



Statement of H.E. Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent
Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 2: Interactive Dialogue with the Group of Experts on Nicaragua
7 March 2023

Mister President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the Report of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua and expresses deep concern about the upsurge of violence across the country, and the shrinking of space for dialogue and negotiations between authorities and civil society in recent years.

It is with concern that we read in the Report about the deterioration of the socio-political and human rights situation in Nicaragua, with increased restrictions on freedoms of expression, of peaceful assembly and association, along with repressive measures against critics of the government, journalists and human rights defenders, as well as members of the Catholic Church. The reported closure of several independent media outlets and non-governmental organizations, including faith-based organizations, and the allegations on the systematic use of violence by law enforcement in a climate of general impunity, with frequent episodes of arbitrary arrests, violations of due process and precarious conditions of detainees, also cause concern.

In addition to the expulsion from Nicaragua of a number of diplomats, including the Apostolic Nuncio, H.E. Archbishop Waldemar Stanisław Sommertag, and of the Missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa, the Holy See regrets the most recent news regarding the 26-year sentence of Msgr. Rolando Alvarez, Bishop of Matagalpa, and the arbitrary deprivation of nationality for over 300 Nicaraguan citizens, including the exiled Auxiliary Bishop of Managua Silvo José Baez, 222 of which were deported to the United States.

Mister President,

This Delegation wishes, therefore, to echo the plea of Pope Francis to overcome hostilities and seek spaces for a constructive dialogue between the Parties, laying the foundations for the return to a peaceful coexistence based on the respect of the dignity and the rights of all persons, especially those in the most vulnerable situations, who are disproportionately affected by the current circumstances.¹ Pope Francis appeals for the “open[ing of] the hearts of political leaders and all citizens to the sincere search for peace, which is born of truth, justice, freedom and love.”²

Thank you, Mister President.

¹ Cf. Pope Francis, Angelus 21 August 2022

² Pope Francis, Angelus 12 February 2023