

Nicaragua: UN rights office calls for investigation as protest-related violence claims over 100 lives

The United Nations human rights arm has called on Nicaragua to conduct a prompt, transparent and independent investigation into allegations of serious rights violations carried out during anti-Governments protests, which have claimed more than 100 lives since mid-April, and injured over 1,000.

According to Liz Throssell, a spokesperson for the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR), violence spiked alarmingly this week with reports that at least 16 people were killed – many allegedly shot by police and armed pro-Government groups.

The latest killings took place on Thursday, at a march attended by hundreds of thousands, according to news reports, to mark Nicaragua's Mother's Day. The event was reportedly held to honour the mothers of students killed at previous rallies.

"We urge the Nicaraguan authorities to carry out effective, prompt, independent, impartial and transparent [investigations into all allegations of serious human rights violations](#) that have occurred in the last few weeks," Ms. Throssell said at a regular news briefing in Geneva on Friday.

"It is essential that those responsible for such serious human rights violations are held to account, and that victims and their relatives are accorded effective remedy, including equal and effective access to justice."

There are also reports that, in the early hours of 30 May, the Nicaraguan army arrested and detained six human rights defenders near the country's border with Costa Rica. Furthermore, journalists, students, and members of the Catholic Church and other groups have reportedly been subjected to death threats, violence and intimidation.

Calling for the prompt release of the rights defenders, Ms. Throssell urged the Government to "publicly express" its support and respect for the work they do, and to give clear instructions to the relevant authorities to prevent further aggression and intimidation.

She also underscored the need for the authorities to guarantee all legal safeguards, including access to lawyers, as well as to respect the absolute prohibition on torture and ill-treatment.

The spokesperson also reiterated OHCHR's request to the to the Nicaraguan authorities to grant it immediate access to the country so that it can, in line with its mandate, gather first-hand information about what happened during the protests and promote concrete actions to prevent further human rights violations.