

Nicaragua: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the deteriorating political situation



The EU firmly condemns the actions of the Nicaraguan authorities against opposition parties, media, journalists and other media workers, human rights defenders and civil society, including the systematic detention and arrest of potential presidential candidates and opposition leaders. The political use of the judicial system, the exclusion of candidates from the elections and the arbitrary delisting of opposition parties are contrary to basic democratic principles and constitute a serious violation of the rights of the Nicaraguan people under the Nicaraguan Constitution and under International Law. These actions further undermine the credibility of an electoral process, already hampered by an electoral reform which fell short of the recommendations of the OAS and EU Electoral Observation Missions, and which was not the result of the dialogue between the government and the opposition. The EU also urges the Nicaraguan authorities to repeal restrictive laws, including the law on the regulation of foreign agents.

The EU calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the potential presidential candidates Cristiana Chamorro, Arturo Cruz, Félix Maradiaga and Juan Sebastián Chamorro, opposition leaders José Adán Aguerri, José Pallais and Violeta Granera and all other political prisoners, as well as ensuring the respect for their human rights and civil and political rights. Only the Nicaraguan people have the right to choose their representatives through a credible, inclusive and transparent electoral process, without interference from the authorities.

The EU reiterates its call for the restoration of inclusive dialogue and democracy as the only way out of the political, economic and social crisis in Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan authorities must put an end to the crackdown on political opponents, independent media, civil society and human rights defenders, and must fully guarantee the respect of human rights and civil and political rights in the country. International human rights bodies must be authorised to return to Nicaragua, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

The EU will continue to monitor the situation in Nicaragua and stands ready to use all instruments, including additional restrictive measures, and will work with the international community to defend dialogue and democracy as an essential step to restore trust in public institutions and to promote the respect of the rule of law and human rights in Nicaragua. The EU calls on the Nicaraguan government to abide by its own commitments, by Nicaragua's Constitution and by international human rights laws and standards.