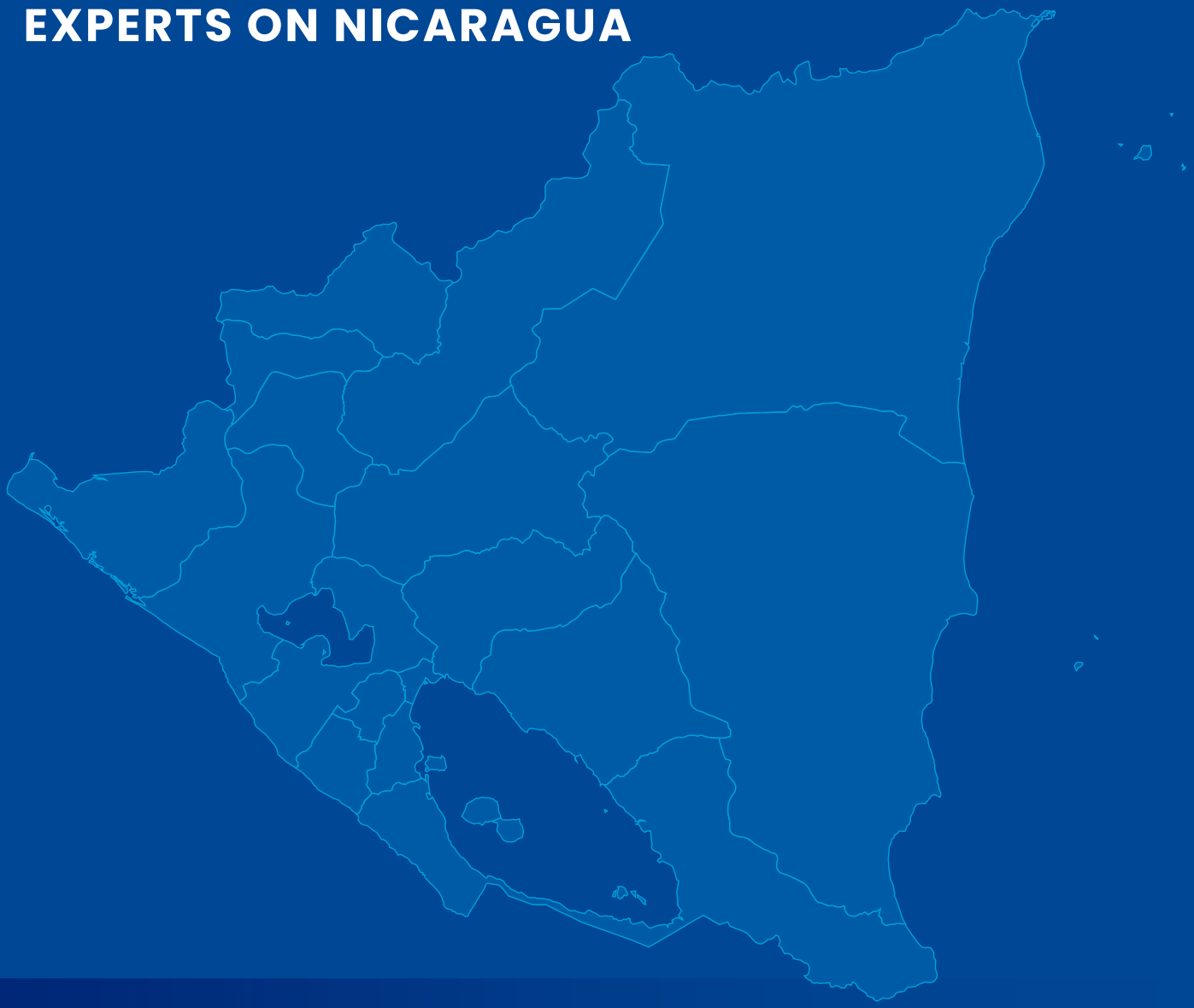
# SUMMARY OF THE 2026 REPORT

## OF THE GROUP OF HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS ON NICARAGUA



GROUP OF HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS ON NICARAGUA

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## THE 2026 REPORT* PRESENTS THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE GROUP OF HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS ON NICARAGUA ON:

- The evolution of the profiles of victims since April 2018.
- The gender dimensions of victimization.
- The expansion of transnational human rights violations.
- The persistence of serious human rights violations inside Nicaragua.
- The financing of the repressive State apparatus and activities.
- Responsibility and accountability.

The Government of Nicaragua did not cooperate with the Group and did not respond to the Group's requests for information.

## HOW REPRESSION HAS EVOLVED SINCE 2018

The Group has identified four phases of repression in Nicaragua since April 2018:

**First phase** (2018-2020): violent and disproportionate crackdown on legitimate widespread protests.

**Second phase** (2021): intensified targeted repression to ensure the re-election of Daniel Ortega as President.

**Third phase** (2022): increased efforts to eliminate all remaining political opposition, amplification of repression against the Catholic Church and accelerated dismantling of civic space.

**Fourth phase** **current phase** (2023 to the present): violations aimed at eliminating all criticism and preventing any resistance movements, including from within the State apparatus and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), to ensure that the Co-Presidents maintain absolute control over State entities and the population, including abroad.

*A/HRC/61/56

## A GROWING POOL OF VICTIMS

The Group concludes that since 2018 **victims have been targeted because of their real or perceived political identity** or their association with perceived opponents. This forms part of a discriminatory policy aimed at persecuting and silencing dissent and closing spaces from which criticism, protest or resistance could emerge.

**The "pool" of victims has expanded over time**:

Initially, in April 2018, the authorities mainly targeted protesters and those providing support to the self-organized movement. They soon also started targeting human rights defenders, feminists, activists, journalists and media workers, lawyers, students, opposition supporters and dissident Sandinistas.

Ahead of the 2021 election, the authorities focused on arresting and prosecuting the main opposition figures, political activists and other critical voices.

Since 2023, the profile of victims has further widened to include leaders and members of sectors of the population whose mobilization and convening capacity were considered a threat to the Government, such as the university sector, the campesino movement, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, and the Catholic and other Christian churches.

The Group has also documented increased targeting within the State apparatus and Sandinista ranks, as well as a continuing rise in "violations by association" against relatives (including children and older persons) of real or perceived opponents, including those in exile.

**"The patterns of violations and the profiles of victims documented by the Group reveal a clear objective: the determination of the Co-Presidents to control the State and population, both at home and abroad, to prevent any replacement of the Government, especially from within."**



**"Long before 2018, women's visibility and capacity for mobilization had already made them frequent targets of State repression."**

## GENDER DIMENSIONS OF VICTIMIZATION

The Group finds that political persecution has had distinct gendered dimensions and affected women and LGBTIQ+ persons differently. The violations documented by the Group were committed in a context where the Nicaraguan authorities subjected women and LGBTIQ+ movements and organizations to defamation campaigns and mass closures.

Women and LGBTIQ+ persons were subjected to violations from the start of the repression. Among the victims were: protest and political leaders, students, journalists, academics, feminists and human rights defenders. Many were arbitrarily arrested and subjected to sexual and gender-based violence and other acts of ill-treatment and torture. LGBTIQ+ persons were subjected to humiliation and abuse related to their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

The Group finds that the Government made a calculated effort to neutralize actors whose historical legitimacy and organizational capacity were perceived as a threat to their pursuit of total control.

**"Hundreds of victims have seen their lives dismantled, with legal identities erased, livelihoods harmed and access to asylum and mobility imperilled. Relatives at home and in exile, including children, have also become collateral damage."**

## EXPANSION OF TRANSNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The Group has documented systematic, cumulative and escalating patterns of transnational human rights violations targeting Nicaraguans abroad, particularly since February 2023.

- Surveillance, threats, harassment and physical violence
- Abuse of international control and cooperation mechanisms, including INTERPOL
- Arbitrary deprivation of nationality
- De facto deprivation of nationality (including entry bans and denial of passports)
- Arbitrary confiscation of property and pensions
- Proxy punishment of relatives in Nicaragua

The methods employed in such violations are designed to:

- deter, punish and silence exiles,
- prevent the reorganization of opposition, and
- erode safe havens.

Transnational violations form a central pillar of the Government's plan to eliminate dissent, guarantee impunity and entrench its power. The Group also notes that the consequences of transnational violations have been experienced differently depending on the gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnic origin, race and/or social roles of the victims.

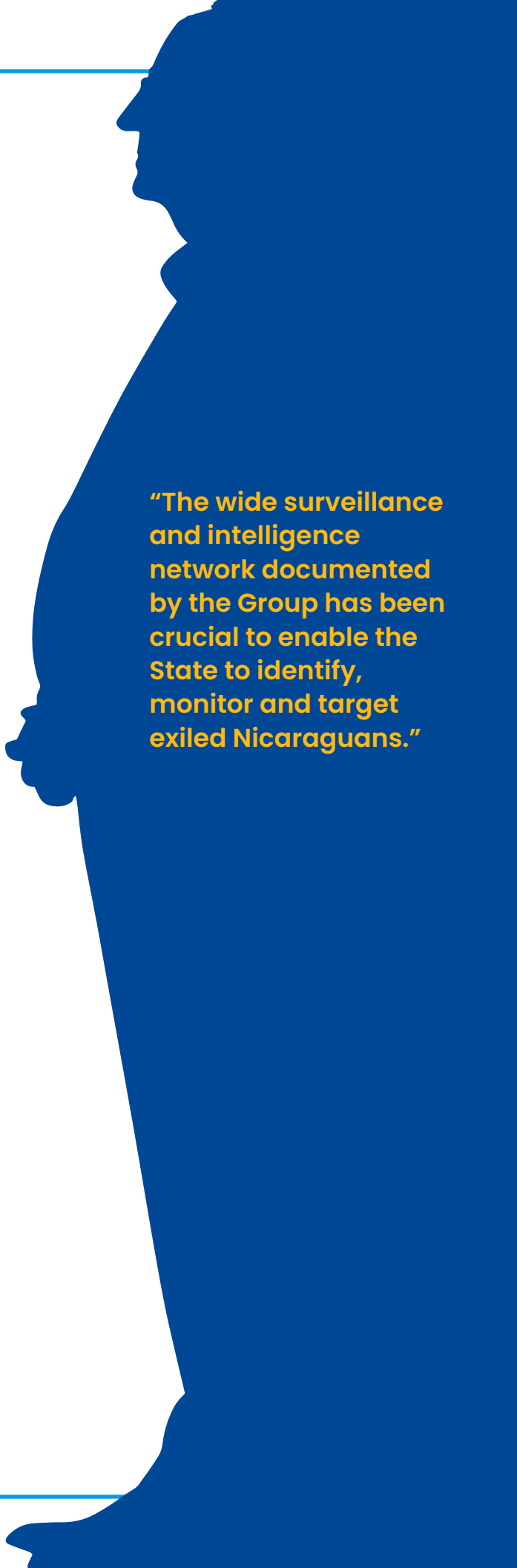
## TRANSNATIONAL SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE NETWORK

The report describes a complex transnational surveillance and intelligence network involving the army, the police, the diplomatic service, other State institutions and non-State actors, like FSLN members and informants. The Group has identified two components to this network:

- The political component determines objectives and provides strategic orientation.
- The operational component coordinates the implementation of these decisions abroad.

Together these components constitute an effective integrated structure enabling the State to project its repressive apparatus abroad in pursuit of exiled Nicaraguans.

The Group notes that Co-President Murillo and a small group of senior officials and leaders of FSLN determine who among exiled Nicaraguans should be targeted, define "threat categories" and decide on the specific measures to take.



**"The wide surveillance and intelligence network documented by the Group has been crucial to enable the State to identify, monitor and target exiled Nicaraguans."**

## SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS CONTINUE TO BE COMMITTED IN NICARAGUA

The Group notes that cases of enforced disappearance have significantly increased, while arbitrary detention and ill-treatment in custody, which in some cases may amount to torture, are still regular occurrences. In 2025, two political detainees died while in custody of the state.

From April 2025 to mid-January 2026, at least 199 persons (174 men and 25 women) were arrested for political reasons, including active and retired military and State officials, former Sandinista and relatives and associates of exiles.

The Group highlights the treatment of arbitrarily detained older persons, including the denial of adequate medical care, which represents a serious threat to their physical and mental integrity and, in some cases, may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The Group has also verified the enforced disappearance of 75 persons (60 men and 15 women) for periods ranging from several weeks to over two years.

The Group also underscores that released political detainees continue to be subjected to constraining conditions without any legal basis, including strict surveillance, prohibition of communication and restrictions on freedom of movement.

**"These cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance embody the Government's refined strategy of resorting to the gravest and most terrifying violations to efficiently silence dissent and control the population."**

## FINANCING THE REPRESSIVE APPARATUS

The report finds that the authorities' control has been supported by corruption and the misuse and diversion of public funds and assets to finance repression and social control measures. It states that these conclusions are based on dozens of interviews and a review of extensive documentation, including payroll records, emails, and budget/audit materials.

The Group describes the consolidation, in 2018, of a covert parallel structure within the FSLN to channel resources and divert public funds, including instructions to public institutions and municipalities to reassign budget portions for logistics linked to the repression, and continued practices of funding party activities and repression using public resources.

## CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Group reiterates that violations investigated since 2018 amount, prima facie, to the crimes against humanity of murder, imprisonment, torture, deportation, enforced disappearance and persecution on political grounds.

Some transnational human rights violations also amount, prima facie, to the crime against humanity of persecution, which, the Group finds, was committed with a gendered dimension.

**The Group finds reasonable grounds to believe that the State of Nicaragua is responsible for grave violations of international law**.

The Group has also found that Co-Presidents Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo, as well as numerous other named high-level State officials and ruling party members, allegedly bear individual responsibility for human rights violations.

# MAIN CONCLUSIONS

**"... the courage of victims and those who document their suffering gives hope that change, justice and accountability will come."**



The Group concludes that the patterns of violations and victimization it identified show a deliberate policy of the State to silence any form of dissent, including within its own ranks, neutralize real or perceived opposition and deter the emergence of any resistance.

It notes that, over successive phases of repression, the Government has formalized repression through constitutional and legislative reforms, enabling generalized impunity by blocking any form of accountability and exposing victims and justice-seekers to severe reprisals.

The Group also concludes that the authorities have weaponized gender norms to stigmatize and punish women and LGBTIQ+ persons who are real or perceived opponents.

Given the scale and duration of the violations, the Group concludes that restoring rights, democracy and the rule of law will require sustained international engagement, significant resources and a long term commitment.

**The Group urges the authorities to take significant and unconditional steps towards a full restoration of human rights in line with their international obligations.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA

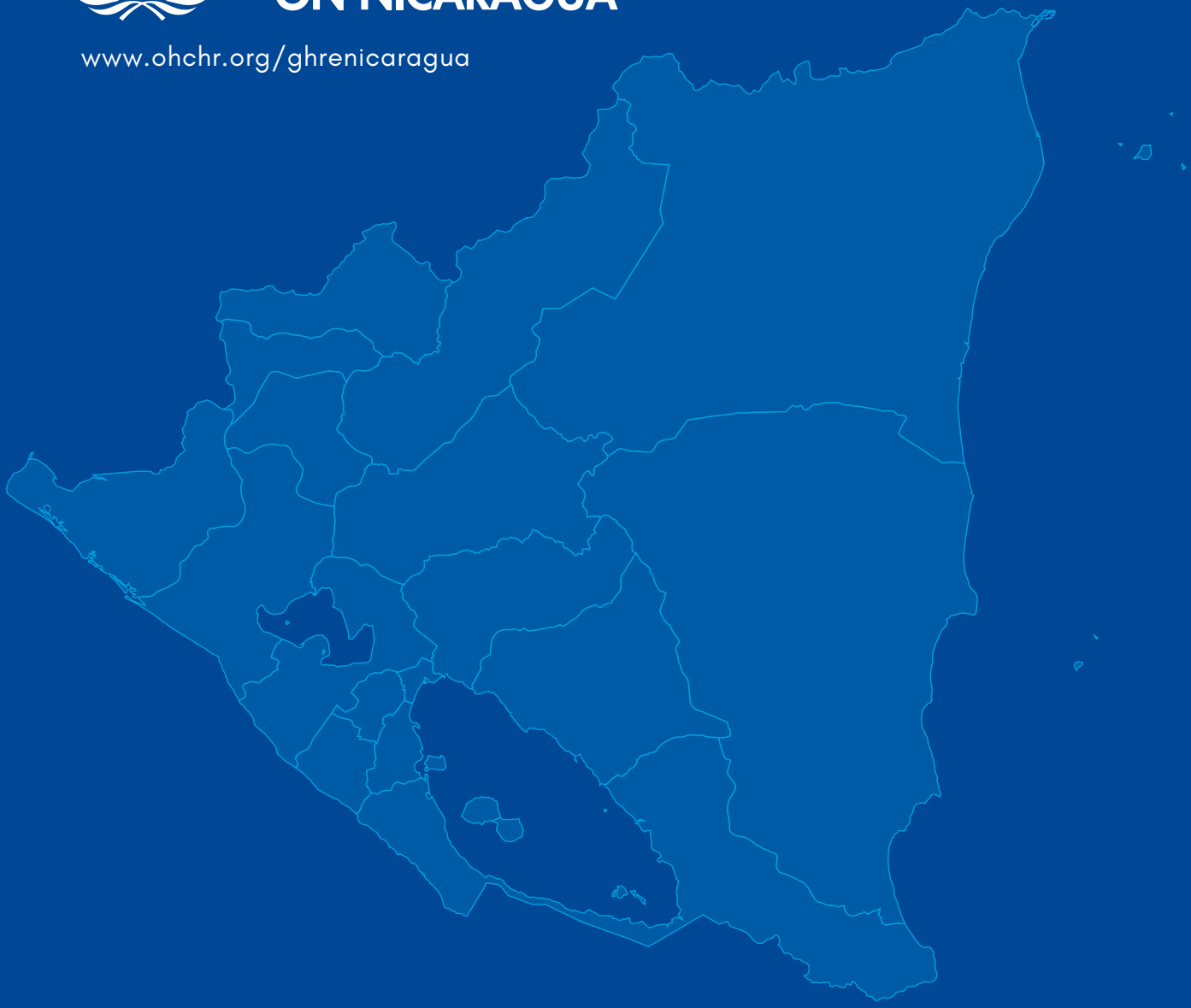
- Reveal the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons.
- Unconditionally release all those arbitrarily detained.
- End all politically motivated persecution in Nicaragua and abroad.
- Revoke legislation and reforms incompatible with Nicaragua's international obligations.
- Investigate all violations, ensuring full respect for the right to truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence.
- Restore the right to freedom of movement, including by delivering passports.
- Respect freedom of the media.
- Cease the persecution of members of the Catholic and other Christian churches, ensuring respect for the right to freedom of religion.
- Reinstate the legal status of civil society organizations.
- Cooperate with the UN and Inter-American human rights mechanisms.

## SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Pursue extraterritorial criminal investigations and prosecutions and impose targeted sanctions.
- Hold Nicaragua accountable before the International Court of Justice regarding statelessness and torture obligations.
- Ensure gendered dimensions are addressed in international accountability mechanisms and incorporate victim support.
- Ensure international protection for exiled Nicaraguans and uphold the right to asylum.
- Ensure that de facto stateless persons are afforded the protections established under the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.
- Establish programmes for the reception, protection and integration of exiled Nicaraguans.
- Investigate reported threats, surveillance, harassment and attacks against exiled Nicaraguans.
- Strengthen oversight of international cooperation on law enforcement, such as INTERPOL notices.
- Require heightened human rights due diligence by financial institutions and providers in the field of anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.
- Factor in transnational violations by Nicaragua when considering security cooperation, extradition treaties, foreign assistance and information-sharing.

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