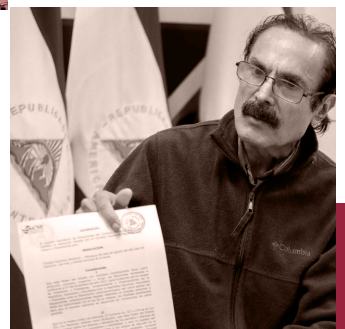
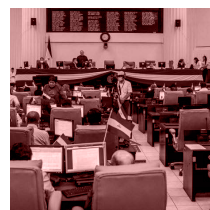
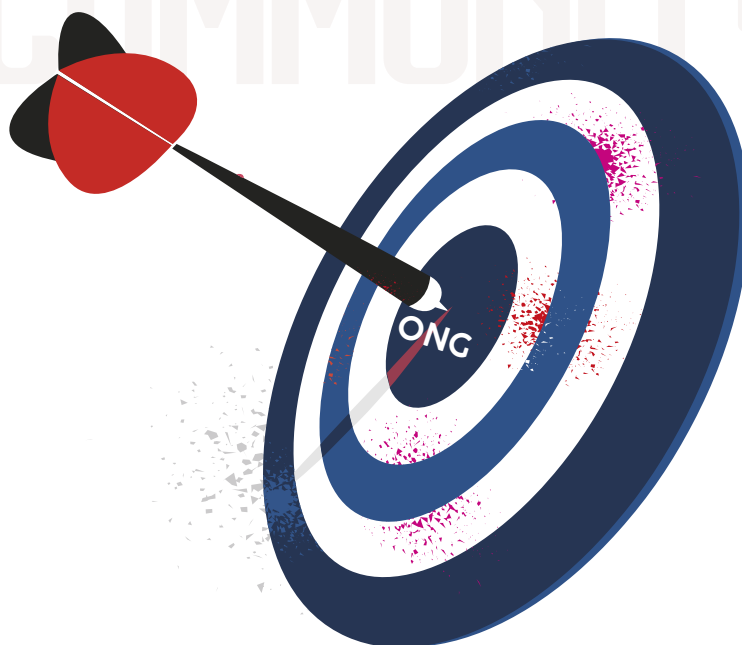


**REPORT ON THE
CANCELLATION OF LEGAL
STATUS OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS
(APRIL 2023)**



CONTENT

Presentation	2
Executive Summary	5
Human rights violations in Nicaragua 2023	7
Legislation against civil society	8
Reasons given for eliminating organizations	13
Impact of the closure of organizations	17
Next steps to continue contributing	23
Conclusions	26
Recommendations	27



PRESENTATION

As of November 7, 2021 -the day on which voting took place in an electoral process questioned by national and international organizations for lacking competence, impartial electoral authorities, observation and other guarantees for transparency and respect for the political rights of Nicaraguans- a total of 62 organizations (including national NGOs, international cooperation agencies and political parties) had lost their legal status and their ability to operate legally in Nicaragua.

Once a new period of government for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) was assured, on December 13, 2021, a new stage of repression against national and international non-governmental organizations (including universities) began, stripping 12 of their legal status in December 2021 and 1,277 in 2022, counted up to August 15 of that year.



The count carried out by the digital media [Confidencial](#) indicates that as of March 31, 2023, 3,321 organizations have been closed. Of that total, "half a hundred have been confiscated, with a total of 87 properties verified by the journalistic alliance formed for this investigation. Other dozens of properties have also been seized

from the media, businessmen and representatives of the private sector, diplomatic headquarters, and "denationalized" citizens by Ortega's orders, adding up to more than a hundred and a half usurped properties, in a plot in which a dozen public institutions have participated", states the newspaper.

Thus, the social, economic and political situation in Nicaragua continues to worsen. The Fundación del Río, quoted by [Confidencial](#), "calculates economic losses of more than 250 million dollars and some 3.5 million citizens affected" as a consequence of these closures.



2023, who "were banished and stripped of their nationality through an illegal "deportation" sentence and a reform to the Political Constitution that lacks legal standing," according to the report, adding that "the mechanism registers a total of 1,310 people who have been recognized as political prisoners between October 2018 and February 2023 through the monthly lists. Of these, at least 72 have been imprisoned more than once for political persecution."

The Nicaraguan Observatory against Torture, promoted by the Human Rights Collective Nicaragua Never Again, documented between April 2018 and March 2022 some 138 cases of torture, cruel and inhuman treatment against these people. Some of the cases include physical and mental torture, poor food, lack of access to drinking water, medicines and medical care, confinement in punishment cells with poor ventilation, heat and no light, among others.

In addition, the treatment of their family members includes waiting for long hours for visits, verbal aggression, threats, etc.

The siege, threats and even aggressions and imprisonment of those who demand the release of political prisoners, who continue to demand justice, or who have suffered human rights violations, continue to be the object of concern of national and international organizations.

The [March 2023 Report](#) of the Mechanism for the Recognition of Political Prisoners documents a total of 36 political prisoners, of which 26 were imprisoned from April 2018 to date and another 10 before the events of April 2018.

This despite the release of 222 political prisoners on February 9,



NOTA DE PRENSA

- Se han registrado cuatro (4) excarcelaciones de personas presas políticas durante el mes de marzo. Paralelamente, se agregan a lista tres (3) personas capturadas en años anteriores para un total de 36 personas presas políticas a la fecha.
- Durante marzo de 2023 se continuó registrando el patrón de detenciones arbitrarias contra miembros de la Iglesia Católica. Continúa también la práctica violatoria de DDHH de desterrar a las personas detenidas por motivos políticos.
- Cinco (5) personas del grupo de 26 presos políticos de abril a la fecha y nueve (9) de los 10 presos políticos previo al contexto se encuentran en celdas de reclusión diferenciada en condiciones de mayor aislamiento, precariedad de las celdas y mayor vulnerabilidad ante malos tratos y torturas.
- De las 1310 personas reconocidas como presas políticas desde abril 2018 (ver informe del Mecanismo del mes de febrero), 139 han sido mujeres quienes han sido víctimas de violencia de género. Así como también las familiares mujeres de presos y presas políticas han sufrido algún tipo de violaciones a sus derechos.
- El Grupo de Expertos en Derechos Humanos para Nicaragua investigó la situación de personas presas políticas y afirma que las detenciones y judicializaciones han sido usadas de forma "sistemática y generalizada" como parte de una política del Estado que incluyó "la adopción de legislación penal contraria a los estándares internacionales de derechos humanos.

Meanwhile, independent journalism continues to suffer censorship, intimidation, aggression, stigmatization, harassment campaigns, arbitrary arrests and death threats.

In this second report of the 2022 Human Rights Observatory (ODH) we will systematize the cancellation of legal status of various organizations from November 2018 to June 30, 2022, emphasizing the impact this has for the vulnerable populations they served, as well as explaining the reasons given by the state institutions in charge of this work and how the process of closing these organized groups has been





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3,321 Nicaraguan, international organizations, political parties and universities have been stripped of their legal status between November 29, 2018 and April 10, 2023.

- For organized civil society and national and international human rights organizations, it has been very difficult to verify the lists of CSOs that have been closed by the different institutions of the Nicaraguan State, because the information is not public.

- Women, children, youth, the elderly, different ethnic groups and LGBTIQ+ communities, as well as those living in poverty have been deprived of essential supports to improve their quality of life.

- The State of Nicaragua implemented the Law for the Regulation of Foreign Agents to control international cooperation funds and criminalize certain practices with which the government does not agree, because it fears that they will be the object of citizen uprisings against it. Non-compliance with the provisions of this law has been mentioned as one of the reasons for the cancellation of the legal status of organizations, however, the most commonly used have been alleged non-compliance with the "Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities or Law 147; the Organic Law of the Legislative Power of the Republic of Nicaragua or Law 606, and the Law against Money Laundering, Financing of Terrorism and Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction or Law 977".

- The main reason given by the pro-government deputies for the cancellation of legal entities is that "they have failed to report the financial statements according to the fiscal periods, with detailed breakdowns, income, expenses, trial balance, details of donations, origin, provenance and final beneficiary".

- Some of the affected organizations have publicly stated that the reasons for the cancellation of their legal status are unfounded, since the Ministry of the Interior has been an instrument to promote their

disappearance by not receiving the documentation requested to verify their financial situation or the updating of their boards of directors; in addition to demanding new requirements each time they approached the institution to resolve their situation, applying discretionary fines for not completing requirements that are not explicit in the legislation and not providing them with their certificates of compliance.

- Education, health, employment, culture, food and the full exercise of citizen rights and freedoms were the main areas of work of the organizations that were cancelled, in different geographical areas of the country, especially in the poorest regions where the implementation of public policies of the State fails to meet the basic needs of the population. In other words, the local organizations were responsible for complementing (and in some cases almost exclusively carrying out) the functions of the same State that has prohibited them from continuing their work.

- With the cancellation of the legal status of CENIDH, the CPDH and the ANPDH, Nicaragua was left without independent organizations that are referents in the compilation and dissemination of denunciations of human rights violations, as well as the accompaniment of victims. Nevertheless, these organizations have continued to operate from exile and under other conditions, albeit with limitations.

- Some organizations that lost their legal status have publicly stated that they will continue their operations to the best of their ability, adapting to their situation and changing their work plans.





HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN NICARAGUA 2023

The ODH April 2023 report focuses on the impact of the closure of national and international non-governmental organizations, universities and political parties that has been promoted by the Ministry of the Interior and the National Assembly through the cancellation of the legal status of each one.

As of April 10, 2023, the number of closed organizations amounts to 3,321. For this purpose, a review has been made of information published in official and independent media, websites of state institutions and in the Official Gazette (Gaceta Diario Oficial).

- In 2018, the legal status of 9 organizations was cancelled.
- In 2019 another 3 organizations.
- In 2020 there were 2 organizations.
- In 2021, another 60 organizations.
- In 2022 a total of 1,277 organizations as of August 15.
- Between August 16, 2022 and April 10, 2023, 1,970 organizations have been closed.

Women, children, youth, the elderly, different ethnic groups and LGBTIQ+ communities, as well as those living in poverty have been deprived of essential supports to improve their quality of life.

Additionally, we point out that this situation is not over, and by the time you are reading this report the number of organizations eliminated will be higher.

Legislation against civil society

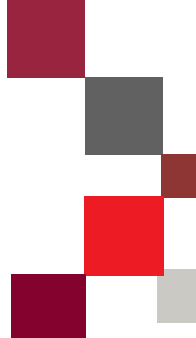
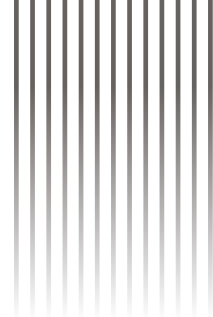
The strategy of control over any organization that is not openly in favor of the State of Nicaragua, its policies and its rulers included a first "wave" of cancellation of legal status of nine NGOs between November 29 and December 13, 2018: the Center for Information and Advisory Services in Health (CISAS), the Institute for Strategic Studies and Public Policy (IEEPP), the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH), the Hagamos Democracia Association (HADEMOS), the Las Segovias Leadership Institute (ILLS), Fundación para la Conservación y el Desarrollo del Sur-Este de Nicaragua (Fundación del Río), Centro de Investigación de la Comunicación (CINCO), Fundación Popol Na para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Municipal (Popol Na) and Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Democracia (IPADE).

Then, the State tried to control international cooperation funds and criminalize the work of NGOs, which the President of the Republic and other public officials accused of being an instrument of citizen uprising against him and a "failed coup d'état attempt". And, finally, they have ended with the disappearance of organizations of various types that are not directly linked to the government apparatus.



LA APLICACIÓN DE LEYES
REPRESIVAS EN NICARAGUA
DESDE 2020

In this regard, the report "[the application of repressive laws in Nicaragua since 2020](#)", prepared by ODH in 2021, explains that the State of Nicaragua approved between September 2020 and February 2021 a total of seven legal instruments (laws, decrees and regulations) to increase control over non-governmental organizations that manage international cooperation funds on issues of democracy, human rights and the like; Also, to punish those who the State considers that they are producing and disseminating "false news", imprisoning opponents for at least ninety days



without trial and even leaving open the possibility that these people could be tried for committing "hate crimes" and receive life imprisonment for it.

1. Presidential Decree No. 24-2020 approving the [National Cybersecurity Strategy 2020-2025](#), approved on September 24, 2020 and published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette, on September 29, 2020.

2. [Law for the Regulation of Foreign Agents](#) (Law 1040), approved on October 15, 2020 and published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette, on October 19. And the [Regulations for the regulation, supervision and sanction of foreign agents](#), approved on January 27, 2021 and published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette, on January 29, 2021.

3. [Special Law on Cybercrime](#) (Law 1042), approved on October 27, 2020 and published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette, on October 30, 2020.

4. [Law for the defense of the rights of the people to independence, sovereignty and self-determination for peace](#) (Law 1055), approved on December 21, 2020 and published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette, on December 22, 2020.

5. [Law amending Article 37 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua](#) (Law 1057), approved on January 18, 2021 and published in La Gaceta, Diario Oficial, on January 19, 2021.

6. [Law amending and adding to Law No. 406, Criminal Procedural Code of the Republic of Nicaragua](#) (Law 1060), approved on February 2, 2021 and published in La Gaceta, Official Gazette, on February 5, 2021.

The Foreign Agents Regulation Law has been the "perfect" tool to generate that organizations decided to close their operations, others tried to register as foreign agents, but their registration was not accepted, and finally the law was applied in cases of cancellation of legal entities.

The [Law](#) establishes, among other provisions, the creation of the Registry of Foreign Agents (Art. 6 of the Law), which is in charge of

the Ministry of the Interior; the obligation of foreign agents to inform the competent authority about any transfer of funds or assets they are going to receive directly or indirectly from the above mentioned entities with headquarters outside the national territory (Art. 9); the presentation of detailed and verifiable reports of expenses, payments, disbursements, contracting and other activities related to the performance of foreign agents (Art. 10); and that foreign agents (natural or juridical persons) must abstain from intervening in internal and external political issues, activities or topics, nor may they finance or promote any type of organization, movement, political party, coalitions or political alliances or associations that develop internal political activities in Nicaragua (Art. 14).

For this reason, organizations such as PEN Nicaragua and the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation publicly announced on February 5, 2021 that they would not submit to this law and would close their operations in the country.

Other organizations decided to continue their operations and register as Foreign Agents with the Ministry of the Interior, such as the Permanent Human Rights Commission (CPDH), and others stated that they would continue to operate only with the support of their members and no longer receive funding from international cooperation, as in the case of Ethics and Transparency.



In any case, all these organizations were stripped of their legal status.

In this regard, national and international human rights organizations agreed that the Foreign Agents Law seeks to criminalize efforts in favor of democracy, freedom of the press and of expression and other rights violated by the Nicaraguan government.

According to the [Consideraciones sobre la Ley No. 1040, Ley de Regulación de Agentes Extranjeros](#) by the Human Rights Collective [Nicaragua Never+](#), a document published on November 12, 2020 the Foreign Agents Law is unconstitutional and in violation of human rights, among other reasons, because:

- The Law has the nature of a condemnatory sentence to the detriment of all those persons who work or receive foreign funds (and are not within the exceptions), assigning them the quality of "foreign agents", a condition that entails as a direct consequence, according to said Law, to suppress the exercise of their political rights (to carry out political activity of any type, violating the equality in political rights, as well as the inhibition of the right to be elected) as if it were a criminal sentence or civil interdiction, generating violations to their human rights.
- With this law, the State of Nicaragua invades the rights of every Nicaraguan who works with foreign funds (and is not



within the exceptions), without providing any legitimate reason for this, other than to generalize the concept of interference in internal affairs, a concept and scope that does not apply to Nicaraguans, given that internal affairs are the sovereign's own, whose addressee, subject of rights and protagonist is every Nicaraguan person, to whom no adjective that qualifies or disqualifies him or her, such as the unconstitutional label of "foreign agent", is applicable. However, if it were the unusual case, in order to be used as a reason to deprive of these rights, it should be proven in the respective due legal process; reiterating on our part that the law from its title, content and essence is unconstitutional.

- This Law is drafted in a contradictory, ambiguous and bad faith manner (the latter, because it distorts and manipulates legal concepts to make its anti-juridical purposes appear legitimate). Furthermore, it contravenes the principles of constitutionality, conventionality, legal certainty, legality, legitimacy, reserve of law, and especially it is contrary to the democratic principle, which is indispensable for the existence of the Rule of Law. The violation of this principle, in the way this law does, severely restricts the formation of public opinion, political and social equity, and political pluralism; in a totally undemocratic and unlawful governmental position.

However, this mechanism of control over the organizations was apparently not effective in silencing many civilian organizations, as some did not register as foreign agents, others changed their operating mechanisms and others decided to close their operations.

On August 11, 2022, the National Assembly approved an amendment to Law 1115 (General Law of Regulation and Control of Non-Profit Organizations), Law 522 (General Law of Sports, Physical Education and Physical Recreation) and repealed Law 849 (General Law of Chambers, Federations and Confederations of Business Associations), to pass the regulation of



pass the regulation of

NGOs directly to the Ministry of the Interior, thus allowing said entity to close organizations without having to go through the approval of the National Assembly.

This has prevented a more effective and specific follow-up of the list of organizations closed since then, since the respective information is not public and is handled with total discretion.

Reasons given for eliminating organizations

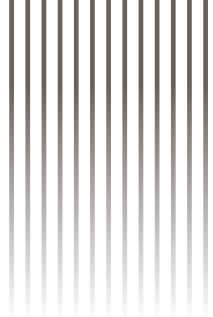

The aforementioned repressive laws did not exist when the first nine organizations lost their legal status in 2018.

These entities were accused of "altering public order and carrying out actions to destabilize the country", for "being used for the commission of crimes by managing, receiving, channeling and facilitating funds for the commission of terrorist acts for the training of groups of persons who subsequently participated in destabilizing actions in the country", and because "they denaturalized their legal personality by not acting in accordance with the purposes and objectives for which they were constituted as a non-profit organization".

And a non-compliance with the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities (Law 147) was named. This can be seen, for example, in the press release [published](#) on December 12, 2018 on the website of the National Assembly.

Then, other tools of the Nicaraguan legal framework began to be cited to cancel the legal status of NGOs and disqualify them from exercising their functions in the country.






This is identified in the resolutions and reasons presented to the National Assembly by the Ministry of the Interior from 2019 to date, where it is cited that the affected organizations are not only in breach of Law 147, but also "the Organic Law of the Legislative Branch of the Republic of Nicaragua or Law 606, and the Law against Money Laundering, Financing of Terrorism and Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction or Law 977".

The main reason given by the pro-government deputies for these actions is that "they have failed to report the financial statements according to the fiscal periods, with detailed breakdowns, income, expenses, balance sheet, details of donations, origin, provenance and final beneficiary", according to 100% Noticias of May 4, 2022.

To which [Confidencial](#), in its April 24, 2022 publication, adds that the Ministry of the Interior (MIGOB) has accused the organizations of not registering as foreign agents and not reporting their boards of directors and the identity of their members.



“We presented our financial statements before the Ministry of the Interior and they were rejected. We don't understand the reasons, there is no valid reason,” said CPDH board vice-president Denis Garcia at a press conference

Publication of [Divergent](#) on March 1, 2022



According to Confidential's [publication](#) of May 4, 2022, Sandinista deputy Filiberto Rodríguez referred to the causes of the closing of the Nicaraguan organizations as follows: "we are committed to continue enforcing the laws, those who believe they violate the laws, and those who believe they will

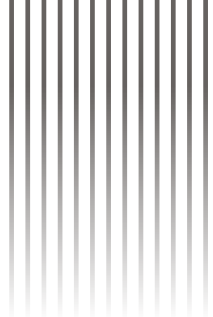

continue with subterfuges, with lies, trying to deceive the authorities that administer the laws of Nicaragua, this is over. We are going to continue deepening our legislation and compliance with the same".

While 100% Noticias published other [declarations](#) of the same congressman on May 18, 2022 in which he expressed that (the organizations) "grew during the times of Violeta Barrios, Arnoldo Alemán and Enrique Bolaños, they grew due to the inability of the governments to assume the constitutional responsibility that corresponds to them, they could not and irresponsibly left the country in the hands of associations and they asked for money everywhere and money came from everywhere and they did not care where the money came from, some with clear objectives and at the time of rendering an account, they cannot render an account, they do not know how to render an account, they do not want to render an account and they lend themselves to the game (...) Many of the empire as they did, as they did in the past (...) Many of the empire as they did in the past (...).



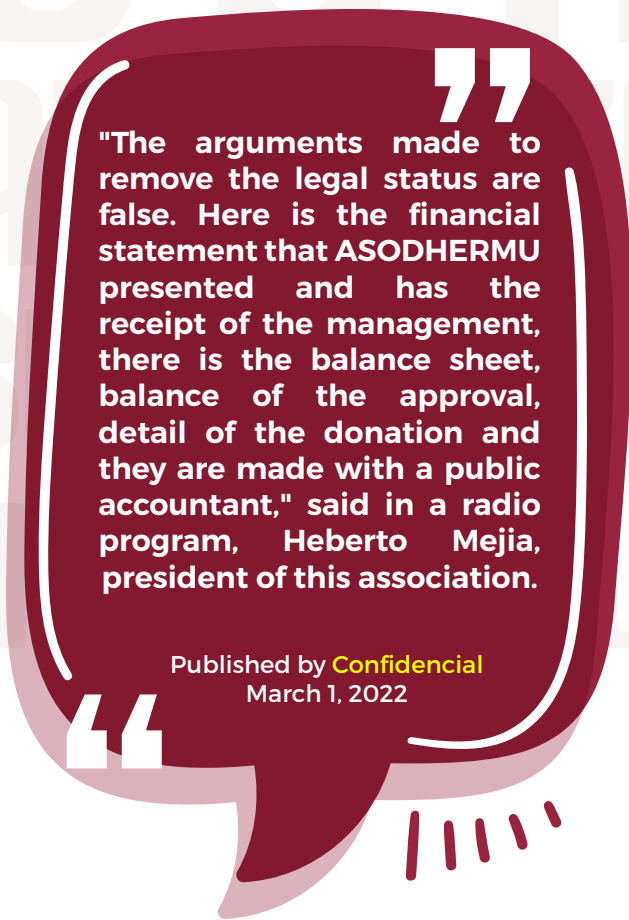
Many of the empire as they did with the attempt to overthrow our government with the attempted coup d'état and use the resources for that purpose".

There is a diversity of purposes of the organizations that have been cancelled. However, a good part of these coincide in that they are organizations in favor of human rights of various groups of society,



having denounced crimes against humanity committed by the State of Nicaragua in 2018, having precedents in favor of public freedoms, being part of or having a relationship with the Catholic Church, professional guilds or educational institutions that are symbols of the student protests of 2018, among others.

Some of the affected organizations have publicly expressed that the reasons for the cancellation of their legal status are unfounded, since the Ministry of the Interior has been an instrument to promote their disappearance by not receiving the documentation requested to verify their financial situation or the updating of their boards of directors, demanding new requirements each time they approached the institution to resolve their situation, applying discretionary fines for not completing requirements that are not explicit in the legislation and not delivering their certificates of compliance.



“The arguments made to remove the legal status are false. Here is the financial statement that ASODHERMU presented and has the receipt of the management, there is the balance sheet, balance of the approval, detail of the donation and they are made with a public accountant,” said in a radio program, Heberto Mejia, president of this association.

Published by **Confidencial**
March 1, 2022

Impact of the closure of organizations

The work of some Nicaraguan organizations included the management of international cooperation projects and/or private funds for the benefit of youth, women, children, the elderly, LGBTIQ+ groups and other groups, as well as the search for solutions to social conflicts (especially addressing violence in its various forms), the promotion of economic development, the allocation of scholarships and other activities.

Education, health, employment, culture, food and the full exercise of rights and freedoms were the main focus of their work in different geographical areas of the country, especially in the most impoverished regions where the implementation of public policies of the State fails to meet the basic needs of the population.



In other words, local organizations were responsible for complementing (and in some cases almost exclusively performing) the functions of the same State that has legally prohibited them from continuing their work.

A report by the Fundación del Río, quoted by [Confidencial](#) on April 4, 2023, indicates that the closure of the organizations "has sent 23,483 Nicaraguans into unemployment and left losses in excess of \$250 million; it has also cut off aid to some 3.4 million beneficiaries in Nicaragua."

In addition, the organizations involved in the collection and dissemination of complaints of human rights violations, as well as the accompaniment of victims, are also in the packages of cancellation of legal personality.

In this case, the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH), the Permanent Human Rights Commission (CPDH) and the Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights (ANPDH) will continue their work from exile, as they are able to do so without a presence in the country.

Meanwhile, most of the international organizations that also lost their legal status functioned as cooperating organizations for these social projects, investing millions of dollars to improve the living conditions of Nicaraguans.

For example, according to a Confidential publication on [June 20, 2022](#),

"a source linked to the international NGOs that have been outlawed by the Government revealed that in October 2020 an evaluation was carried out on the impact of the cooperation channeled by these organizations. "The evaluation is partial, because only 27 international organizations provided information," the source specified. "Between these 27 international NGOs, they channeled 25.5 million dollars a year in cooperation with Nicaragua, which directly reached 550,000 people, especially in rural areas," he added".



Onda Local, in its publication of May 4, 2022, made a compilation of experiences and achievements of the work of local organizations, for



example, Octupan, "a community association that for more than 20 years has promoted women's leadership for rural productive development and has implemented initiatives aimed at rural development and poverty alleviation, in 23

communities in the municipalities of Condega, Estelí and Palacagüina" (in northern Nicaragua).

Another organization profiled by this media is CANTERA, which had more than 30 years of developing initiatives based on popular education with a gender approach, promoting community health, environmental protection and the promotion of productive initiatives to ensure food security in rural communities, especially in 18 communities in the municipalities of Ciudad Sandino, Mateare and Villa el Carmen in Managua, and 11 communities in the municipality of Belen in the department of Rivas.

ASODEL has been working for 27 years "in urban and rural communities in western Nicaragua, with the mission of strengthening the productive capacity of poor rural families to achieve food security and sustainable development", focusing on "the development of sustainable agricultural production and risk management, but has also had an impact on issues such as building youth agendas and promoting transparency in municipal budgets" in the municipalities of Villanueva, Somotillo, Cinco Pinos, Santo Tomás, San Pedro and San Francisco, in the department of Chinandega.

A **Confidencial** publication of June 22, 2022 showed the work of organizations such as the Asociación Infantil de Niños y Niñas Trabajadores de Jinotega (Tuktan Sirpi), which was dedicated to the care and accompaniment of child and adolescent survivors of sexual violence.

"There were hundreds of stories that passed through the Association and we saw a change in the lives of the boys and girls, they were able to recover their plans, their purpose in life because one of the consequences of sexual abuse is that people lose their sense of life," a source told the media under the condition of anonymity.



Divergentes published on March 1, 2022 information from the women's association Oyanka, located in the municipality of Jalapa (in the north of Nicaragua), which was dedicated to "assisting women who are victims of violence in this area of the country, in the department of Nueva Segovia, where machismo causes more than 500 cases of gender violence and up to three femicides per year".

The organization had a shelter where between two and eight battered women were attended daily, some of whom were received with their children.



For its part, **Despacho 505** highlighted in its February 17, 2022 publication that the closure of the Fabretto Foundation would leave more than 54,000 children in Estelí, Madriz, Ocotal, Somoto, Managua and Granada, who received school reinforcement, library services, computer classes and other educational and nutritional benefits, without attention.

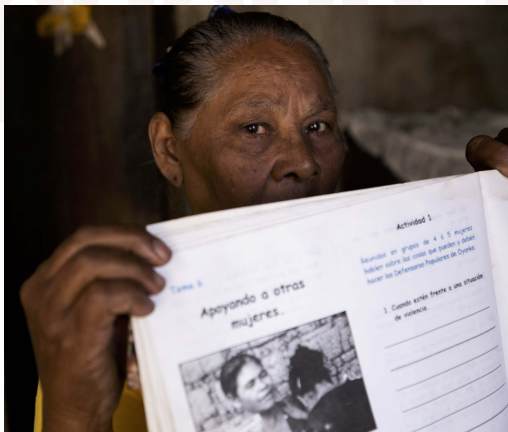
"In the community of Quebrada Honda de Madriz, for example, 1,000 children received reinforcement and snacks from the Foundation. In Somoto, the benefit was for 1,500 school children and another 1,500 in Ocotal, in Granada and San Juan de Oriente and its surrounding communities, the foundation benefited 15,200 children. In San Isidro de Bolas, in Managua, the semi-rural Educational Center served some 750 students. In rural areas, in addition to reinforcement and library services, the children and adolescents received training to improve their work in their families' vegetable gardens and plots of land. In the San José de Cusmapa center, 2,500 children from various schools received reinforcement and about 200 received supplementary food," the media reported.

”

Lludely Aburto of the Nicaraguan Network for Democracy and Local Development (Red Local) stated that there is an enormous impact on the people who will now be unemployed. She also affirmed that these organizations contribute to the local economy since "they generate an economic movement because they develop activities that involve renting premises, lodging, food", she explained that this generates a dynamic that contributes to the local economy because the organizations pay for these services through the projects, "then the impact of the affectation also transcends to the local economy, to small businessmen and suppliers who have an income from the provision of a series of services in these localities"

“

Published by [Onda Local](#), May 4, 2022



Neyma Hernandez, according to [publication](#) by the EFE news agency on February 6, 2022.

On the other hand, some 14 thousand students of the universities that lost their legal status were affected by this situation.

"It is a very strong blow, because we do not know where we are going to go to study; and our parents, who have sacrificed (for our studies), the blow is stronger for them," said UPOLI student

In this regard, Dr. Adrián Meza, Rector of the Paulo Freire University, one of the universities affected by the cancellation of its legal status,

said in an interview with the Human Rights Observatory that "the university attended between 1500 and 2000 students in its campuses in Managua, Carazo, Río San Juan and Estelí, in addition to having technical training programs for union leaders, a teacher training program in rural areas, and capacity building for professionals in environmental, labor and educational sciences".

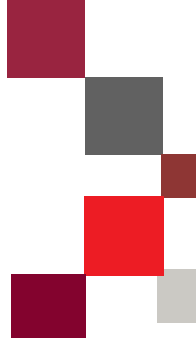
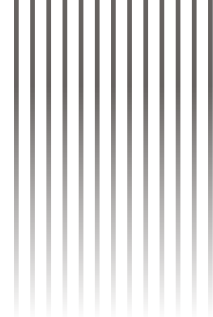
In addition, he referred that "the accidents in the relationship of the University with the State of Nicaragua did not begin with the approval of the law of foreign agents, but even before 2018, from the positions we had been assuming in relation to several issues that concerned us, such as the independence of the judiciary, the deterioration of the institutions of democratic governance and the need for academic independence that public and private universities should have. All this positioning was rejected by the State", indicating that the university received constant visits from the Ministry of Labor, the Nicaraguan Institute of Social Security and the General Directorate of Revenues to audit its operation.



While the effects of the closure of political parties and the imprisonment of opposition leaders were reflected in the voting on November 7, 2021, in which there was no competition, but the imposition of a single party.

This generated an abstention rate of over 81%, according to the Urnas Abiertas [report](#) published on November 11.

According to this report "using the 2021 electoral cartography published by the Supreme Electoral Council, a national probabilistic sample was designed with a confidence level of 95% and a statistical




error of 4% using standard deviation. The sample size was 563 voting centers, which were surveyed through a method of counting the flow of voters who entered the Voting Centers (CV) during 6 hours on average, in three periods of 2 hours each: in the morning, in the middle of the day and during the afternoon, then it was multiplied by weighting the flow per hour and per cut-off to extrapolate to 11 hours of attendance, time during which the voting centers were open. The number of voters who attended each of the observed CVs during the day was compared with the number of voters registered to vote in each of the same CVs, according to the official electoral cartography. Obtaining a national average participation percentage of 18.5% and a national average abstention level of 81.5%".

Next steps to continue contributing

There are Nicaraguan organizations that will continue to work for the benefit of the populations they serve, but under different conditions and following the example of some of the organizations that lost their legal status in 2018 and have not disappeared, such as CENIDH, Popol Na and Fundación del Río. Some will do so from exile, others will reinvent themselves to adjust to their situation and others are making decisions in this regard.

According to a publication of [Nicaragua Investiga](#) of May 10, 2022, a representative of the Permanent Human Rights Commission (CPDH), whose legal status was cancelled on April 10, 2022, informed that the organization "will continue to offer its services from the United States "to any person who requires it regardless of their nationality". The modality of attention will be both face-to-face and virtual".



In the case of virtual assistance, "it includes an audiovisual interview of the victim or complainant so that he/she can directly present his/her complaint or situation. From there, the Commission begins a process of documentation and systematization in order to identify the appropriate mechanisms and strategies of accompaniment (...)
In the case of face-to-face assistance processes, for the time being, it



will be attended only by appointment, which can be scheduled both through the Facebook page and the Commission's email: denuncia.cpdhinternacional@gmail.com".

For its part, the Nicaraguan Institute of Development (INDE) published a [communiqué](#) on June 1, 2022 in which they informed that their operations would continue normally, due to the fact that "according to ministerial agreement No. 067 -2014 published in the Gazette, Official Gazette Number 240, last December 18, 2014, complying with the provisions of Law 849 "General Law of Chambers, Federations and Guild and Business Confederations of Nicaragua"; it is currently registered in the Registry of Chambers, Federations and Business Confederations of the MIFIC under the identification number 18-I. Since 2014, INDE with its perpetual number 778 ceased to be an association supervised by the Department of Registration and Control of Associations of the Ministry of the Interior. The legislative decree initiative to cancel the legal personality of the Nicaraguan Development Institute, INDE, registered with the Ministry of the Interior does not prejudice its current legal status and, therefore, it continues to operate normally."

INDE did not clarify whether any of its programs would be affected by not having a legal status. And no other attempts by the State of Nicaragua to close this entity or limit its operation have been reported.

Environmental activist and human rights defender Amaru Ruiz, said Wednesday that, despite the illegalization of non-profit organizations in Nicaragua, these should not limit their work and should establish strategies to continue working in the country "with or without legal status".

"The legal status will not limit the work of the organizations, the commitment and trust that for many years has been built through civil society organizations, we believe it is important not to forget that we must protect the territorial fabrics that guarantee the work of civil society organizations," he said.

Publication of [Roundtable](#) on February 23, 2022

In its May 12, 2022 publication, [Nicaragua Investiga](#) explained that the feminist collective La Corriente will change its work plan, taking into account that it will no longer be able to access international cooperation funds (one of its main sources of income). Therefore, some of its support components could be suspended or reformulated.

"We work with sectors of scarce resources; we are talking about young men and women who come from the Caribbean Coast or rural areas of the country, and who do not have money for their tickets, lodging and food, which are expenses that La Corriente has been assuming," said founder María Teresa Blandón. "It is the whole line of work in campaigns and public awareness; the whole line of research (...) it is practically all the areas of work" that have to be reformed to continue their work.



CONCLUSIONS

1. The Nicaraguan State has made multiple efforts to control international cooperation funds and shut down recipient organizations for fear of a new uprising against them. In addition, it has eliminated political-partisan competition and has reduced educational and economic opportunities for thousands of young people whom the State cannot serve efficiently.

2. The closure of national and international organizations directly affects the most vulnerable populations who will have to deal without help with the most sensitive social problems such as violence in all its forms, poverty and forced migration.

3. No economic, social or political sector has security and minimum conditions to continue operating, as long as the Nicaraguan State continues to use legal tools to silence those who oppose it or do not share its current policies.

4. Nicaragua requires greater efforts to rebuild the social fabric, meet the basic needs of the population and continue to defend human rights in a country that does not live in a democracy and has no freedoms.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National and international organizations must continue to systematize the ongoing violations of the rights of the Nicaraguan people and demand justice for the victims.

2. It is essential that organizations that lost their legal status adapt to this reality and make efforts to continue operating for the benefit of Nicaragua's vulnerable populations, to the extent of their possibilities and as long as their security and strategic management conditions allow.

3. It is essential that donor agencies take into account these new conditions of Nicaraguan civil society in order to continue supporting development in a country that needs it more than ever.

