

Check Against Delivery

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Oral Update on Nicaragua

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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Over the past year the human rights situation in Nicaragua has remained extremely fragile with no significant improvement since we last reported to the Council.

Regretfully, Nicaragua has not resumed cooperation with this Council, the Universal Periodic Review, the human rights mechanisms and with OHCHR.

More than 800.000 persons have reportedly fled abroad in the context of the human rights crisis that started in 2018.

The rule of law has been hollowed out through the steady erosion of democratic institutions and the growing concentration of power in the presidency. We repeatedly warned against last year's sweeping constitutional reforms.

Five opposition parties are effectively banned, including the main Indigenous party. The ruling party exercises total control over Parliament, all municipalities, and the North and South Caribbean Coast Regional Councils, undermining the autonomy of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

Civic space is almost entirely shut, and any independent expression of thought or opinion is suppressed.

Since 2018, 56 media outlets have been closed, and some 300 journalists and media workers forced into exile. More than 5,600 civil society organizations have had their legal status arbitrarily revoked.

Freedom of religion remains severely curtailed, particularly when religious leaders or institutions are perceived as a threat to the Government.

There are also attacks against students and the academic community, as well as women, LGBTIQ+ people, and their organizations.

All of this has created a climate of fear, distrust, and censorship, clearly at odds with a safe and enabling human rights environment that would allow a free and meaningful participation of the Nicaraguan people in the general elections slated for 2027.

Civil society indicate that at least 46 people remain arbitrarily detained on political grounds. Our records show that at least eight of these cases may amount to enforced disappearance, as the fate or whereabouts of detainees have long been unknown.

Mr. President,

We are gravely concerned about detention conditions and the treatment of detainees and their families. Authorities have shown insufficient regard to older people and those in need of medical care. In some cases, this may have contributed to deaths.

This is the case of Indigenous Miskitu leader, Brooklyn Rivera, who was held incommunicado for more than two years and recently died in custody. Authorities reportedly prevented his family from burying him in accordance with their traditions. Later, his relatives and associates were detained.

We urge their immediate release and call on the authorities to ensure that relatives, associates and community leaders are not subjected to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance or reprisals for seeking truth and justice regarding the fate and whereabouts of their detained relatives. Authorities must also respect the families' mourning and their right to honour their relatives according to their own beliefs.

Thirteen current political detainees are older people in poor health, and we call on the authorities to ensure that adequate and timely medical attention is available to them.

We note the release of at least 26 political prisoners earlier this year. However, we remain concerned that many reportedly continue to face undue restrictions on their rights without a clear legal basis.

Beyond its borders, a system of transnational repression keeps exiled Nicaraguans on continuous alert.

Since April alone, our Office has recorded at least 16 cases involving death threats. Families of exiles, already suffering from separation, also face threats and reprisals.

Hundreds of Nicaraguans have been arbitrarily stripped of their nationality, while thousands more have been denied the renewal of identity documents, exposing them to the risk of statelessness.

Mr. President,

The rights and lands of Indigenous Peoples are being threatened by a gold rush, which puts their cultural and physical survival at risk.

The expansion of large-scale mining concessions to foreign companies has become an important economic lifeline for a government facing sanctions and political isolation.

Last year saw new laws facilitating the expansion of extractive activities in protected areas, including environmentally sensitive and Indigenous territories. They also reduced independent oversight over mining concessions.

More than half of the mining concessions granted during the first five months of 2026 affect the Caribbean Coast Autonomous Regions, where most of Indigenous and Afro-

descendant populations live. According to civil society, up to one quarter of Indigenous territories is subjected to mining concessions, many issued without appropriate process to guarantee the right to free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. President,

We need urgent and full international attention to the situation in Nicaragua – for the sake of its people.

We call on the Government to repeal its anti-democratic reforms, reopen civic space, and restore the rule of law. People of all political opinions must be able to vote and run for office in next year's elections.

We urge the immediate release of all those arbitrarily detained. Conditions of detention must be humane, and all deaths in custody must be independently and thoroughly investigated.

We are ready to provide support.

We reiterate our call to Nicaragua to resume constructive dialogue with our Office and the human rights system. International human rights mechanisms are not optional.

We stress the need for Member States to support Nicaraguans in exile, including by protecting them against refoulement and transnational repression.

Thank you.