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Nicaragua: Persecution Beyond Borders

Exile and Transnational Human Rights Violations

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**GROUP OF HUMAN
RIGHTS EXPERTS
ON NICARAGUA**

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Executive summary

Since 2018, the Nicaraguan authorities have pursued a systematic strategy of repression of any form of opposition to the Government of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo that now extends beyond the country's borders. The present document examines the transnational human rights violations targeting exiled Nicaraguans as well as their relatives in the country and abroad. The Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua concludes that these abuses form a cumulative and interlinked pattern of transnational human rights violations designed to suppress dissenting voices wherever they are.

The violations documented include the arbitrary deprivation of nationality, entry ban, refusal to issue or renew passports, deletion of civil records, revocation of academic and professional titles, confiscation of properties and pensions, as well as surveillance, threats and harassment. Exiled individuals are further exposed to physical violence abroad and to the instrumentalization of international mechanisms, including the abuse of INTERPOL's red notices, the circulation of false alerts on travel documents and the misuse of financial compliance frameworks to block access to banking. These acts are complemented by the targeting of relatives who remain in Nicaragua, who are subjected to harassment, arbitrary detention, dismissal from employment, confiscation of properties, and restrictions on their freedom of movement solely by virtue of association.

The cumulative effect of these measures is to deprive victims of their legal identity, their property and income, their ability to move freely and, ultimately, their recognition as persons before the law. Many are rendered *de jure* or *de facto* stateless, in contravention of Nicaragua's international obligations, and are left without access to an effective remedy. Victims' effective access to asylum and other protection mechanisms is impaired by the absence of documentation to sustain their situation. The deliberate use of deprivation of nationality and erasure or denial of official documents has imposed what victims themselves describe as "civil death". Families are torn apart, children are deprived of their right to identity and education, older persons are stripped of their pensions, and relatives in Nicaragua face reprisals, intimidation and isolation.

The report finds that these acts form part of a consistent and deliberate State policy to silence dissent, eradicate opposition voices abroad, and guarantee impunity for crimes committed inside Nicaragua. These are serious violations of international human rights law and, in some cases, constitute, *prima facie*, crimes against humanity. The State has also consolidated its control through constitutional and legislative reforms that undermine the principle of legality and concentrate virtually unlimited power in the presidency. These measures, combined with Nicaragua's recent and unprecedented withdrawal from several United Nations agencies and the Human Rights Council, represent a calculated strategy to avoid scrutiny and accountability while continuing to perpetrate serious human rights violations.

The Group urges the international community to respond decisively by strengthening protection for Nicaraguans in exile – ensuring fair and expedited asylum and naturalisation procedures for Nicaraguans deprived of nationality or otherwise persecuted and preventing refoulement under any circumstance – and by holding perpetrators accountable under international law. Enhanced monitoring, cooperation and accountability mechanisms are essential to prevent Nicaragua's transnational reach from further eroding international human rights norms.

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I. Introduction

A. Background

Political exile has increased dramatically since Nicaragua's human rights crisis deepened following the 2018 wave of mass protests. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, by the end of 2024, 356,201 Nicaraguans were seeking asylum abroad, against 2,722 in 2017, and 30,020 had been granted refugee status, against 1,467 in 2017.¹ While these figures illustrate the sharp increase in asylum applications and refugee recognitions since 2018, they do not capture the full scale of Nicaraguans compelled to leave the country as they do not account for Nicaraguans who relocated abroad availing themselves of a second nationality, those who acquired a new nationality while in exile, or those who legalized their migration status through alternative migration channels without seeking asylum.

In February 2023, the Nicaraguan authorities released 222 persons who had been arbitrarily detained, expelled them to the United States of America (USA) and deprived them of their nationality. Shortly after, the authorities deprived another 94 Nicaraguans of their nationality, most of whom were living abroad. In September 2024, the authorities again released 135 persons who had been arbitrarily detained, expelled them to Guatemala and deprived them of their nationality. These incidents made news around the world and raised alarms about the extent of Nicaragua's repression. They cast a grim light on a broader reality the present report documents: a systematic and escalating pattern of transnational repression – arbitrary deprivation of nationality, entry ban, confiscation, targeted surveillance and threats – that extends to Nicaraguans across the borders of their homeland. Beyond Nicaragua's borders, opponents of the Government of Co-Presidents Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo are not safe.

It is within this context of fear, coercion and silencing that the present report seeks to give voice to the hundreds of victims – dissidents, activists, students, journalists – and their relatives, whose lives have been disrupted, legal identities erased, and asylum and mobility imperilled. It shows how the very fabric of civic space and human rights for Nicaraguans in exile is being methodically dismantled.

The present document showcases the findings of the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua on the different methods used by the State to deter, punish and silence Nicaraguans in exile. It provides a comprehensive and updated analysis of these specific violations and their dire consequences, building on the Group's previous findings.² It also highlights the critical need for international, rights-based responses that safeguard asylum, protect families, uphold due process and hold perpetrators to account, while honouring the dignity and humanity of those who bear the cost of transnational human rights violations by the Nicaraguan State.

¹ See <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/data-summaries>. Most Nicaraguan refugees and asylum-seekers are in Costa Rica, the United States of America, Mexico, Spain and Panama.

² See, in particular, [A/HRC/55/27](#), paras. 18, 33-34 and 37-44; [A/HRC/55/CRP.3](#), paras. 94-117 and 133-179; [A/HRC/58/26](#), paras. 20-21, 56-64 and 69-84; and [A/HRC/58/CRP.8](#), paras. 66-68, 619-697, 725-794, 808-821 and 828-833. See also [A/HRC/52/63](#), paras. 104-108; [A/HRC/52/CRP.5](#), paras. 765-779; [A/HRC/55/CRP.4](#), paras. 150-154; [A/HRC/55/CRP.5](#), paras. 112-114, 223-247, 249 and 250; [A/HRC/55/CRP.6](#), paras. 191-193, 195-198, 205 and 283-303; and [A/HRC/55/CRP.7](#), paras. 335-342.

B. Mandate and methodology

The Human Rights Council established the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua in 2022 to investigate all alleged human rights violations and abuses committed in Nicaragua since April 2018 and provide guidance on access to justice and accountability.³ To this end, the Group has presented three reports⁴ and seven conference room papers⁵ to the Human Rights Council, containing the findings of its investigations.

In these reports, the Group concluded there were reasonable grounds to believe that, since April 2018, State and non-State actors had committed serious human rights violations and abuses⁶ against an ever-growing range of real or perceived opponents and their relatives in a systematic and widespread manner.⁷ The Group determined that some of those violations constitute, *prima facie*, the crimes against humanity of murder, imprisonment, torture, including rape and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity, enforced disappearance, deportation and persecution.⁸

The Group understands the geographic scope of its mandate to investigate all alleged human rights violations in Nicaragua to include violations that are controlled by the Nicaraguan State, even if these take effect – fully or in part – outside its territory. This interpretation is in line with interpretations of UN treaty bodies, according to which a State Party to the respective treaty has the obligation to respect the rights of anyone “within the power or effective control of that State Party”, even if not situated within its territory.⁹ To this effect, international courts have affirmed that a State Party’s obligations apply even outside its territory when a person is subject to its jurisdiction¹⁰ or agents of a State “exercise power and authority over persons outside national territory”.¹¹

³ See [A/HRC/RES/49/3](#).

⁴ [A/HRC/52/63](#), [A/HRC/55/27](#) and [A/HRC/58/26](#).

⁵ The seven conference room papers are available at: www.ohchr.org/ghrenicaragua.

⁶ These include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, enforced disappearances, violations of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and freedom of association, arbitrary deprivations of nationality, and violations of the right to freedom of movement.

⁷ See [A/HRC/52/63](#), paras. 123-125; [A/HRC/55/27](#), paras. 3, 80, 81 and 107-116; [A/HRC/58/26](#), paras. 2, 91 and 106-110; and the relevant sections of the seven conference room papers.

⁸ See [A/HRC/52/63](#), paras. 109, 110 and 123-125; [A/HRC/55/27](#), paras. 3, 82-87 and 107-116; [A/HRC/58/26](#), paras. 2, 85-90 and 106-110; and the relevant sections of the seven conference room papers.

⁹ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 31, [CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13](#), para. 10. See also Human Rights Committee, *Lopez Burgos v. Uruguay*, [CCPR/C/13/D/52/1979](#), para. 12(3), and *Celiberti de Casariego v. Uruguay*, [CCPR/C/13/D/56/1979](#), para. 12(3); Committee against Torture, General Comment No. 2, [CAT/C/GC/2](#), para. 16; General Comment No. 4, [CAT/C/GC/4](#), para. 10; and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 28, [CEDAW/C/GC/28](#), para. 12, and General Recommendation No. 30, [CEDAW/C/GC/30](#), para. 8.

¹⁰ International Court of Justice, *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (Georgia v. Russian Federation)*, Order on the Indication of Provisional Measures, 15 October 2008, p. 353, para. 109; and Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Advisory Opinion OC-23/17 – The Environment and Human Rights*, requested by the Republic of Colombia, 15 November 2017, para. 78.

¹¹ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Armando Alejandro Jr., Carlos Costa, Mario de la Peña, and Pablo Morales v. Cuba*, Case No. 11.589, Report No. 86/99, 29 September 1999, para. 25. See also Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Coard et al v. United States*, Case No. 10.951, Report No. 109/99, 29 September 1999, para. 37; *Franklin Guillermo Aisalla Molina (Ecuador v Colombia)*, Inter-State Petition IP-02, Admissibility, Report No. 112/10, 21 October 2010, párr. 91; and European Court of Human Rights, *Issa and Others v. Turkey*, Application No. 31821/96, Judgment, 16 November 2004, para. 71; *Isaak and Others v. Turkey*, Application No. 44587/98, Decision as to the Admissibility, 28 September 2006, p. 21; *Pad and*

In preparing the present document, the Group reviewed and analysed the relevant information and evidence contained in interviews conducted with victims, witnesses, alleged perpetrators and other sources of information, and the documents collected since the beginning of its mandate and until the end of March 2025.¹² The Group conducted a further 229 interviews and gathered an additional 404 documents between April and August 2025 to complement and corroborate the information already in its possession.

The Group recalls that it conducts its investigations applying the methodologies, the “reasonable grounds to believe” standard of proof and the legal framework outlined in its previous reports.¹³ The requirements of reasonable grounds to believe are met when, on the basis of the verified body of factual information, an objective and ordinarily prudent observer would have reasonable grounds to conclude that the facts took place as described and, when drawing legal conclusions, that these facts meet all the elements of a violation or abuse.

II. Transnational human rights violations

The systemic, cross-border State persecution against exiled Nicaraguans is embodied in the anatomy of the victim of transnational human rights violations. The acts or omissions they face are not a discrete event or a single violation; their entire life is systematically dismantled. The victim profile is not limited to the moment of arrest or death; it stretches across identity, rights, resources, and social ties, shaping a precarious existence for the individual and reverberating through the family.

Harm overtakes the individual in exile and follows family members in Nicaragua and across borders. The process begins with the erosion of national belonging and legal identity and cascades into economic collapse, social isolation, and pervasive surveillance. The victim’s family – both at home and in exile – becomes collateral damage, facing coercion, displacement and threats that extend the reach of State repression far beyond its territorial boundaries. The pattern is cumulative, interlinked and designed to suppress dissent through a scalable governance model that employs – literally – a long-arm strategy of violations and erodes safe havens.

From the start of its mandate, the Group has documented various human rights violations perpetrated by Nicaraguan authorities against exiled Nicaraguans. These have steadily increased and diversified with the rising number of Nicaraguans forced to leave the country since 2018. They significantly escalated following the expulsion and deprivation of nationality of 222 Nicaraguans in February 2023.

Transnational human rights violations constitute an important facet of the Government’s plan to eliminate any kind of opposition or dissent, guarantee impunity for the serious violations and crimes committed, and strengthen its enduring power over Nicaragua. They represent a direct

Others v. Turkey, Application No. 60167/00, Decision as to the Admissibility, 28 June 2007, para. 53; *Al-Skeini and Others v. United Kingdom*, Application No. 55721/07, Judgment, 7 July 2011, para. 136.

¹² By the end of March 2025, the Group had conducted 1,631 interviews, both remotely and during 23 field visits, and gathered over 8,400 documents.

¹³ See [A/HRC/52/63](#), paras. 6-11; [A/HRC/55/27](#), paras. 7-12; [A/HRC/58/26](#), para. 6; and the relevant sections of the seven conference room papers (see, in particular, conference room paper [A/HRC/52/CRP.5](#), paras. 16-41, 45-47 and 55-73).

extension of internal violations tactics and one of the main characteristics of the “fourth phase” of repression identified by the Group (2023 to the present).¹⁴ During this phase, the Government has been taking measures aimed at eliminating all criticism and cementing the absolute control of the executive branch over all State entities and the population which culminated with a broad constitutional reform, in force since February 2025, that undermined the protection of fundamental rights and put almost unlimited power in the hands of the presidency.

The wide surveillance and intelligence network identified by the Group¹⁵ has been crucial to enable the Nicaraguan State to identify, locate and monitor Nicaraguans in exile who could be targeted by transnational violations. This network responds to orders from Co-Presidents Ortega and Murillo and is mainly composed of members of the National Army, the National Police, the Ministry of the Interior, the Nicaraguan Telecommunications and Postal Institute (TELCOR), pro-government armed groups and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). TELCOR actively works with the police to monitor and intercept the communications of its users including on social media platforms. TELCOR also hosts “troll farms” that harass, threaten and discredit Nicaraguans deemed opponents wherever they are. These farms are controlled by the FSLN and answer to Co-President Murillo.¹⁶

The human rights violations and abuses described in the sections below form part of what can be referred to as “transnational repression”. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “[w]hile there is no official definition, the term transnational repression denotes acts conducted or directed by a State, or its proxy, to deter, silence or punish dissent, criticism or human rights advocacy towards it, expressed from outside its territory.”¹⁷ The Group notes, however, that these violations represent only one element of the massive and serious human rights violations it has documented since its inception.

A. Arbitrary deprivation of nationality

Nicaragua’s large-scale use of the arbitrary deprivation of nationality as a mechanism of targeted political repression is exceptional in scope and systematic nature. Since February 2023, the Group of Experts has documented the arbitrary deprivation of nationality through court rulings of 452 Nicaraguans declared “traitors to the homeland”. A diverse array of persons has been affected, including political leaders, human rights defenders, women’s rights activists, student leaders, academics, *campesino* leaders, journalists and media professionals, writers, lawyers, members of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations, entrepreneurs, opponents’ relatives, and former public officials.

The Nicaraguan authorities have used arbitrary deprivation of nationality to silence and punish real or perceived opponents and their relatives. Cases documented by the Group show a systematic pattern of violations of the right to a nationality as part of a wider pattern of serious and systematic

¹⁴ See A/HRC/58/26, para. 10. The first phase (2018-2020) was characterized by a violent and disproportionate crackdown on legitimate protests; the second phase (2021) was defined by intensified targeted repression to ensure President Ortega’s re-election; and the third (2022) saw the intensification of efforts to eliminate all remnants of political opposition, the escalation of repression targeting the Catholic Church and the acceleration of the dismantling of civic space (*ibid.*, paras. 7-9).

¹⁵ See A/HRC/58/26, paras. 21 and 69-74; and A/HRC/58/CRP.8, paras. 66-68 and 725-774.

¹⁶ See A/HRC/58/26, para. 73; and A/HRC/58/CRP.8, paras. 760-765, 767 and 771.

¹⁷ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Transnational Repression: What Is Transnational Repression – Civic Space Brief”, 18 June 2025, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/transnational-repression>.

human rights violations with a transnational impact, including restrictions on freedom of movement and residence. The practice has far-reaching consequences for the victims' enjoyment of other human rights and extends its impact to their families.

International law, including article 15(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 20(3) of the American Convention on Human Rights, prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of nationality. The Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961, ratified by Nicaragua in 2013, establishes that States “shall not deprive a person of its nationality if such deprivation would render him stateless” (article 8) and “may not deprive any person or group of persons of their nationality on racial, ethnic, religious or political grounds” (article 9). Beyond that, article 12(4) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes that nobody shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter one's own country, which encompasses the right to remain in one's own country.¹⁸

The Nicaraguan Constitution and legislation formerly provided for the absolute prohibition of the loss of nationality for nationals of origin.¹⁹ On 9 February 2023, the National Assembly adopted the Special Law Regulating the Loss of Nicaraguan Nationality (Law No. 1145),²⁰ which stipulates that persons sentenced under the provisions of the Law on the Defence of People's Rights to Independence, Sovereignty and Self-Determination for Peace (Law No. 1055) lose their Nicaraguan nationality.²¹ On the same day, the Assembly adopted an amendment to article 21 of the Constitution which establishes the loss of Nicaraguan nationality for “traitors to the homeland”. The constitutional amendment entered into force on 22 January 2024,²² meaning that Law No. 1145 was unconstitutional when passed. The vagueness of the legal definitions of the crimes leading to declarations of “traitor to the homeland” also contravenes the fundamental principle of legality.²³

On 9 February 2023, the presiding judge of the first criminal chamber of the Managua Court of Appeal read a sentence ordering the “immediate deportation” of 222 Nicaraguans for infringing “the legal and constitutional order, thereby undermining the Nicaraguan State and society [and] harming the supreme interest of the nation”.²⁴ The court order was read as the 222 persons were already on board a plane heading for the USA. On 10 February, the presiding judge read a statement

¹⁸ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 27, [CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.9](#), para. 19.

¹⁹ Political Constitution in its version prior to the version amended by the Partial Amendment to the Political Constitution of Nicaragua (Law No. 1234), adopted on 30 January 2025, published in *La Gaceta No. 32*, 18 February 2025; and General Law on Migration and Foreigners (Law No. 761), according to the Law of the Nicaraguan Legal Digest of Internal Order Matters (Law No. 1146), approved on 28 February 2023, published in *La Gaceta No. 9*, 18 January 2024.

²⁰ Special Law Regulating the Loss of Nicaraguan Nationality (Law No. 1145), adopted on 9 February 2023, published in *La Gaceta No. 25*, 10 February 2023.

²¹ Law on the Defence of the People's Rights to Independence, Sovereignty and Self-Determination for Peace (Law No. 1055) provides for a broad definition of the figure of “traitor to the homeland” (adopted on 21 December 2020, published in *La Gaceta No. 237*, 22 December 2020). The constitutional reform of February 2025 incorporated the notion of “traitor to the homeland” into the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

²² Law on the Reform of Article 21 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua (Law No. 1190), approved on 18 January 2024, published in *La Gaceta No. 11*, 22 January 2024.

²³ See Article 1 of the Law on the Defence of the People's Rights to Independence, Sovereignty and Self-Determination for Peace (Law No. 1055).

²⁴ Document on file with the Group of Experts.

announcing the Court had deprived the 222 persons of their nationality as they were declared “traitors to the homeland”, in accordance with Law No. 1145 and Law No. 1055.²⁵

These 222 victims had been detained for political reasons, some since 2018. The majority had already been convicted of other crimes following blatantly unfair trials. The legal proceedings against the rest were still ongoing. Yet, in early February 2023, the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the respective criminal courts in Managua and other districts retroactively amended the counts and/or sentences against the victims to strip them of their civil rights “in perpetuity” and allow for the application of Law No. 1055, thereby opening the door to their declaration as “traitors to the homeland”.

On 10 February 2023, the presiding judge of the first criminal chamber of the Managua Court of Appeal read a resolution from the Second Criminal Trial District Court of Managua sentencing Monsignor Rolando José Álvarez Lagos, bishop of the Diocese of Matagalpa and apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Estelí, to over 26 years in prison for a series of crimes, declared him “traitor to the homeland”, stated that he had lost his civil rights “in perpetuity” and, invoking Law No. 1145, declared that he had been deprived of his nationality.²⁶ The trial was moved forward immediately following Monsignor Álvarez’ refusal to be expelled to the USA on 9 February and held in the absence of the defendant and his defence. Monsignor Álvarez remained arbitrarily detained in Nicaragua until his expulsion on 13 January 2024.

On 15 February 2023, the president of the Managua Court of Appeal read sentences issued by the criminal district courts of Managua which declared 94 Nicaraguans – the majority outside of the country – “traitors to the homeland” and fugitives from justice.²⁷ The resolutions ordered the deprivation of their nationality in accordance with Law No. 1145 and the confiscation of all their real estate and companies in favour of the State. None of the victims was informed of any legal proceedings against them. The trials, if they took place, were held *in absentia* and in secret.

“They took away my citizenship. Where have you ever seen a procedure without hearing the other side ... and on top of that with an unappealable legal consequence? And the [most shocking] part is that a judge did it, without a trial, without a file, without anything. It’s crazy.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

On 5 September 2024, 135 arbitrarily detained Nicaraguans were expelled to Guatemala. Some of them had been convicted of political offences and others of common crimes following unfair trials, though the majority had not been notified of their convictions. In a press release dated 9 September, the Supreme Court of Justice announced that the first criminal chamber of the Managua Court of Appeal had ordered the deprivation of nationality of the 135 persons, convicted of criminal acts that had undermined the sovereignty, independence and self-determination of the Nicaraguan people, and the confiscation of all their assets in accordance with the Constitution, Criminal Code,

²⁵ Video of the reading available at: <https://www.el19digital.com/articulos/ver/136853-222-traidores-a-la-patria-pierden-la-nacionalidad-nicaraguense>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See copy published by Confidencial available at: <https://confidencial.digital/nacion/despojan-de-nacionalidad-y-derechos-ciudadanos-y-confiscan-a-94-nicaraguenses/>. Eighty-eight persons were already abroad when the court orders were issued. At the time of writing, only one person remained in Nicaragua in a situation of statelessness *in situ*.

and Laws No. 1055 and 1145. The court order was not published, and the authorities did not disclose the names of the 135 victims, thereby impairing their access to international protection. The victims were identified through the investigation of civil society organizations and journalists and their names published in the media.²⁸

The decisions to deprive these 452 persons of their Nicaraguan nationality were taken by President Ortega and then Vice-President Murillo. Several State institutions, in particular the National Assembly, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court of Justice and criminal courts of other instances, the Supreme Electoral Council, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General de la República*), coordinated to execute these decisions and, once issued, to implement the court orders.

The Group of Experts has also documented several cases in which Nicaraguans living abroad were deprived of their nationality without having been notified of any legal proceedings to that end. Some victims reported that upon requesting their birth records, the authorities informed them that the documents did not exist. Others were informally told by consular authorities when seeking to renew their passports that they had lost their nationality. Most of these victims had started asylum application procedures in third countries or had already been granted refugee status. In these cases, the Deputy Minister of the Interior decides whom to target, in consultation with Co-President Murillo and based on information collected by the wide surveillance and intelligence structure identified by the Group of Experts.²⁹

Most of the persons deprived of their nationality became stateless, in contravention of Nicaragua's international obligations, especially under article 8 of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961. Cases in which Nicaraguans were informed only unofficially of the deprivation of their nationality also constitute a *de jure* deprivation of nationality. Most of these latter victims became stateless too and are therefore entitled to the protection provided by international standards on statelessness. However, the fact that these victims have little to no evidence to prove the formal deprivation of their nationality severely undermines their ability to claim and obtain international protection.

Because many Nicaraguans in exile cannot, or fear to, confirm whether they have been stripped of their nationality, the true number of victims of arbitrary deprivation of nationality is likely significantly higher than the 452 court-ordered cases identified by the Group of Experts.

None of the victims had access to an effective remedy. By formalizing arbitrary actions through legislation applied retroactively and constitutional amendments, the Nicaraguan State eliminated any domestic legal avenue to challenge the deprivation of nationality. The retroactive application of denationalization laws and the constitutional entrenchment of "treason to the homeland" illustrate the State's deliberate subversion of the rule of law, including the principle of non-

²⁸ See, for instance, Confidencial, "Estos son 133 de 135 excarcelados y desterrados a Guatemala", 25 September 2024, available at: <https://confidencial.digital/nacion/quienes-son-los-135-presos-politicos-de-nicaragua-desterrados-a-guatemala/>; and 100% Noticias, "Actualización: Lista completa de los 135 presos políticos excarcelados en Nicaragua y desterrados a Guatemala", 20 September 2024, available at: <https://100noticias.tv/politica/133921-lista-presos-politicos-nicaragua-guatemala/>.

²⁹ A/HRC/58/CRP.8, paras. 648, 649 and 678.

retroactivity, to legitimize political persecution. In this way, measures that fundamentally violate human rights are presented as compliant with domestic law.

Deprivation of nationality has been accompanied by other repressive measures, including the confiscation of the victims' assets, sources of income, pensions and pension contributions, as well as obstacles to family reunification, especially affecting children. These actions were designed to leave victims in a situation of extreme vulnerability, stripped of their legal identity and State protection. Deprivation of nationality also complicates the regularization of their migration status, further destabilizing their lives in exile. Taken together, these measures appear deliberately engineered to sever all ties to their homeland and to erase their political presence in exile, undermining their possible return as opposition figures.

A recent partial constitutional reform, still pending final approval in second legislature, foresees the abolition of the right of Nicaraguans to hold dual nationality.³⁰ This reform will be problematic when Nicaraguans, who are denied the renewal or issuance of their Nicaraguan passports and, therefore, forced to formalize their migration status abroad, will have the opportunity to do so by acquiring the citizenship of another country.

B. Prohibition of entry into one's own country

Since 2018, the Nicaraguan Government has increasingly barred Nicaraguans from re-entering their own country as a tool to punish and silence real or perceived opponents and their families, including children. Targets include both resident nationals who travelled abroad intending to return and nationals residing abroad, but who maintained a special relationship with the country, including through close family members. These bans surged after the mass expulsion of 222 Nicaraguans to the USA in February 2023 and form part of a broader pattern of serious and systematic violations of the right to liberty of movement and the freedom to choose one's residence documented by the Group of Experts.³¹

The right to enter one's own country is enshrined in several human rights treaties. Article 12(4) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 22(5) of the American Convention on Human Rights establish that nobody shall be deprived of the right to enter his or her own country.³²

Victims attempting to return to Nicaragua were informed by airlines or bus companies that they were banned from entry and should contact the authorities for explanations.³³ This was done either in the days preceding their departure, via email, phone call or messaging platforms, or directly at the airport or the border when travelling by land. Some Nicaraguans travelling by land in their own vehicles were also prohibited entry into the country by border officials, especially at the Peñas

³⁰ Law on Partial Reform of Articles 23 and 25 of the Constitution, adopted in first legislature on 16 May 2025, published in *La Gaceta No. 89*, 20 May 2025.

³¹ [A/HRC/55/27](#), paras. 33, 34, 40 and 41; [A/HRC/55/CRP.3](#), paras. 110-117; [A/HRC/58/26](#), para. 56; and [A/HRC/58/CRP.8](#), paras. 619-638.

³² The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of the right to enter one's own country. However, the Human Rights Committee considers that "there are few, if any, circumstances" in which such deprivation could be reasonable and therefore not arbitrary (see General Comment No. 27, [CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.9](#), para. 21).

³³ Airlines and bus companies are required to send a list of passengers in advance to Nicaragua's Directorate General for Migration and Alien Affairs.

Blancas land border with Costa Rica. Others were turned back upon arrival at the Augusto C. Sandino international airport in Managua. While many sought explanations, none received official documentation; one victim simply received screenshots of their social media posts as an explanation. This deliberate absence of documentation has denied victims access to an effective remedy to challenge the decision and complicated the regularization of their migration status abroad, often leaving them in a legal limbo. Other victims had to write a “letter of repentance” addressed to the presidency or pay money – up to thousands of US\$ according to the information gathered – to border authorities to be allowed into Nicaragua.

“I had my boarding pass with me [to return home]. But when I was about to check in my bags ... [the airline staff told me] that the Nicaraguan immigration department had informed them that I had to contact a Nicaraguan embassy or consulate and that I could not board the plane. It was a shock to me. I understood perfectly what it meant: I was being denied entry to my own country. And in that moment my whole life changed. My father is [old] and ... I was the only [child] living in Nicaragua.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

The Directorate General for Migration and Alien Affairs maintains an internal registry containing the names and profiles of people considered a possible threat to the Government compiled through the surveillance and intelligence structure identified by the Group of Experts.³⁴ Officials of the Directorate General complement these profiles by searching for information available on the internet and social networks. Entry bans are decided by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, who is also national administrative secretary of FSLN, in consultation with Co-President Murillo, and then communicated by the Directorate General to airlines and bus companies.

In an effort to sanction the actions of the Directorate General, on 28 November 2024, the National Assembly reformed the General Law on Migration and Foreigners (Law No. 761),³⁵ to authorize the Directorate General for Migration and Alien Affairs to deny entry to both Nicaraguan nationals and foreigners who could “undermine sovereignty” or pose a “social risk”. As these terms are undefined, the reform confers an arbitrary discretion on the authorities that is incompatible with the principle of legality.

Nicaraguans barred from entering their country and who lack another nationality or residence are suddenly forced into extreme vulnerability, often separated from their families and cut off from their sources of income and properties. The Group of Experts considers that such Nicaraguans who do not hold another nationality are *de facto* stateless as they remain outside of Nicaragua without the protection of their State of nationality. In the opinion of the Group of Experts, these victims should also be provided with the protection afforded to *de jure* stateless persons enshrined in the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.³⁶

³⁴ A/HRC/58/CRP.8, paras. 626 and 634-638.

³⁵ Law on Amendments and Additions to Law No. 761, General Law on Migration and Foreigners, and on Additions to Law No. 641, Criminal Code of the Republic of Nicaragua (Law No. 1228), adopted on 28 November 2024, published in *La Gaceta No.* 222, 29 November 2024.

³⁶ UNHCR, “Expert Meeting – The Concept of Stateless Persons under International Law (“Prato Conclusions”)”, 2010, part II, para. 6. See also Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)13 on the nationality of children adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 9 December 2009 (The Recommendation reads as follows: “With a view to reducing statelessness of

Bans on nationals entering their own country also violate the right to freedom of movement and residence and can impair the enjoyment of other human rights, notably the rights to education, work, health, social security and an adequate standard of living. They result in family separation, in contravention of the right to be free from arbitrary or unlawful interference in family life, and cause particular harm to relatives left in Nicaragua who depend economically on those barred from returning, especially children and older persons.

“When we were denied entry, our child did not understand what was happening and wanted to return home. My son asks every day why we are not going back, why we are not in Nicaragua. It has been a very difficult situation. He doesn’t understand why he can’t see his family and friends again and go back to school. He lost his identity, what he recognized as the safe space that was his home. We don’t know how to explain to him that we can’t go back.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

The Group of Experts has documented 318 cases of Nicaraguans denied entry between June 2018 and August 2025. However, the actual number is likely much higher, as many victims are afraid to report for fear of reprisals against themselves or family members in Nicaragua. Some hold onto the hope that if they wait for a while, with a low profile, they will be allowed back in. Those most targeted include relatives of expelled or denationalized persons, members of the Catholic church and other Christian denominations, and journalists and media professionals, many of whom had previously been subjected to threats, harassment and other violations. The Group of Experts has observed that entry bans are often followed by other transnational human rights violations, including consular refusal to renew the victims’ passports or issue copies of birth certificates, and the confiscation of their properties, assets and pensions.

C. Refusal to issue or renew passports and erasure of official records

The Nicaraguan State has also seriously impaired – or denied – the access of exiled real or perceived opponents and their relatives to official documents, including passports, birth certificates and academic records, to further disempower them and sever their ties to their country of origin.

Refusal to issue or renew passports

Nicaraguan consular authorities have refused to issue or renew passports of people considered threats to the Government, as well as those of their relatives, often through unjustified delays. In most of the cases documented by the Group, the victims were in Costa Rica, Mexico, Spain and the USA, though underreporting suggests it may also occur elsewhere.

The right to leave any country, including one’s own, is enshrined in article 12(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Given that international travel usually requires valid travel documents, the right to leave a country includes the right to obtain necessary travel documents, including a passport.³⁷

children, facilitating their access to a nationality and ensuring their right to a nationality, member states should: [...] 7. treat children who are factually (de facto) stateless, as far as possible, as legally stateless (de jure) with respect to the acquisition of nationality”).

³⁷ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 27, *CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.9*, para. 7.

Nicaraguans usually submit passport renewal applications, with the required documentation and a 50 US\$ fee, at their closest consular office or by post. When following up on their applications, victims were invariably told by consular authorities that inquiries had to be directed to the Directorate General for Migration and Alien Affairs in Nicaragua. Some were instructed to send a relative with a photo of their application receipt to inquire directly at the offices of the Directorate General in Managua, where they were simply told the passport was “not ready,” without further explanation.

The Group of Experts found that these delaying tactics are deliberate and amount to a refusal to issue or renew passports, forming part of the Government’s measures to punish and silence dissenting voices in exile. Responsibility lies primarily with the Deputy Minister of the Interior and the Directorate General for Migration and Alien Affairs, particularly the Directorate for Alien Affairs, which coordinates the actions of State institutions on passport restrictions and determines, in consultation with Co-President Murillo, whose passports are renewed.

“I appointed my niece in [country known by the Group] as my representative ... to apply for a new passport. She went to the consulate in person to request information. Six months later, she went back and was told: ‘Don’t expect your relative to be issued a passport because she is not entitled to one. She does not exist in the system’.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

The vast surveillance and intelligence network identified by the Group of Experts³⁸ also plays a central role in identifying who is denied the issuance or renewal of passports. In particular, the social media posts of applicants are extensively reviewed. An official document obtained by the Group of Experts, confirms that posting content deemed critical of the Government is sufficient grounds for refusal. The Group also received information about specific instructions sent to consulates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior to this end.

The victims, whose number continues to increase, remain in an administrative limbo for years, without access to an effective remedy. While not formally deprived of their nationality, Nicaraguans in exile who are denied the renewal of their passport and do not hold another nationality are rendered *de facto* stateless as they are unable to avail themselves of the assistance of their country.³⁹ Further, consular refusals to issue or renew passports seriously undermine the victims’ ability to travel, in violation of their right to freedom of movement. In many cases, such measures also gravely compromise the regularization of the victims’ migration status abroad or relocation to other countries. They also hinder, in some cases, the victims’ possibility of family reunification.

Deletion and alteration of civil records

Furthermore, as part of the measures aimed at punishing and silencing dissenting voices beyond the country’s borders, the authorities have deleted, blocked access to or altered documents

³⁸ See footnote 15 above.

³⁹ See footnote 36 above.

inscribed in the Central Registry of Civil Status – especially birth records and marriage certificates – of Nicaraguans in exile and their relatives.⁴⁰

Many victims discovered that their civil records had been erased when relatives, friends or legal representatives in Nicaragua requested copies of their birth certificates. Others found out about the deletion of their records when trying to access official administrative or banking systems. In cases of persons formally deprived of their nationality, the Supreme Electoral Council removed them from the electoral roll and ensured all information on them was deleted from the civil registry. In some cases, the authorities went so far as to tear out the pages of the civil registry containing the victims' birth records.

These repressive measures have also directly affected family members, especially children and spouses. In some cases, the targets' surnames were erased from the birth certificates of their children and their marriage certificates eliminated.

Depriving individuals of their legal identity violates the right to recognition as a person before the law and the right not to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy and family life. In the case of children, such actions are also in violation of their right to preserve their identity, including name and family relations, without unlawful interference.⁴¹ None of the victims had access to an effective remedy.

The Group of Experts has identified a widespread fear among Nicaraguans in exile of requesting copies of their birth records through third parties. The fear of reprisals against themselves or their relatives for making such a request, and of the possible confirmation of the loss of their legal identity, means that the true number of people whose civil records have been deleted or altered is likely much greater than those documented.

The Group of Experts considers that, by eliminating birth certificates and other civil records, the Government has sought to impose a form of “civil death” on those targeted. The deprivation of legal identity has far-reaching consequences: it impairs the victims' ability to establish property rights, obtain a passport and other official documents, regularize their migration status and establish filiation and can severely restrict their access to other human rights. The victims are unable to avail themselves of the protection and assistance of Nicaragua and are therefore rendered *de facto* stateless.⁴²

“I am one of the 222. I requested residency in the USA which in the end was denied because they asked for documents that I cannot provide. You know that [the Nicaraguan authorities] deleted us from the registries. Before the expiration of my parole, I decided to leave the USA.”

Victim interviewed by Group

⁴⁰ The Central Registry of Civil Status (*Registro Central del Estado Civil de las Personas*) is a Directorate General of the Supreme Electoral Council, which is represented in all the offices of the Departmental and Regional Electoral Councils.

⁴¹ See Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 8.

⁴² See footnote 36 above.

Refusal to issue academic titles and records and revocation of professional titles

Acting on instructions from the National Council of Universities,⁴³ university authorities have denied hundreds of students deemed opponents access to their academic titles and records or, in some cases, simply revoked or deleted those records. Other students and professionals were prevented from authenticating (*apostillar*) their degrees. In one case, police officers confiscated and destroyed a student's official documents, including their high school diploma and university records, as they left the country.

For students living abroad, whether as a result of having been expelled from the country, prohibited from entering or forced to exile themselves, these measures have prevented or hindered them from continuing their studies or validating their degrees. They constitute violations of the students' rights to education and non-discrimination, among others.

Primary and secondary educational institutions under the authority of the Ministry of Education, have also refused to issue study certificates to children who have been prohibited from entering their own country. As with university students, these measures have hindered children's ability to continue studying in violation of their rights to education and non-discrimination. None of the victims has had access to an effective remedy.

On 11 May 2023, the National Council for Administration and Judicial Careers of the Supreme Court of Justice permanently suspended 25 lawyers who had been deprived of their nationality in February 2023 from practising law and exercising as notaries public and revoked their professional titles. In its resolutions, the National Council invoked Law No. 1145 that regulates the loss of nationality alleging that these persons had engaged in acts undermining the independence and sovereignty of the State and self-determination of the people, and incited violence, terrorism and economic destabilisation.⁴⁴ One of the affected lawyers – Vilma Núñez de Escorcía – filed a writ of *amparo* against the decision, but the civil chamber one of the Managua Court of Appeal declared the appeal “notoriously inadmissible” since the plaintiff had lost her Nicaraguan nationality and civil rights.⁴⁵ Two days earlier, the National Council had permanently suspended another woman lawyer who defended persons arbitrarily arrested in the context of the repression. None of the lawyers was afforded the opportunity to defend against the revocation of their license or appeal the decisions.

The Nicaraguan authorities used the refusal to issue or authenticate academic records and the revocation of professional titles to further neutralize students, academics and professionals critical of the Government, complicate their integration abroad and, ultimately, hinder the rebuilding of their lives in exile.

D. Confiscation of property and economic dispossession

Since 2018, and particularly since 2023, the Nicaraguan authorities have increasingly confiscated the property of exiled real or perceived opponents and their relatives, including homes, buildings, vehicles, land, bank accounts, businesses and shares, pensions, pension contributions and other

⁴³ The National Council of Universities was replaced by the National Council of University Rectors in early June 2025.

⁴⁴ Supreme Court of Justice, National Council for Administration and Judicial Careers, Decision of 11 May 2023, document on file with the Group of Experts.

⁴⁵ [A/HRC/58/CRP.8](#), para. 683.

assets. The cases documented by the Group of Experts were arbitrary, carried out either after unfair trials or without any legal basis.

Confiscation of property and other assets

The confiscations of property and other assets of exiled real or perceived opponents constitute a pattern of violations of the right to property and the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of property enshrined in article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 21 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

In the case of the 452 persons formally deprived of their nationality, the judiciary imposed the additional penalty of confiscation of their properties and assets. As explained above, some of the victims were convicted following blatantly unfair trials and were denied the right to appeal their sentence. The others could not present a defence and appeal the decisions as they had not been notified of any legal proceedings against them.

The Attorney General's Office has led the execution of court-ordered confiscations, accompanied operationally by police officers. Relatives residing in confiscated properties were evicted while tenants were generally offered the opportunity to formalise their occupancy with the State by paying rent. The Attorney General's Office has allocated or assigned confiscated properties to State institutions, and, in some cases, to private individuals linked to FSLN, and has transmitted the corresponding information to the Physical Cadastre of the Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies.

In other cases, the Attorney General's Office confiscated the properties and other assets of Nicaraguans who were expelled from the country, prohibited from entering the country or forced into exile for political reasons and transferred the ownership of these properties to State institutions without any known legal proceedings. In other cases, properties have simply been occupied.

The identification of properties belonging to persons of interest is coordinated by the Attorney General's Office, under instructions from Co-President Murillo. One method of identification documented by the Group of Experts involved house-to-house visits by personnel from different State institutions under false pretences. The victims were often informed by neighbours or relatives that their properties had been occupied by the police or other individuals close to the Government, or they discovered the confiscations when they tried to access online systems or registries, including the Real Estate and Commercial Property Registry. They did not have access to any avenue to appeal these measures and were not offered compensation.

Confiscation of pensions or pension contributions

The authorities have also extended confiscations to the pensions or accumulated social security contributions of exiled Nicaraguans, including those deprived of their nationality. The executive president of the Nicaraguan Social Security Institute ordered the confiscation of the pensions or pension contributions of those among the 452 persons formally deprived of their nationality who had contributed to the Nicaraguan pension system in execution of the corresponding sentences of the Managua Court of Appeal.

The Group of Experts has also documented the cases of older exiled Nicaraguans – who had requested asylum after having been expelled, denied re-entry or forced into exile – whose pensions had also been confiscated. In recent years, the Nicaraguan Social Security Institute verified that pensioners living abroad were still alive by conducting video calls. However, at least in the cases documented, the Institute did not make these calls and used the absence of proof of life as a justification for confiscating their pensions.

“My husband and I no longer receive our retirement pensions [abroad]. The brutal confiscation of our pensions and income affects our dignity. It also affects third parties, because we helped relatives who are elderly and depended on us.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

These measures constitute serious violations of the rights to social security and non-discrimination. They also disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, in particular older persons and children, who depend on a fixed income to cover their basic needs, such as food, housing, medical care and medicines.

Ensuing consequences

The confiscation of property and other assets, including pensions, has forced numerous victims into poverty. Many have been compelled to rely on the solidarity of fellow Nicaraguans and associations, as well as the support of social service organizations and institutions in their host countries.

This has generated a general climate of uncertainty and fear among exiled Nicaraguans, particularly among the older adult population. Properties and other assets’ confiscations have acted as powerful deterrent against dissent. By maximizing economic hardship, the Nicaraguan State is not only punishing the exiled, but it is also acquiring resources that consolidate its economic power and control.

E. Surveillance, threats and harassment

The Group of Experts has identified and documented the existence of a wide and complex surveillance and intelligence network, involving both government institutions and the FSLN, that responds to the orders of the Co-Presidents.⁴⁶ The State of Nicaragua uses this network to monitor the population’s activities, both physically and online, identify and locate opponents, track their communications, and decide who should be arrested, expelled, prevented from returning or stripped of their nationality, among other measures.

The Group has confirmed that this extensive and methodical system of surveillance, which makes substantial use of digital technologies, extends beyond Nicaragua’s borders, enabling the Government, FSLN-affiliated actors and pro-government armed groups to harass, discredit and threaten exiled Nicaraguans. Former Sandinistas and

“[I received] a written threat [without any stamp] just after a talk [in a public event]. It was in the letterbox of the organisation [where I work, in Europe]. I filed a complaint. At the police station they didn’t really know how to deal with the matter.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

⁴⁶ See [A/HRC/58/26](#), paras. 21 and 69-74; and [A/HRC/58/CRP.8](#), paras. 66-68 and 725-774.

Contras combatants, former members of the military, journalists, political figures, activists, and human rights defenders have been particularly targeted.

Transnational surveillance, in particular, is orchestrated via a multi-layered intelligence architecture involving the military, the police, the foreign service and non-State actors. At its core is a network coordinated by the army's Defence Intelligence Directorate, the military intelligence agency. The different actors are tasked with identifying and monitoring internal and external "threats" to the Government. Undercover officials and informants surveil targeted individuals, both physically and online, report on their movements and associations, and, sometimes, harass and threaten them directly. The National Police, particularly its intelligence services, maintain close coordination with the military, sharing dissident profiles and intercepting communications and mobility data.

Targets are identified through the monitoring of their social media or public activities, or their association with known opposition groups. Once profiled, they are physically surveilled by undercover officials or informants, and digitally through account hacking, spyware and communication interception. Nicaraguans reported to the Group being photographed, followed, harassed, approached by unknown persons and threatened while abroad, particularly in neighbouring Costa Rica and Honduras, but also in Belgium, Guatemala, Spain and the USA. These actions are directed from Nicaragua and executed by networks of informants, including, according to the information obtained, both Nicaraguans and locally recruited individuals.

"Behind where I live lives one of the police officers who arrested me in 2020. I have seen him several times and, when he sees me, he hides. I felt that someone was watching me a lot, until one day I came to the conclusion that it was him."

Victim interviewed by the Group

Digital surveillance is a central pillar of the Government's strategy to control dissenting voices in exile. The Group of Experts has identified a sustained pattern of State-sponsored digital espionage targeting the exiled and their relatives. This includes the interception of phone communications, the hacking of messaging platforms, and the installation of spyware on devices such as mobile phones and computers. In many cases, victims reported that messages they had shared privately were later used to threaten them or discredit them through anonymous social media campaigns. This indicates that Nicaragua has systemic monitoring capabilities involving both State and aligned private operators.

Social media platforms have become a key focus of this State-sponsored digital surveillance. Specialized units within the army's Defence Intelligence Directorate and Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Directorate, and the National Police monitor posts, photos, comments and online connections. They use algorithms and keyword tracking to flag content deemed critical of the Government. Nicaraguans engaging in public criticism, especially former Sandinistas, students, journalists and political opposition figures, are routinely profiled, doxed and subjected to threats, including death threats, and smear campaigns orchestrated by "troll farms"

"I have received threats on social media, telling me that I will end up dead in a ditch in Spain, because that is the fate of traitors."

Victim interviewed by the Group

and bot networks linked to the Sandinista Youth 19 July (*Juventud Sandinista 19 de Julio*), the “victory units” and the Nicaraguan Telecommunications and Postal Institute (TELCOR). Defamation campaigns often falsely accuse dissidents of having committed crimes or being connected to trafficking of illegal drugs and terrorism, to undermine asylum applications and other relocation processes. These digital transnational human rights violations have played a central role in silencing critical voices and dismantling civic space online.

Telephone communications are also frequently intercepted by the State with the cooperation of State-aligned telecommunications providers. Victims reported call drops, interference, echoes, and the sudden activation of microphones – signs consistent with surveillance technologies. In some cases, dissidents received calls from unknown numbers repeating private conversations or threatening them while describing their recent movements – indicating real-time tracking. Many exiled Nicaraguans assume their devices are compromised and their communications intervened, prompting behavioural changes, such as the use of encrypted messaging applications or burner phones, or complete digital disengagement.

This pervasive digital surveillance has fostered a climate of fear and isolation among exiled Nicaraguans. Many no longer feel safe communicating with friends or trusted allies while others have drastically limited their communications with relatives in Nicaragua, for fear of reprisals. In some cases, family members have explicitly asked them to cease communication.

The repercussions of these repressive actions on those targeted are profound and affect many areas of their lives. The fear of retaliation leads to widespread self-censorship, especially online, where people have abandoned social media platforms or sanitized their content. The fear of reprisals against their relatives has led victims to social isolation. The general atmosphere of fear and suspicion has led many Nicaraguans to often change homes, live in isolation or hiding and even change host country. Even in exile, many Nicaraguans live with the constant fear of being watched, tracked and harmed, which is too often taking a tremendous toll on their psychological health.

F. Physical violence

Physical violence against exiled Nicaraguans has become an increasing concern over the last few years, particularly in Costa Rica and Honduras.⁴⁷ A handful of murders and attempted murders of exiled Nicaraguans have been reported to the Group of Experts, the most recent being the murder of vocal critic Roberto Samcam in San José, which was widely reported in the press.⁴⁸

A retired Nicaraguan army major who had once served under Ortega, Samcam left Nicaragua after the 2018 uprising and became one of the Government’s most outspoken critics in exile. In his various interviews, articles and publications, since 2018, he referred to the role of the Nicaraguan army, in particular its key undercover role in the crackdown against demonstrators in 2018 (training and distributing arms to the police and pro-government armed groups and even donning their uniforms). In 2021, he published a memoir entitled “Ortega: El Calvario de Nicaragua” where he discussed the role of the army. He appeared frequently on public affairs programmes to

⁴⁷ Costa Rica hosts the largest population of forcibly displaced Nicaraguans (refugees and asylum-seekers) in the world (see UNHCR at: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/data-summaries>).

⁴⁸ See the Group’s press release available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/nicaragua-un-group-experts-condemns-murder-prominent-political-opponent>.

denounce the growing brutality of the Government and warn that there were cells operating out of the Nicaraguan embassy in San José that kept tabs on the exiles.⁴⁹ Co-Presidents Ortega and Murillo, he said, directed special fury at their former allies and associates. Sources said Samcam took precautions to protect himself, however, on the morning of 19 June 2025, he was shot eight times in his home.⁵⁰

The information received by the Group described other targeted assaults with firearms by one or more unidentified individuals which displayed a high level of organization. Accounts also said both surviving and deceased victims had been harassed and had received death threats and warnings prior to the attacks. Other victims of similar crimes in recent years include Joao Maldonado who survived two attacks in 2021 and 2024 in Costa Rica, and Rodolfo Rojas Cordero who was found dead in 2022 in Honduras.

These incidents are under investigation by the respective authorities. The possibility that these murders and attempted murders form part of the broader pattern of transnational human rights violations targeting exiled Nicaraguans cannot be excluded until comprehensive and independent inquiries are completed. Such investigations should not only pursue the direct perpetrators but also examine all possible motives – including political motives – and seek to establish the responsibility of those who may have ordered or planned the crimes.

The murder of Roberto Samcam and other incidents of physical violence underscore the urgent need for strengthened international cooperation, more robust protection mechanisms for exiled populations and comprehensive investigations into the transnational dimension of the threats they face.

“Everything that has happened to Roberto Samcam has created pressure. Many people are considering leaving [Costa Rica].”

Victim interviewed by the Group

G. Abuse of international cooperation and control mechanisms

In a further bid to restrict the freedom of movement of exiled real or perceived dissidents, the Nicaraguan authorities have frequently – and falsely – reported their passports as stolen or revoked, abusing INTERPOL’s Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database. As a result, victims have been stopped by the immigration authorities of third countries while crossing borders. Some

⁴⁹ See Roberto Samcam, *Ortega: El Calvario de Nicaragua*, chapter VII “Riesgos potenciales derivados de la Crisis de Abril para Nicaragua y la región centroamericana”, 2021.

⁵⁰ On 12 September 2025, Costa Rica’s Judicial Investigation Agency arrested four persons in relation to Roberto Samcam’s murder; three of them were remanded in pretrial detention. Costa Rica’s Public Prosecutor General confirmed that investigations continued to find the intellectual authors of the crime and that his office was pursuing several lines of investigation (see, for instance, El Observador, “OIJ detiene a grupo que ejecutó asesinato de exmilitar y exiliado de Nicaragua Roberto Samcam en Costa Rica”, 12 September 2025, available at: <https://observador.cr/oij-detiene-a-grupo-que-ejecuto-asesinato-de-exmilitar-y-exiliado-de-nicaragua-roberto-samcam-en-costa-rica/>; Reuters, “Costa Rican police arrest 4 in killing of Nicaraguan opposition figure”, 12 September 2025, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/costa-rican-police-arrest-4-killing-nicaraguan-opposition-figure-2025-09-12/>; La Nación, “Detenida por homicidio de exmilitar nicaragüense Roberto Samcam queda libre, a tres hombres les imponen estas medidas cautelares”, 16 September 2025, available at: <https://www.nacion.com/sucesos/detenida-por-homicidio-de-exmilitar-nicaraguense/T42ZVIJS6VEYLP3C14FRT4WFLY/story/>; and La Mesa Redonda, “Fiscal General de Costa Rica: Asesinato de Roberto Samcam habría sido ejecutado ‘para satisfacer intereses políticos’”, 12 September 2025, available at: <https://www.lamesaredonda.net/destacados/101443-fiscal-general-de-costa-rica-asesinato-de-roberto-samcam-habria-sido-ejecutado-para-satisfacer-intereses-politicos/>).

of them were allowed to proceed by showing alternative documents, such as passports of another country, residence permits or other identification documents, or thanks to the understanding of sympathetic officials. Others were subjected to interrogation and allowed to continue their journey only thanks to the intervention of high-level contacts or international organizations, in some cases narrowly avoiding being returned to Nicaragua.

In other cases, Nicaraguans targeted by false reports of stolen passports were stopped by airline staff at check-in counters, during stopovers or even on board. They were informed that travel was not permitted due to alerts triggered in the system. In some cases, the diplomatic services or governments of third countries intervened to ensure they could travel.

The Government of Nicaragua has also frequently abused INTERPOL's red notices – worldwide requests to locate and provisionally arrest individuals for extradition – to report real or perceived opponents falsely accused of having committed common offences. The Group of Experts has documented several cases of Nicaraguan dissidents who were apprehended in Costa Rica in execution of red notices issued against them.

In one case, the individual was extradited to Nicaragua after he was denied refugee status. Shortly after, pro-government media outlets showed him with his hands and feet chained. The Nicaraguan State has refused to disclose his fate and whereabouts for over a year until the penitentiary authorities confirmed where he was held. In another case, the individual's refugee status was approved and he was released. In another, the individual remains in detention as the resolution of the extradition request is still pending.

The responsibilities for the abuse of INTERPOL's law enforcement cooperation tools fall on the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Managua, a specialized office part of the National Police which is under the direct command of Co-President Ortega.

The Nicaraguan Government's abuse of INTERPOL's notice system has sown fear among exiled Nicaraguans of being detained under false pretences and possibly extradited to Nicaragua. These repressive measures constitute yet another form of criminalization of legitimate criticism – this time with a transnational component – aimed at punishing and silencing dissidents wherever they are. The Group of Experts also notes that it is complex and difficult to successfully challenge red notices.

“I had to obtain financial support from my family to hire a solicitor to approach INTERPOL and make them see ... that I'm persecuted for political motives and that, therefore, the Nicaraguan State was abusing INTERPOL's own rules and using INTERPOL as an instrument of political persecution.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

The Nicaraguan authorities have also instrumentalized international Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regulations to continue harassing exiled Nicaraguans. False allegations linking them to money laundering and terrorism financing are often circulated on social media – anonymously or by government supporters – to tarnish the targets' reputation and trigger compliance warnings from financial institutions.

Nicaraguans in exile have faced difficulties – sometimes for years – in opening or maintaining bank accounts in their place of residence. Several of them reported they had been prevented from opening bank accounts with certain banking institutions in Costa Rica and the USA. Other Nicaraguans saw their bank accounts unilaterally closed or frozen, including immediately following the deprivation of their nationality. The victims were not often given clear motives for the banks’ decisions. One person was specifically told that the bank refused to open a bank account because they were a politically exposed person (PEP).⁵¹ Others were told the closing of their accounts was due to the risk they represented for the financial institution, the alerts raised by their profile or that there were following “orders from above”. One victim also faced cumbersome administrative procedures to change money with several international currency exchange institutions, because – they were told – they were a PEP.

The Group of Experts notes that spreading misinformation triggering the application of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) measures against the persons concerned constitutes a form of transnational financial repression. This likely happened in many of the cases identified. Such actions add to the constant persecution to which many Nicaraguan opponents continue to be subjected in third countries.

By weaponizing tools intended for legitimate international cooperation to target exiled critics and dissidents, the State of Nicaragua has undermined the integrity of global law enforcement and protection systems. As a result, it has placed Nicaraguans abroad, especially – but not only – asylum seekers, at risk of arbitrary detention and politically motivated prosecution.

III. Proxy punishment of in-country relatives and associates

The Nicaraguan authorities have regularly targeted the in-country relatives and associates of exiled real or perceived opponents as a means of punishing and silencing them. This form of collective punishment designed to create a widespread chilling effect has become more frequent as an ever-growing number of dissidents have been forced into exile or expelled since 2018. Family members – including minor children, partners and former partners –, friends and acquaintances have been subjected to surveillance, harassment, threats, arbitrary detention, confiscations of properties and other assets, and prohibitions to leave the country, by virtue of mere association. Such measures often started or intensified after exiled opponents made public declarations or participated in public activities deemed critical of the Government.

The Group of Experts has documented a pattern of police surveillance and harassment of opponents’ relatives which has intensified since 2021. Police and military intelligence officers monitored victims’ homes and activities, regularly visiting to

“A friend of mine [in Nicaragua] received a message and called me immediately because he was frightened. He knows where I live [abroad] and has visited me. He says he received a message offering him money to give out my address.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

⁵¹ According to the Financial Action Task Force, a politically exposed person (PEP) is an individual who is or has been entrusted with a prominent function/position that can be abused for the purpose of laundering illicit funds or other predicate offences such as corruption or bribery. Family members or close associates may also be considered politically exposed persons (see: <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Fatfrecommendations/Peps-r12-r22.html>).

interrogate and threaten them, photographing and fingerprinting them, and, in some cases, bringing them – even children – to police stations for questioning. Victims were asked about their activities, their relatives’ whereabouts abroad and if they had received international money transfers. Many were forced to report their movements and contacts via phone or social media, sometimes in real time, including by sharing photographs or geolocation. Members of pro-government armed groups also harassed victims at home, while others received anonymous threats on their phones and offers of money in exchange for the location of their relatives.

Some relatives who had been victims of police surveillance and harassment were later expelled from the country. Others felt forced to leave the country owing to the fear caused by the harassment and threats.

Relatives were also arbitrarily arrested, including children, spouses, and in-laws, with authorities frequently withholding information on their fate and whereabouts during initial detention. The Group has documented cases where multiple members of the same family were arrested simultaneously, including an 81-year-old man. In one instance, police arrested the spouse, daughter, and son-in-law of an opponent, later sentencing them to several years in prison for allegedly conspiring to undermine national integrity and spreading false information. They were expelled from the country and deprived of their nationality in February 2023. In another case, the caretaker of an opponent’s home was arrested.

The Government has also frequently confiscated the properties and other assets belonging to family members of exiled real or perceived opponents. In one case in March 2023, personnel of the Attorney General’s Office accompanied by police officers took possession of the house of the children of an exiled Nicaraguan without presenting a legal warrant and confiscated it. They did not allow the house’s residents to take any of their personal belongings. In another example, the authorities not only confiscated the dissidents’ apartment, but also other apartments in the building.

Relatives’ pensions were also confiscated, including in the case of a person with disabilities whose pension was their sole income. The Group of Experts also identified cases in which relatives of exiled opponents were dismissed from their jobs and could not find new employment because of their family connection.

The authorities have also unlawfully altered civil records. In some cases, the birth certificates of minor children of exiled opponents were altered to remove the surname of the dissident parent, particularly when that parent had been deprived of nationality. Such actions seriously impair the victims’ ability to establish filiation and constitute a violation of several human rights, notably the child’s right to preserve his or her identity, name and family relations, enshrined in article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They are particularly concerning when they affect a child whose two parents are considered opponents or who only has one parent. In some cases, the child’s remaining parent feels compelled to

“My wife went to the civil registry office [to get my son’s birth certificate]. When they gave her the birth certificate, my last name was not on it. He is my son, but only my wife’s last name appears on it.”

Victim interviewed by the Group

request the removal of the dissident parent's name to secure a passport for the child.

The Directorate General for Migration and Alien Affairs has systematically obstructed or denied the issuance or renewal of passports of family members, including children under 18 years of age, of exiled real or perceived opponents, especially the relatives of those deprived of their Nicaraguan nationality. The authorities have also frequently obstructed or denied the issuance of travel authorizations for the minor children of dissidents. Such measures not only violate the right to freedom of movement of the victims but also prevent family reunification, particularly affecting the mental and emotional health of children. The Directorate has also directly prohibited opponents' relatives from leaving Nicaragua in violation of their right to freedom of movement.

Individuals attempting to process passports and/or travel authorizations were sometimes subjected to verbal abuse, surveillance, or arbitrary detention of a few hours. Sometimes migration personnel confiscated documents the victims had brought with their applications. In one case, the remaining parent felt they had no choice but to request the termination of the parental rights of the exiled parent, so that their child could leave the country legally.

The wide range of measures used to target the relatives of dissidents – including children – constitutes serious violations of human rights and forms part of a broader pattern of transnational human rights violations. These actions have forced many exiled Nicaraguans to limit their public profiles, practise self-censorship, reduce participation in public life, or distance themselves from family members, sometimes even denying kinship ties, to protect them. Many have partially or completely ceased communication with relatives in Nicaragua for fear that calls or messages would be intercepted, leading in some cases to family divisions. The measures have caused profound suffering among victims in Nicaragua and relatives in exile, including intense feelings of guilt, and have had particularly severe effects on the mental and emotional health of children. By targeting opponents' most vulnerable loved ones, the State has demonstrated its willingness to use any means to suppress dissent.

“My family has become divided. And they even blame me for the problems they are facing back in Nicaragua. [They told me]: ‘This is your fault for talking, and that’s why they are persecuting us.’”

Victim interviewed by the Group

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

Human rights violations by the Nicaraguan State against exiled individuals deemed opponents and their relatives have profound and far-reaching repercussions. The patterns documented by the Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua reveal a clear objective: the total control of the population, both within Nicaragua and in exile. Victims are systematically deprived of their legal identity, livelihoods and social connections, often resulting in their “civil death” and forcing them into poverty. Through proxy punishment of in-country relatives, including children and older persons, the State is instilling pervasive fear, maximizing psychological pressure and compelling self-censorship among exiles. Taken together, some of these violations form consistent patterns

previously identified as constituting, *prima facie*, crimes against humanity, including persecution on political grounds.

The Nicaraguan State has developed an intricate and adaptive strategy to suppress dissent, evolving from an initial violent and disproportionate crackdown on widespread legitimate protests to highly targeted tactics with global reach. This strategy encompasses arbitrary deprivations of nationality, forced expulsions and entry bans, confiscations of property, denials of passports, alterations or deletions of civil records, and pervasive surveillance. It was formalized through constitutional and legislative reforms that erode fundamental rights and consolidate unlimited power in the presidency. The breadth of these violations – legal, economic, physical and digital – shows that the State is actively extending its control beyond its borders. This poses serious challenges not only for affected individuals but also for the States concerned and the international community at large.

Nicaraguans in exile find themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation, marked by multiple, overlapping risks. Arbitrary deprivation of nationality, entry ban and the denial of passports leave many stateless or in a condition of *de facto* statelessness, deprived of legal identity and State protection. Confiscation of property and other assets, such as freezing of bank accounts and denial of pensions, drive many into destitution or “economic death”, undermining their ability to sustain themselves or their families in exile. Entry ban and other restrictions on freedom of movement cause prolonged family separation, with grave emotional and economic effects, particularly for children and older relatives left behind. The informal and often undocumented nature of these violations, coupled with the instrumentalization of the Nicaraguan judiciary, denies victims any effective legal or administrative remedies. High-profile exiled opponents face the risk of targeted assaults on foreign soil, demonstrating that no location is entirely safe from the reach of the Nicaraguan State.

Proxy punishment of in-country relatives – or “violations by association” – whereby relatives and associates of perceived opponents are victimized solely because of their family ties or connections, are also of serious concern. This deliberate targeting of vulnerable family members, including minor children and older persons, to exert pressure on exiled real or perceived opponents takes a particularly severe psychological toll on victims and their families, contributing to widespread fear and self-censorship that stifle dissent both in Nicaragua and in exile.

The pervasive nature and severe consequences of the violations examined in the present document underscore the urgent need for enhanced protection of Nicaraguans in exile which requires the investment of significant resources and close coordination among institutions and host countries. The Group’s findings highlight that the State’s tactics are designed to neutralize any form of opposition in the long term, making international community action imperative. The hundreds of victims recorded by the Group represent only a fraction of the true number of victims of transnational violations. The escalating and systematic nature of these violations demands a robust and coordinated international response to ensure the safety and rights of Nicaraguans in exile and to prevent the Nicaraguan State from extending its reach globally.

The Government of Nicaragua has shown a calculated approach to international engagement, abusing international cooperation mechanisms – such as INTERPOL red notices, extradition

requests and AML compliance – to perpetrate violations while strategically disengaging from international organizations. In an unprecedented move in the history of the United Nations, between February and June 2025, Nicaragua has announced its withdrawal from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as the Human Rights Council.

This dual strategy of abusing international mechanisms while concurrently withdrawing from international organizations reinforces Co-Presidents Ortega and Murillo's pursuit of impunity. They not only aim to evade international scrutiny, accountability and the obligations that membership entails, but they also simultaneously signal a clear intent to undermine the very mechanisms designed for international cooperation and human rights protection.

The Group already welcomed the generous offers of citizenship extended by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Spain to Nicaraguans deprived of their nationality, as well as the assistance of many countries in the resettlement and integration of exiled Nicaraguans, in particular Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain.⁵²

B. Recommendations

The Group encourages States to continue and strengthen such efforts. Transnational human rights violations targeting Nicaraguan exiles will continue until the international community brings them to an end. The Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua urges the Human Rights Council and the international community to remain vigilant and act decisively to address the human rights violations described in the present document as well as in previous reports. In keeping with OHCHR's brief on transnational repression, the international community should:

- **Implement comprehensive measures to protect Nicaraguans in exile**, in particular those who have been deprived of their nationality, expelled, denied re-entry or denied access to a passport or other official documentation, including by:
 - Ensuring fair refugee status determinations and asylum processes, applying the broader criteria of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.
 - Enabling expedited pathways to asylum, refuge or naturalisation for Nicaraguans arbitrarily deprived of nationality or persecuted in exile, in line with the Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol, and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.
 - Establishing, where appropriate, reception and protection programmes for Nicaraguans in exile, with particular attention to older persons, families with children, women and others in vulnerable situations.
 - Facilitating continued access to education, including tertiary education, and ensuring recognition of professional qualifications to enable Nicaraguans' social and labour integration.
 - Closely monitoring the situation of persons subjected to the violations detailed in the present document to provide timely and tailored assistance and protection.

⁵² [A/HRC/58/26](#), para. 112.

- **Provide the protection afforded to *de jure* stateless persons**, enshrined in the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961, to Nicaraguans in exile who are denied renewal of their passport or whose civil records have been erased, and do not hold another nationality.
- **Ensure that extradition requests made by Nicaragua are processed through transparent and efficient procedures**, in full compliance with international human rights and refugee law safeguards, including the absolute prohibition of refoulement and guarantees of due process and fair trial.
- **Strengthen support to Nicaraguan civil society**, by increasing financial and technical assistance to Nicaraguan civil society organizations and independent media and journalists to ensure continued documentation of in-country and transnational human rights violations.
- **Hold the State of Nicaragua accountable under international law**, by pursuing accountability measures before the International Court of Justice for violations of international obligations, particularly under the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961 and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Nicaragua's large-scale use of the arbitrary deprivation of nationality as a mechanism of targeted political repression is a *prima facie* violation of the Convention of 1961, evidenced by the Constitution, the laws and the judicial decrees themselves – and the States parties to the Convention have an evident response.
- **Extend legal actions and targeted sanctions** against the individuals, institutions and entities identified in the Group's reports as responsible for human rights violations and crimes against humanity.
- **Conduct prompt, thorough, impartial and effective investigations** into all reported threats, surveillance, harassment, attacks and other prohibited activities, including online, targeting Nicaraguans under their jurisdiction, and **ensure the individual accountability of perpetrators**, whether they are Nicaraguan State agents or non-State proxies.
- **Enhance INTERPOL vetting**, by ensuring additional and rigorous scrutiny of INTERPOL red notices and diffusions to prevent their misuse for political persecution.
- **Promote the adoption of a human rights-informed approach to Nicaragua by financial institutions and AML/CFT compliance service providers**, providing a critical layer of individual protection against misuse and fortifying the integrity of the AML/CFT architecture against subversion by the State of Nicaragua.
- **Champion corporate responsibility** by requesting technology companies and other businesses whose products or services may be used by the State of Nicaragua to commit human rights violations to conduct, with due diligence, thorough human rights evaluations.

- **Factor Nicaragua's transnational human rights violations** into bilateral security agreements, extradition treaties, foreign aid and information-sharing practices.
- **Strengthen cooperation and information exchange** regarding transnational human rights violations tactics employed by the Nicaraguan State to facilitate coordinated responses.

Annex I – Overview of transnational human rights violations

The following table provides an overview of the transnational human rights violations employed by the Nicaraguan State against real or perceived Nicaraguan opponents in exile and their relatives, as well as the crimes against humanity which they *prima facie* constitute, as documented by the Group of Experts.

Methods	Summary of modus operandi	Main human rights violations	Related crime(s) against humanity
Arbitrary deprivation of nationality	Legislative changes leading to loss of nationality for “traitors to the homeland”; unfair trials based on fabricated cases; loss of nationality without notification through erasure of civil records.	Rights to a nationality, legal personality, fair trial, political participation, freedom of movement, and an effective remedy.	Persecution
Prohibition of entry into one’s own country	Informal entry bans through notification to transport companies; prohibition of entry by officials directly at borders; no official documentation and no remedy; use of surveillance and intelligence structure to identify targets.	Rights to freedom of movement (especially to enter one’s own country), family life, and an effective remedy.	Persecution
Refusal to issue or renew passports and erasure of official records	Refusal or unjustified delays to issue or renew passports without explanation; use of surveillance and intelligence structure to identify targets; deletion/alteration of birth and marriage certificates without notification; denial, revocation or deletion of academic titles/records or professional titles.	Rights to legal identity, freedom of movement, family life, preserve identity (children), non-discrimination, education, work, and an effective remedy.	Persecution
Confiscation of property and other assets (including pensions)	Implementation of judicial orders following unfair trials based on fabricated cases; confiscation without known legal proceedings; occupation of properties; confiscation of pensions justified on absence of proof of life; no effective remedy.	Rights to property, social security, non-discrimination, and an effective remedy.	Persecution
Surveillance, threats and harassment	Digital surveillance, threats, harassment and smear campaigns orchestrated by a multi-layered intelligence architecture involving the military, the police, the foreign service and non-State actors, including “troll farms” and bot networks; Surveillance, harassment and threats by undercover officials and informants.	Rights to privacy, honour and reputation, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and security of the person.	Persecution
Physical violence	Targeted assaults with firearms by one or more unidentified individuals which display a high level of organization; death threats and warnings prior to the attacks.	Rights to life and physical integrity.*	Murder* Persecution*

Abuse of international cooperation and control mechanisms	False reports abusing INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database and red notices; politically motivated extradition requests; false allegations to instrumentalize international Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) regulations.	Rights to freedom of movement, asylum (including fair processing), and property.	Persecution
Proxy punishment of in-country relatives and associates	Surveillance, harassment and threats by police, military and pro-government armed groups; arbitrary detention; confiscation of properties, assets and pensions; dismissals; alteration of civil records; denial of issuance or renewal of passports and prohibitions to leave the country.	Rights to privacy, family life, security of the person, fair trial, property, social security, preserve identity (children), freedom of movement, work, and non-discrimination.	Imprisonment Persecution

* Violations of the rights to physical integrity and life are not confirmed as the cases reported to the Group of Experts are still under investigation by the competent authorities. Should the responsibility of the State of Nicaragua be determined, then it would give rise to violations of the rights to physical integrity and life, which constitute *prima facie* the crimes against humanity of persecution and murder, respectively.

Annex II – Typology of transnational human rights violations

		Summary description
Key features	Cross-border violations	Acts conducted or directed by the State of Nicaragua, or its proxy, against Nicaraguans in exile.
	Intent	To deter, silence or punish dissent, criticism, or human rights advocacy expressed from abroad; to suppress political opposition abroad and control the diaspora.
Methods	Abuse of legislation/jurisdiction	Arbitrary deprivation of nationality; entry ban; refusal of passports; refusal/erasure of official records; confiscation of property, pensions and other assets.
	Surveillance, threats and harassment, including digital	Pervasive and complex intelligence and surveillance structure (State institutions, FSLN, informants); troll farms for disinformation, cyber-attacks, doxing, smear campaigns, hacking, phishing.
	Physical violence	Assaults and murders of individuals in exile.*
	Abuse of international cooperation and control mechanisms	Misuse of INTERPOL red notices/SLTD database; politically motivated extradition requests; abuse of AML/CFT frameworks (misinformation for financial exclusion).
	Coercion through relatives or associates (proxy punishment)	Targeting in-country relatives (surveillance, threats, harassment, arbitrary detentions, passport denial, civil records alteration, dismissals) to pressure Nicaraguans in exile.
Actors	State actors	Government, including migration authorities, police, intelligence services (police and military), and TELCOR; National Assembly; judiciary; public prosecution office; attorney general's office; the Nicaraguan Social Security Institute (INSS).
	Non-State actors	Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), including Sandinista Youth 19 July; pro-government armed groups; pro-government media; troll farms.
Objectives	Consolidation of power	Extend State control beyond borders; suppress all dissenting voices; strengthen absolute control; ensure no challenge to State human rights violations policy.
	Evasion of accountability/impunity	Strategic withdrawal from international organizations; subversion of international cooperation mechanisms.
Targets	Exiled real or perceived opponents	Political opponents; members of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations; former Sandinistas; former Contras members; former Government officials; journalists and media professionals; human rights defenders; Indigenous, Afrodescendant and <i>campesino</i> leaders; feminists; student leaders; academics; lawyers; businesspeople.
	Relatives and associates	In-country relatives and close associates, including children and older persons; relatives in exile.
Consequences	Negative impacts on physical and mental health	Constant fear, anguish, guilt; physical and emotional toll; self-protection measures; isolation; loss of identity and family ties.
	Loss of citizen's rights (“civil death”)	Loss of legal identity; loss of civil rights; <i>de facto</i> statelessness; obstacles to migration status regularization, including asylum processes; obstacles

		in accessing education, work, social security and other services.
	Economic dispossession (“economic death”)	Loss of livelihood, including income, pension, property and other assets; poverty; difficulties in opening bank accounts.
	Inhibition of legitimate rights (“chilling effect”), including beyond direct targets	Self-censorship including online; discouragement of public participation and association; fear of extradition; loss of family ties.
	Disproportionate impact on vulnerable persons	Disproportionate impact on children, older persons, persons with disabilities.
	Undermining of rule of law	Human rights violations against individuals outside of jurisdiction; abuse of international cooperation and control mechanisms.

* Assaults and murders are not confirmed as the cases reported to the Group of Experts are still under investigation by the competent authorities. Should the responsibility of the State of Nicaragua be determined, then it would give rise to violations of the rights to physical integrity and life, among others.