Multi-Faith Open Letter to the Nicaraguan Government

To: The Government of Nicaragua **From:** U.S.-based Persons of Faith

Date: April 7, 2022

"And what does the Lord ask of you: only to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

As we approach Holy Week and recall the suffering of Jesus' Way of the Cross, the tradition of Passover when the Jews were freed from slavery in Egypt, and Ramadan, a time of rekindling the meaning of community, we are called to pause and reflect on the suffering in our world.

This holy season, we U.S.-based people from diverse faith traditions who have signed below, are thinking about Nicaragua and the tragedy that has been unfolding over the last 4 years and that has caused the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans.

Today we raise our collective voice in favor of peace and justice as we address the Nicaraguan government.

We begin by remembering all the Nicaraguans who were killed as a result of the protests that began in April 2018 —both the people who decided to protest as well as the police officers. We remember all those injured in the conflict who continue to suffer the consequences. We remember the more than 150,000 people who have fled the violence in search of peace, tranquility, and a life of dignity because they feel threatened in their own country. And today we also remember those who continue to be held in Nicaragua's jails and prisons without due process just for expressing dissent and raising their voices for human rights and justice. All Nicaraguans, regardless of their opinion of their government, are part of the blessed country of Nicaragua.

How is it possible to speak of peace and reconciliation with so many families subject to the crushing effects of imprisonment, exile, and grief? How can a nation prosper under the weight of so much suffering?

It is the responsibility of the government to defend and protect the lives of all its citizens, including the lives of those who dissent, and it is the responsibility of people of faith to raise our voices when citizens feel defenseless.

Progress is only possible when citizens can exercise freedom of expression and when the dignity of all people is valued and protected. Peace and stability can only be achieved when the rights of all people are respected. Reconciliation is the fruit of justice. If the words of reconciliation are not rooted in concrete actions that contribute to peaceful coexistence and the common good, they are little more than dust in the wind.

During this time of prayer, reflection, fasting and commemoration, as people of faith we urge the government of Nicaragua to heed the cry of its people by liberating the more than 170 prisoners who have expressed their dissent. This would be an important step towards restoring some semblance of tranquility among the Nicaraguan family. Peace is only possible through justice.

"Speak up for the voiceless, Defend the rights of the dispossessed! Raise your voice and judge righteously! Defend the poor and the needy!" Proverbs: 31:8-9

Signed by:* **

*Institutions are listed for identification purposes only.

**We have honored the requests of those signers who asked that their names be withheld for security reasons.

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