Resolution on the situation of human rights and democracy in Nicaragua

2019/2978(RSP) - 19/12/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 560 votes to 12, with 43 abstentions, a resolution on the situation of human rights and democracy in Nicaragua.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Human rights defenders and other critics of the Nicaraguan Government's human rights record have increasingly become the targets of death threats, intimidation, online defamation campaigns, harassment, surveillance, assault and judicial persecution.

According to reports, more than 80 000 people have been forced to leave Nicaragua as a result of the current crisis, and that repression in the country has intensified.

Parliament expressed its solidarity with the Nicaraguan population and condemned all the repressive actions of the Nicaraguan Government, in particular the deaths caused, the generalised restriction of freedom of expression, assembly and demonstration, the outlawing of non-governmental organisations and civil society, the expulsion of international organisations from the country, the closure of and assaults against the media, the limitations on the right to information and the expulsion of students from universities.

The Nicaraguan Government is urged to end the persistent repression of dissent and the ongoing pattern of arbitrary arrests, torture and sexual violence, to refrain from criminalising, persecuting and attacking human rights defenders, political opponents, families of victims and any other dissenting voices, and to immediately dismantle the paramilitary forces operating in the country.

Against this background, Members called for:

- prompt, impartial, transparent and thorough investigations into the violence;
- the immediate release of all those arbitrarily detained and for all charges against them to be dropped and for their fundamental legal safeguards to be respected;
- those responsible for violations of human rights and for undermining democracy and the rule of law to be held accountable;
- adequate medical care to be provided to all detainees;
- an independent review of convictions and sentences with a view to reforming the judiciary;
- the return of confiscated property and the restoration of suspended licences to news outlets.

Parliament welcomed the Council's decision to adopt the framework for targeted restrictive measures for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses and for the repression of civil society and the democratic opposition in Nicaragua. It called on the Member States to quickly agree on the specific list of individuals and entities to be sanctioned, including the President and Vice-President.

Members stressed the need to guarantee political and civil freedoms for all Nicaraguans, the return of those in exile, the return of and cooperation with international organisations, the restoration of the legal

personality of human rights organisations, and the establishment of a credible electoral process, with a reformed Supreme Electoral Council that would assure immediate, fair and transparent elections with the presence of international observers.

Parliament also called:

- on the VP/HR and the EU Delegation to Nicaragua to closely monitor developments in the country and to continue to address the human rights problems affecting prisoners, students, protesters, families of victims and journalists;
- on the Commission to ensure that its cooperation assistance enhances its support to civil society, notably human rights defenders, and that it does not in any way contribute to the current repressive policies of the Nicaraguan authorities;
- for a Parliament delegation to be sent to Nicaragua as soon as possible in order to resume monitoring of the situation in the country.