

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK of Academies & Scholarly Societies



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Statement by the IHRN Executive Committee Regarding Continuing Repression in Nicaragua

The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) is an alliance of 90 national academies and scholarly societies that defends the fundamental rights of fellow academics and health professionals worldwide. Three years ago, the IHRN's Executive Committee, of which we are members, issued a public statement condemning the violent human rights crackdown by Nicaraguan security forces following popular demonstrations in the country in April 2018. Ultimately, more than 300 individuals were killed and more than 2,000 individuals injured, with human rights organizations documenting widespread governmental interference with the provision of medical care to wounded protestors. Many of the brutal attacks that occurred took place on and around university campuses, and university personnel who spoke out against the attacks were regularly subjected to threats and harassment. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued reports detailing extensive human rights violations by Nicaraguan security forces in relation to the 2018 demonstrations, but the government has dismissed these reports as baseless, and it expelled OHCHR and IACHR-established bodies from the country in 2018.

Despite national and international calls for an end to government repression in Nicaragua, the situation in the country remains gravely concerning. Since April 2018, more than 100,000 Nicaraguans have sought asylum in third countries, including university students and many of our professional colleagues. Human rights experts continue to document severe restrictions on a range of internationally recognized rights, including the rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, and the right to liberty and security of person. During the pandemic, many of our medical colleagues have been harassed, and some dismissed from their positions without applicable legal procedures, after expressing concern about the government's response to COVID-19. Our academic colleagues also continue to face pressure to align themselves with the government and are frequently subjected to intimidation

by security forces. Several opposition presidential candidates and other political leaders arrested and detained in recent days are themselves prominent academics.

We call upon Nicaraguan authorities, in line with their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, to put an end to these repressive measures, including the suppression of peaceful dissent, and facilitate the release of individuals imprisoned as a consequence of their exercise of fundamental rights and electoral freedoms. Finally, we call upon Nicaraguan authorities to permit access to the country by international human rights mechanisms, for the purpose of helping to monitor, document, and analyze the very worrying human rights situation.