadores del Subterráneo y Premetro, Buenos Aires (**SUBTE/CTAt**) - Argentine

Organisations syndicales internationales

- Industrial Workers of the World - International Solidarity Commission (**IWW**).

Courants, tendances ou réseaux syndicaux

- Transnationals Information Exchange Germany (**TIE Germany**) - Allemagne.
- Emancipation tendance intersyndicale (**Emancipation**) - France.
- Globalization Monitor (**GM**) - Hong Kong.
- Courant Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire (**CSR**) - France.
- Fronte di lotta No Austerità - Italie.
- Solidarité Socialiste avec les Travailleurs en Iran (**SSTI**) - France.
- Basis Initiative Solidarität (**BASO**) - Allemagne.
- LabourNet Germany - Allemagne.
- Resistenza Operaia - operai Fiat-Irisbus - Italie.
- Workers Solidarity Action Network (**WSAN**) - Etats-Unis.
- United Voices of the World (**UVW**) - Grande-Bretagne.
- Unidos pra Lutar - Brésil.
- Corriente Político Social Sindical 1° de Mayo de Buenos Aires – Argentine.