Resolution on the situation in Nicaragua

2021/2777(RSP) - 08/07/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 629 votes to 19, with 40 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Nicaragua.

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

As a reminder, the human rights and democracy situation in Nicaragua has further gravely deteriorated in the aftermath of the violent repression of civic protests in April 2018.

On 4 May 2021, the Nicaraguan National Assembly passed reforms on Electoral Law 331, which incorporates recently adopted punitive laws. The reform also incorporates rules that restrict electoral competition and the exercise of political rights that further limit the participation of the political opposition, and limits public freedoms contrary to international standards. The Nicaraguan authorities have also dissolved two political parties without due process in recent weeks, using methods that are contrary to international norms.

Since the beginning of June 2021 at least 21 democratic opposition members, including six pre-presidential candidates and union and political leaders, have been arbitrarily arrested under politically fabricated and ambiguous criminal allegations without any evidence in a process marred by serious violations of procedural guarantees, which demonstrates the lack of independence of the judiciary. These worrying developments overseen by the Nicaraguan Government show that the regime is drifting further into authoritarianism by shutting off space for democracy, national understanding and international mediation towards a peaceful solution to the conflict, and clearly impeding the holding of free and fair elections on 7 November 2021.

Parliament expressed its solidarity with the Nicaraguan population and strongly condemned all the repressive actions of the Nicaraguan authorities against democratic opposition parties and their members, journalists and other media workers, students, indigenous people, human rights defenders and civil society, as well as their family members, and in particular the deaths caused.

It called for:

- an immediate stop to the imposition of restrictive measures, repression and human rights violations;

- the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained political prisoners and other opposition activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

The Nicaraguan government is called on to:

- lift the de facto state of siege, respect the role of the national police as a non-political, non-partisan and non-deliberative force, disarm the paramilitary forces and restore citizens' rights;

- immediately restore the legal personality of human rights defenders organisations;

- create an independent investigative unit involving international experts to oversee credible, impartial and exhaustive investigations into the alleged responsibility of top police officials for grave human rights violations committed in the context of the 2018 crackdown and thereafter;

- make immediate changes to the electoral law, appoint impartial people to the different electoral structures, restore the legal status of the parties that were stripped of it, to respect the right of Nicaraguans to elect and be elected, and guarantee the unrestricted presence of national and international electoral observation bodies while committing to political coexistence after the elections;

- immediately repeal the adoption and implementation of the restrictive and punitive laws.

The Council and the Member States are called on to:

- swiftly expand the list of individuals and entities to be sanctioned, including the President and Vice-President of Nicaragua and their inner circle, taking particular care to do no harm to the Nicaraguan people;

- closely monitor the situation on the ground through their representatives and embassies in Nicaragua, including through trial monitoring and by visiting critics and opposition leaders in prison or under house arrest.

Lastly, Parliament called on the EU Delegation to Nicaragua and the Member States, where appropriate, to facilitate the issuance of emergency visas and provide temporary refuge for political reasons in the Member States.