

Declaration of Unity of Nicaraguans in the United States

We, Nicaraguans living in the United States, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, come together across party lines, united in a single front against the dictatorship of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo in Nicaragua. We do so because we want our brothers and sisters, parents, relatives, friends, and all the people of Nicaragua to have the rights that we have in this country. Those rights include, to live peacefully; have our human rights respected; have a government of, by and for the people; and have a country governed by laws, and not by the whims of a tyrant. Only then will Nicaragua be prosperous and stable.

We want the American people to know, and we want the world to know, that there is, in Nicaragua, a dictatorship that has closed all the doors to the exercise of civil and political rights. Daniel Ortega and his associates have remained in power during three terms. They have taken all the steps to stay in office indefinitely, through brutal repression, the elimination of all constitutional separation of powers, the complete subordination of the Judiciary, Legislative, and Electoral Power. All branches are essentially controlled by militants of the FSLN.

We want the world to know that Nicaraguans have made heroic civic efforts to rid themselves of oppression. That we rose en masse in 2018 to demand an end to dictatorship. We sacrificed everything to avoid violence and bloodshed. We have attempted for three years to ensure that our citizens have a voice, and a vote, and that we retake control of our country by peaceful, electoral means. We want the world to know that of our efforts have been met with the violence of state sponsored terrorism, hundreds killed, thousands injured, and more than 100,000 (of a population of 6 million) in exile. Many businesses have closed or are struggling as the government employs fiscal pressures to silence or punish their owners for expressing their views or supporting those of the opposition. The latest round of repression has reached high into the upper echelons of politics and society, with many prominent figures of the civic opposition in jail. It has also reached deep down into the poorest and most vulnerable opponents of the regime in barrios and rural areas. The country lives nights of terror.

We want the world to be aware of the long history of complicity between the international drug lords and the Sandinista regime. We also want the world to know that Russian complicity with the regime allows the Putin government to gain a beachhead for their cyberwar against democracy in the United States and the region. We want the world to know that elections under the Ortega-Murillo regime are a chimera. The new laws passed by the regime and rubber-stamped by the National Assembly make it illegal for people managing or observing the voting precincts on behalf of their parties to refuse to sign off on results, even if irregularities are noticed (the jail term for this “crime” would be 6 years). The new laws also eliminate about a third of eligible voters, those who did not vote in protest against fraud in 2019 (after the 2018 massacres) and 2016 (as an election boycott was called by the opposition). The laws also ban international observers and make it a crime to question in social media the handling of the elections by the government. Non-governmental organizations, many of which have as their purpose the defense of civil rights and the promotion of free press and democracy, are forced to register themselves as “foreign agents.” This law has already forced the closure of the Violeta Chamorro Foundation and PEN, the international organization of writers for freedom of expression.

Moreover, the Ortega dictatorship has organized and mobilized thousands of paramilitary troops (estimated at more than 20,000), who constantly harass and brutalize the population, and will certainly be part of the “electoral army” of the regime. There is all the reason to believe that they will intensify their campaign of intimidation against opponents on election day. It should be noted that among the new laws, there is one that mandates that the police can “request” the help of the army to prevent people from gathering, observing, and protesting on election day. These efforts will surely be helped by the paramilitaries. We want the world to be made aware that no free and fair election is possible until the Ortega dictatorship is removed.

We want the world to know that we desire a peaceful transition to democracy that guarantees national stability, regional stability, and avoids the dangerous accumulation of tensions. Otherwise, a rise in violence and mass migration will lead to the dissolution of national security in Central America and criminal forces might take advantage of that scenario. The Ortega regime needs to be recognized for what it is, an illegitimate dictatorship hanging to power by illegal means. It is supported by criminal activity and is unable to allow the exercise of human rights. The regime is a destabilizing force in the midst of a region in crisis, which seeks to survive with the help of a more active and open Russian intervention.

Thus, to protect the human rights of Nicaraguans; the stability and peace of Central America; and the well-being of the United States of America, our home, we ask our elected representatives to support the struggle of democratic Nicaraguans. This is not, as the Ortega regime propaganda says an unjustifiable “imperialistic” intervention. It is a legitimate reaction against a rogue regime unleashing violence against unarmed citizens and threatening regional and democratic interests.

We request that our elected representatives across all levels and branches of government, and in particular the Government of the United States of America:

- (1) Fully apply all U.S. laws that permit the government of the United States to sanction those involved in corruption and human right abuses in Nicaragua.
- (2) Work internationally, particularly with the European Union, to have the Ortega-Murillo sanctioned, with suspension of all preferential trade agreements and financial support from multinational organizations.
- (3) Work internationally to have the regime declared illegitimate, as well as the National Assembly that rubberstamps Ortega-Murillo’s antidemocratic laws, and to recognize the right of the people to elect their own representatives. To recognize, should one be formed, a transition government to replace the tyranny and prepare free and fair elections.
- (4) Work to prevent a reenactment of the undemocratic, antidemocratic alliance between the most powerful economic groups of the country and Ortega, an alliance that he has insisted on restoring “after the election.” The so-called “Consensus-and-Agreement Model” with Big Business led to the current crisis. A return to that, in the name of an unsustainable stability, would be a veritable tragedy. It would be a non-solution that will lead to more turmoil and violence. It will also strengthen the regime and destroy the dream of democracy harbored by most Nicaraguans. We believe that the large conglomerates that have been

part of the Ortega dictatorial system must be targeted for sanctions, individual and commercial, unless they support democracy. We believe that sanctions must be escalated to include the suspension of CAFTA until democracy is installed in Nicaragua. This suspension is a threat, not just against those conglomerates, but against many Sandinistas. They have benefited disproportionately from the trade agreement. We want a system where we have economic freedom and political freedom. We want free enterprise and democratic politics. We do not want a few citizens controlling all political and economic power at the expense of the rest of society.

(5) Work to declare the FSLN a terrorist organization.

(6) Work to sanction the Nicaraguan Army, not just its individual leaders, but their rich finances, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, managed by their financial arm, the “Instituto de Previsión Social,” and much of it invested in the US. The Army must not protect the unconstitutional rule of an illegitimate government, much less be part of this government’s repression. The Army must not be allowed to profit from dictatorship.

We would like to request the opportunity to present to you, in further detail, on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans who call the United States home, the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis caused by Ortega’s cruel and despotic rule. We also wanted to provide our perspective, with detailed legal and political information, regarding the impossibility of democratic elections in Nicaragua as long as Daniel Ortega, Rosario Murillo, and their FSLN control the government.

For a free and democratic Nicaragua, united we stand!

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