

Ambassador Mr. Carlos Jose Arguello Gomez

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding recent reports of harsh and unjust treatment of clergy and members of the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua by the government. On 19th of August 2022 Bishop Ronaldo Álvarez was unjustly arrested and put in house arrest. Alongside him, seven other men were arrested and put in jail. Their names are, Father Ramiro Tijerino, Father Sadiel Egarrios, Father Raul Gonzalez, Father Jose Lois Diaz, Darvin Leiva and Melkin Sequeira, and Sergio Cardenas.

In addition, I have been informed that police ordered the closure of at least seven radio stations operated by the Catholic Church. While seizing broadcasting equipment from Radio Católica, police reportedly fired shots and used tear gas towards parishioners who were protesting the unjust actions.

Legal protection, as well as religious freedom for all is established in the Nicaraguan constitution, as of article 27 and 29. Both constitutional rights have been infringed upon, looking at what has happened to the Catholic Church in recent months.

Firmly believing that the highest priority of the Nicaraguan government is to ensure the rights and safety of its citizens, regardless of religious affiliation, or personal and political views, I humbly petition your intervention to ensure:

- The immediate and unconditional release of Bishop Ronaldo Álvarez, Father Ramiro Tijerino, Father Sadiel Egarrios, Father Raúl Gonzalez, Father José Lois Díaz, Darvin Leiva, Melkin Sequeira and Sergio Cardenas;
- the Church be given their broadcasting rights, and media equipment back.
- church facilities are not occupied by police forces and congregations are able to gather peacefully without fear of interruption or forceful intervention.

Sincerely,