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Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States Denounces the Nicaraguan Government's Seizure of the University of Central America

The Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States is alarmed and troubled by the unjust confiscation of the University of Central America (UCA) in Managua by the government of Nicaragua. The UCA is internationally known for providing an outstanding education to thousands of students in the Jesuit and Catholic tradition since its founding in 1960. The seizure of the university is a blatant violation of academic and religious freedom.

We stand in solidarity with the Jesuits of Nicaragua and the faculty, staff and students of the UCA in rejecting the false accusations made against the university and in condemning the government's actions.

We echo the call of the Jesuit Central American Province for the Nicaraguan government to reverse and correct its decision and to end the aggression against the UCA community. We ask the United States and Canadian governments to join us in denouncing this grave injustice and in insisting on a just resolution. We pray that truth, justice, dialogue and freedom will prevail.

Fr. Sean Carroll, SJ
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Fr. Brian G. Paulson, SJ
President, Jesuit Conference of Canada
and the United States

Central American Province of the Society of Jesus

In Defense of Truth, Justice, Freedom, and the Right to Education and in Support of the UCA of Nicaragua.

"Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you." - Matthew 5:11

The Central American Province of the Society of Jesus, in view of the situation that the Central American University (UCA) of Managua is experiencing, expresses the following to the Nicaraguan and international community:

1. The grave accusations against the Jesuit University of Nicaragua contained in the official letter issued by the Tenth Criminal District Court, District of Managua, on August 15, 2023, in which it is described as a "center of terrorism," is accused of having "betrayed the trust of the Nicaraguan people," and of "having transgressed the constitutional order, the legal order, and the order that governs the institutions of higher education in the country" are totally false and unfounded. The de facto confiscation of the UCA is the price to pay for the search for a more just society, protecting the life, truth, and freedom of the Nicaraguan people, in line with its motto: **The truth will set you free** (John 8:32).
2. The prestigious teaching and research work carried out by the University during its 63 years of existence has been recognized nationally and internationally and has been carried out in accordance with the educational tradition of the Society of Jesus and the guidelines of the Catholic Church.
3. This new government aggression against the University is not an isolated event; it is part of a series of unjustified attacks against the Nicaraguan population and other educational and social institutions of civil society that are generating a climate of violence and insecurity and exacerbating the country's sociopolitical crisis. Since April 2018, as a consequence of its stance in defense of the lives of people who were being repressed by state and parapolice forces, the UCA has been the object of constant assault, harassment, and intimidation by Nicaraguan government institutions expressed through mechanisms such as the non-extension of certifications necessary for its operation by the Ministry of the Interior, the National Council for Evaluation and Accreditation (CNEA), and the National Council of Universities (CNU); the last of these excluded the UCA from the member universities of this body that benefit from the 6% earmarked for higher education.
4. It is a government policy that is systematically violating human rights and seems to be oriented at consolidating a totalitarian state.
5. It is necessary and essential that our University be allowed to exercise its inalienable right to legitimate defense against said accusations.

6. The UCA of Nicaragua and the Jesuits living in that country have the full support of the Province of Central America.

We hold the Government of Nicaragua responsible for all damages against the students, academic and administrative staff, and other workers of the University, and the cultural heritage of the country that derive from such an unjustified accusation and from the order to confiscate all unmovable and movable property and economic assets of the University in favor of the State of Nicaragua.

We ask the Government of Nicaragua:

1. To immediately reverse and correct the drastic, unexpected and unjust measures adopted by the judiciary.
2. To cease the growing government aggression against the University and its members.
3. That a rational solution be sought in which truth, justice, dialogue, and the defense of academic freedom prevail.

We reiterate the commitment of the Society of Jesus with the Nicaraguan people in favor of an inclusive quality education, inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We thank the university community of the UCA for its courage, dedication, and commitment. Likewise, we recognize the displays of national and international solidarity in the face of the unjust situation that the UCA is experiencing.

God is the one who has the last word on history and will also have it on Nicaragua.

San Salvador, El Salvador, Wednesday, August 16, 2023
Central American Province of the Society of Jesus