



CC: **Mrs. Irana Venerio Fernandez**, Ambassador of Nicaragua in Brussels

CC: **Mrs. Bettina Muscheidt**, Head of Delegation of the European Union in Nicaragua

Brussels, 1 April 2022

Dear **Mr. José Daniel Ortega Saavedra**

Honorable President of the Republic of Nicaragua

We, Members of the European Parliament, write to you to express our concern about the deteriorating and unacceptable human rights situation in Nicaragua. In particular, we are extremely concerned about the conditions of detentions of political prisoners in Nicaragua, with reports of arbitrary arrests, harassments, inhuman and degrading treatment and conditions that in some cases amount to torture, in violation of international human rights law. The trials against these prisoners are illegal and they do not observe the minimum standards of due process.

We demand the immediate and unconditional release of all 169 political prisoners arbitrarily detained for having exerted their political rights. We furthermore reject the arbitrary trials and illegal convictions that have been taking place in Nicaragua against political prisoners and ask for the annulment of all judicial proceedings against them, including their sentences.

While we expect you to proceed with the release of all political prisoners, we are greatly concerned about the life and physical and psychological integrity of the detention conditions of several of the people arrested since May 2021. We were deeply shocked by the death on 12 February 2022 of Jorge Hugo TORRES JIMENEZ, detained in El Chipote. His family had pleaded for his release on humanitarian grounds, but this request was ignored. To avoid a second death in prison, we demand immediate action and medical attention in the cases of

the particularly vulnerable political prisoners. We stress that the conditions of detention must respect the UN standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners (Mandela rules).

To start with, the state of health of Victor Hugo TINOCO, also detained in the prison of El Chipote, is alarming. He is at risk of death in the Chipote prison as a consequence of his high blood pressure, heart rhythm disorder and low white blood cells. Similar serious health problems have been reported by the political prisoners Violeta GRANERA (70 years old), Eveling PINTO (63 years old) and Eliseo de Jesus CASTRO BALDODANO (57 years old). We demand immediate medical attention and urge for humanitarian action for all prisoners with serious health conditions.

We are also concerned about the health situation of the following elderly political prisoners whose families have publicly denounced their physical deterioration and the lack of adequate medical attention: Pedro Joaquin CHAMORRO (70 years old), Bernardo RAMOS (67 years old), Nidia BARBOSA (66 years old), Dora Maria TELLEZ (66 years), Harry CHAVEZ (65 years old), Baltazar DAVILA (65 years old), Irving LARIOS (63 years old) and Jose Adán AGUERRI (60 years old). Therefore, as was done on 19 March with the granting of house arrest to Arturo Cruz, Francisco Aguirre Sacasa and José Bernard Pallais Arana and on 25 February with Edgar Parrales and Mauricio Diaz, we demand you to grant house arrest to all persons over 60 years of age.

Furthermore, we call on you to guarantee dignified detention conditions, and in particular, we advocate for the release of human rights defender Tamara DAVILA (41 years old) from the isolation cell to which she has been detained for more than nine months, without any contact with anyone except her prison guards.

Families report that there are several political prisoners both in the Chipote prison and in other prisons who are presenting symptoms related to Covid 19 and do not receive appropriate medical treatment. This should be guaranteed immediately.

Finally, we also call on you to allow regular and scheduled access to legal representatives and family visits, especially in the case of children to political prisoners, as established by Nicaraguan law. We hear that underage sons and daughters have been restricted from any

contact with their fathers and mothers, which is not acceptable and it is a serious threat to their development.

As a signatory state, Nicaragua is obliged to comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, for all the reasons stressed above, it is clear that your regime is ignoring the Human Rights Council and its resolution 46/2 asking the Nicaraguan state to address human rights violations. For the sake of human dignity and for a prosperous future for Nicaragua and its people, we urge you to comply with the human rights obligations that your country has signed up to.

Yours sincerely,

Tilly Metz, Member of the European Parliament (Greens/EFA)

Adrián Vázquez Lázara, Member of the European Parliament, Renew

Alícia Homs Ginel, Member of the European Parliament, S&D

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Assita Kanko, Member of the European Parliament, ECR

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Clara Ponsatí, Member of the European Parliament, Non-attached

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