

August 10, 2022

*I beg you, I implore you, I order you in the name of God: stop the repression!*  
*Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero*

His Holiness Pope Francis  
Vatican City

Dearest Holy Father:

We are a group of Nicaraguan citizens forced to live in exile, fleeing from the violence, persecution and permanent violation of Human Rights that our country has been experiencing for several years. Recently the situation has worsened dramatically. We are victims of State violence under the control and domain of Mr. Daniel Ortega and his wife Rosario Murillo. We write to you in desperation on behalf of tens of thousands of Nicaraguans who live in anxiety and under constant threats inside Nicaragua. Due to the fear of reprisals, they cannot sign this document.

Holy Father, we write to you moved by the images we saw on the day of the celebration of the Priesthood, the feast of Saint Juan María Vianney, when Monsignor Rolando José Álvarez, Bishop of the Diocese of Matagalpa and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Estelí, knelt down holding the Blessed Sacrament as he was surrounded by the National Police and not allowed to enter the cathedral to celebrate the religious services of the day. A few days ago, the Police have notified that they are investigating Monsignor Álvarez and have placed him under house arrest. We fear for what he may happen to him.

At the same time, a few kilometers from Matagalpa, Father Uriel Vallejos was being held captive in the parish house of Jesus of Divine Mercy in the municipality of Sébaco, surrounded by police and government paramilitary forces. On Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, the government carried out a raid with the purpose of confiscating the equipment of the parish radio station. Members of the parish prevented the police from taking the radio equipment but many were beaten, wounded and arrested by the police. Several other radio stations owned by the Catholic Church in different Matagalpa municipalities were also shut down by the government. Father Vallejos' cries still resonates in our ears: "Don't leave me alone." He and the parishioners who accompanied him managed to get out of confinement after three days thanks to the efforts of a group of religious negotiators.

In recent days, the regime has closed 11 Catholic radio stations and four local television stations, in addition to the 1,174 civil society organizations that have been arbitrarily shut down. These include several religious organizations; for example, the Missionaries of Charity order, founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. At the beginning of July, the regime executed the expulsion from the country of the 18 missionary nuns, who cared for the most needy in Nicaragua.

Holy Father, as people of faith, we witness the Church being persecuted and tormented, and we cry out to you as its spiritual leader: **"Do not leave us alone!"**

As a result of the persecution suffered by the Catholic Church of Nicaragua, two of the Church's most beloved and respected Pastors, Monsignor Silvio José Báez, Auxiliary Bishop of Managua, and Father Edwin Román, pastor of St. Michael the Archangel church in Masaya, are living in exile in the United States to safeguard their lives. We do not know how many more will be forced down this same path.

The Church and its parishes and sacred images have suffered terrorist attacks that have not been investigated or clarified by the authorities. The worst attack was the firebomb that destroyed the venerated image of The Blood of Christ in the Cathedral of Managua.

Holy Father, since April 2018, more than 380 Nicaraguans have lost their lives, victims of state repression according to international human rights organizations. Currently Holy Father, more than 180 brothers and sisters have been unjustly imprisoned solely for expressing opposition to the regime. Absolute impunity reigns in Nicaragua, and the regime has plunged the country into a de facto police state. Just as we fear for the life of Monsignor Álvarez, we also fear for the lives of the innocent political prisoners. Already two prisoners have died in custody at the hands of the regime. Holy Father, let us not allow one more to die.

Holy Father, the regime's persecution and hatred against the Catholic Church have no justification. Pastors have only fulfilled the commandment of love and comfort to the weakest and most oppressed. Bishops are accused of being accomplices in an attempted coup, when in reality what they have done is seek a peaceful and democratic solution to the deep crisis that is consuming the country.

The Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua was invited by the regime to organize and participate as witnesses and facilitators in the national dialogue, which failed mainly due to the intransigence of the regime, among other factors.

Similarly, Holy Father, in February 2019, His Excellency Monsignor Sommertag participated as a witness, together with a representative of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, in another attempt at dialogue between representatives of the regime and the opposition, with the purpose of seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis. This new effort was supported and endorsed by the regime, and the regime signed important agreements to restore the fundamental rights of the population, but then never complied with them. Once again the Church, through the Apostolic Nuncio, participated in an attempt to find a solution to the crisis.

Holy Father, priests cannot be accused of having promoted a coup. The Catholic Church in Nicaragua is being persecuted and martyred by a regime that calls itself Christian and Catholic; however, it manipulates religiosity and devotion to the Blessed Mother Mary for its own political purposes, offending Catholic faith.

Holy Father, we know the enormous responsibilities that you carry on your shoulders during these most difficult and complex times. Nicaragua is a small and impoverished country, but we are a people who want only to live in peace and freedom.

Holy Father, given our plight, we beg you, we implore you: "Don't leave us alone."

*"If I denounce and condemn injustice, it is because it is my obligation as a pastor of an oppressed and humiliated people." Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero.*

#### Organizaciones firmantes

1. Acción Penal



2. Asociación de Familiares de Presos Políticos – AFPP.



3. Asociación Nicaragüense "Por gracia de Dios", Sevilla, España



4. Autoconvocados Exiliados en Toronto.



12. Acción Humanitaria de Derechos Humanos.



5. Autoconvocados en SKÅNE -



Suecia-

13. Coordinadora Civil en el



Exterior -

6. Articulación de Movimientos Sociales.



14. Coordinadora Universitaria por la Democracia y Justicia



7. Alianza Cívica por la Unidad Nacional-ACUN Carazo.

15. Consejo en Defensa por el lago, la tierra y la soberanía.



8. Alianza Cívica por la Unidad Nacional-ACUN Estelí.



16. Concertación abril



9. Alianza Cívica por la Unidad Nacional ACUN-Ocotal

17. Comunidad Nicaragüense Guatemala CONIGUA.



10. Alianza Cívica por la Unidad Nacional-ACUN Rivas.



18. Comunidad Mexicana para la Meditación Cristiana AC.



11. Alianza Cívica por la Unidad Nacional -ACUN Somoto.

19. Congreso por la Unidad



20. CIFEM, Nicaragua.

21. Colectivo UTOPIA, Puebla,  
México

22. Comité Pro Liberación de Presas  
y Presos Políticos de Nicaragua-  
CPLPPN.



23. Diáspora Nicaragua  
California.



24. Diáspora de Nicaragua en  
México

25. Fundación Unidos por  
Nicaragua, Miami.



26. Fiscales Indignados



27. Iniciativa por el Cambio



28. Juntos por Nicaragua



29. Legión Náhuatl (Artistas  
nicaragüenses en el exilio).



30. Movimiento de mujeres

Segovianas.



31. Movimientos Sociales de Las  
Segovias

32. Movimiento Independiente  
"Porque Nicaragua Nos Importa".



33. Movimiento Anticanal de  
Nicaragua.



34. Mesa de Articulación  
LGBTIQ+ en el Exilio,  
Capítulo Costa Rica



35. Nicaragüenses  
Autoconvocados y Exiliados  
Montreal Canadá.



36. Nicaragüenses en el Mundo-  
NEEM.



37. Nicas en Puebla, México

38. Norte de Lucha y Libertad Matagalpa.



39. Nicaragüenses en Grecia

40. Partido Acción Ciudadana-



PAC

41. Seed of Hope for Nicaraguans in Exile.



42. SOS Nicaragua Global.



43. SOS Nicaragua-Hamburgo



44. SOS Nicaragua-Irlanda



45. SOS Nicaragua- Holanda



46. SOS Nicaragua-Suiza



47. SOS Nicaragua Francia



48. SOS Nicaragua Suecia



49. SOS Nicaragua Italia



50. SOS Nicaragua Noruega

51. SOS Nicaragua Madrid



52. Solidaridad Escocesa con Nicaragua "



53. Unidad Sindical Magisterial Nicaragua USMN.



54. Unidos Por Matagalpa Eddy Montes Praslín.



55. Universidad de la Tierra en Puebla, A.C.



56. Unión de Presos y presas políticas Nicaragüense.



57. Unión de Militares Patrióticos de Nicaragua – UMPN.



58. Unión Gremial por Nicaragua



59. Unidad de Exiliados Nicaragüenses UEN



60. Unidos por Nicaragua



61. Unidad Juvenil Estudiantil



Se suman organizaciones de sociedad civil y territoriales que por encontrarse dentro de Nicaragua y estar expuestas al terrorismo de Estado suscriben de forma anónima

