

Free Expression Advocacy Organizations call on the UN Human Rights Council to Ensure the Protection and Respect of Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom in Nicaragua.

- On November 13, in Geneva, Switzerland, the review and adoption of the recommendations issued to the State of Nicaragua as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) will take place.

The undersigned organizations and networks call on the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to formulate recommendations, [as part of Nicaragua's fourth UPR cycle](#), to ensure the protection and respect of freedom of expression and press freedom in the country.

They urge the UNHRC to consider the serious complaints [raised](#) by civil society organizations as part of the UPR proceedings, as well as the reports presented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Since 2018, Nicaragua has been facing a severe human rights crisis, [intensified following citizen protests that triggered unprecedented state repression. Such repression has affected activists, artists, journalists, students, clergy, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations](#), all of whom have been persecuted and criminalized for questioning the official narrative. Although the [State of Nicaragua asserted in its National Report](#), submitted in September 2024, that there have been no violations of freedom of expression during the evaluation period (2019-2023), reports from civil society and international bodies, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the UNHRC itself, reveal a different reality. Investigations, concrete data, and testimonies show an almost complete shutdown of civic space and the systematic persecution of critical voices. Also, until September 2024, FLED had counted at least 278 exiled journalists.

According to [information collected by civil society organizations](#), from 2019 to 2023, the most common attacks against journalists and media workers included arbitrary detentions, espionage, judicial harassment, kidnappings, gender-based violence, torture, and surveillance of family members. Additionally, forced exile, expulsion, and the stripping of nationality have become common repressive practices, increasing the vulnerability of journalists and media workers by depriving them of civil, social, economic, political, and cultural rights—a situation that demonstrates the [ongoing violation of human rights](#).

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), between 2018 and 2023, around 440,260 people were forcibly displaced (6.5% of the population). At least 317 individuals were stripped of their nationality and denationalized for the crime of treason¹. Repressive strategies against

¹ PCIN, FLED, PEN Nicaragua en el exilio, AMARC-ALC, IFEX- ALC, ARTICLE 19 México y Centroamérica, ARC, PEN America, CPJ, SIP, PEN International; *Informe sobre la Situación de la Libertad de Expresión en Nicaragua*, August 2024. Link: <https://articulo19.org/nicaragua-examen-periodico-universal-epu-2024/>

freedom of expression and press freedom have diversified to such an extent that, as of August 2024, approximately [5,664 forced closures](#) of media outlets, national and international NGOs, religious organizations, cultural associations, and others have been recorded. This data reveals a prohibition on expressing dissent in any form.

The Nicaraguan State has employed various repressive state mechanisms, including the strengthening of its [restrictive and punitive legal framework](#), accompanied by judicial processes applied in a discretionary manner and without clear criteria. In this context, the full development of a democratic society is hindered, as freedom of expression and press freedom are essential conditions for its realization.

The undersigned organizations call on the State of Nicaragua to immediately cease the persecution, criminalization, and harassment of dissenting voices, as it is obligated to respect, protect, and guarantee human rights, specifically the rights to freedom of expression, press, and assembly.

We also urge the UNHRC to continue supporting dissenting voices and to adopt measures to protect them. To this end, it is essential to implement recommendations that prevent, protect against, and prosecute violations of freedom of expression.

Signatories,

AMARC-ALC

Artículo 19 oficina México y Centroamérica

Artist at Risk

Comité para la protección de periodistas (CPJ)

Fundación por la Libertad de Expresión y Democracia (FLED)

IFEX-ALC

PCIN

PEN International

Pen Nicaragua

Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa (SIP)



CPJ



ifex-ALC ALIANZA DE AMÉRICA
LATINA Y EL CARIBE

PCIN
Por la libertad de expresión

pen
INTERNATIONAL



pen Nicaragua
INTERNATIONAL
LITERATURA - LIBERTAD DE EXPRESION