

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 2018

Honorable Luis Almagro
Secretary General
Organization of American States
1889 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Secretary General Almagro:

We are writing with great concern regarding the Nicaraguan police forces' recent violent attacks against innocent civilians in Nicaragua who were exercising their right to peaceful protest. We are also deeply concerned about the Nicaraguan government's decision to close and censure media outlets covering the protests, as well as the incident in which a journalist was shot and killed while reporting on the demonstrations. We respectfully request that you, in your role as Secretary General, work with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to conduct an immediate and comprehensive investigation into these matters.

On Wednesday, April 18th, protests broke across Nicaragua following the government's policy changes to the social security system. The protests quickly escalated into intense, violent clashes with police and security forces, who clearly used excessive force against civilians. It has been reported that the Nicaraguan police killed more than 30 people and have arrested dozens more in this wave of repression. On Thursday April 19th, in an effort to suppress freedom of the press, the government suspended the broadcasts of five television stations that were covering the protests.

The recently released 2017 State Department Human Rights report included the arbitrary and unlawful killings carried out by police forces and criminal organizations in Nicaragua. According to the report, in 2016, the *NGO Nicaraguan Human Rights Center (CENIDH)* received 610 complaints against the Nicaraguan National Police (NNP) for excessive force, arbitrary detention, and cruel or degrading treatment, including in prisons. CENIDH was able to confirm abuse in 391 of those complaints.

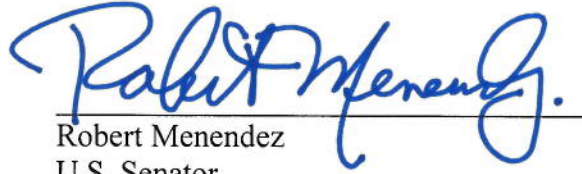
We commend your willingness to speak out against the abuses currently taking place in Nicaragua, and urge you to work with the IACHR to investigate these incidents immediately and work with international partners to bring justice to these families and accountability for the police forces. These forces must understand that they cannot act with impunity.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', written in a cursive style.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Menendez', written in a cursive style.

Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator