

Press release – Nicaragua: MEPs demand an end to repression of political opponents



In a resolution adopted on Thursday, MEPs urge the Nicaraguan government to end the persistent repression of dissent, torture and sexual violence against the political opposition. They also call on the Nicaraguan authorities to immediately release all those arbitrarily detained and dismantle the paramilitary forces operating in the country.

The text, adopted by 560 votes to 12, with 43 abstentions, further condemns the Nicaraguan government's lack of willingness to relaunch a meaningful internal dialogue with the opposition, and demands that talks between the authorities and the opposition Civic Alliance resume.

It also stresses the need to:

- guarantee political and civil freedoms for all Nicaraguans,
- end assaults against media,
- bring back and cooperate with international organisations currently expelled from the country,
- stop expelling students from universities for protesting against the authorities,
- establish a credible electoral process, with a reformed Supreme Electoral Council, to ensure immediate, fair and transparent elections with the presence of international observers.

Suspend Nicaragua from the EU-Central America Association Agreement

In light of the current circumstances, the text finally calls for the democracy clauses in the current EU-Central America Association Agreement to

be triggered, which would effectively start the process of suspending Nicaragua from the agreement. MEPs justify this move by noting that the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights must form an integral part of the EU's external policies.

Background

Nicaragua has seen a wave of unrest and brutal crackdowns on demonstrators and opposition voices ever since protests began in April 2018 over the social security reforms decreed by President Daniel Ortega that increased taxes and decreased benefits, with many people being killed and jailed.