



## **OPEN LETTER**

**to the President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights  
and to the  
IACHR Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts on Nicaragua,  
the Argentinian Team of Forensic Anthropology  
and SITU Research of New York**

**from Nicaraguan civil society  
and from members of North American and European networks  
in solidarity with Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution**

8 July 2020

IACHR President: Sr. Joel Hernández García

IACHR First Vice-President: Sra. Antonia Urrejola Noguera

IACHR Second Vice-President: Sra. Flávia Piovesan

GIEI members: Sr. Amerigo Incalcaterra, Sra. Sofía Macher, Sr. Pablo Parenti and Sra. Claudia Paz and Paz Bailey

EAAF: Sra. Mercedes Doretti, Directora Programática Centro y Norteamérica

SITU: Brad Samuels, partner

### **IACHR reports on events in Nicaragua**

We are writing to express our concern at what we believe to be very serious shortcomings in the [video documentary](#) your organizations released on May 30th this year, about events leading to the deaths of three Nicaraguan citizens demonstrating against their government two years earlier on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2018.

While your video documentary acknowledges there is no conclusive evidence, it still argues that circumstantial evidence overwhelmingly suggests that armed police officers or Sandinista supporters indiscriminately killed those three protesters who died that day, as well as other people also shot dead in the same set of incidents. Your video documentary acknowledges that two Sandinista supporters were also shot dead in related incidents that day, but you have selectively chosen to omit any consideration of how or why they might have been killed.

Your video documentary reinforces the unjust and extremely dishonest claim by Nicaragua's political opposition, repeated, with no serious attempt at independent corroboration, by the [Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts](#) organized by the Inter American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States, that the country's Sandinista government deliberately used disproportionate lethal force against peaceful protesters during the violent failed coup attempt between April 18<sup>th</sup> and July 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.

We have the following questions about this video documentary and sincerely hope you will respond and answer them in the interests of institutional transparency, democratic debate and genuine accountability.

- Why does the video documentary mention the killing of two Sandinista supporters without noting that they were probably shot dead by armed opposition activists, completely undercutting the video documentary's claim that the opposition protesters were unarmed and peaceful? Surely it then becomes practically impossible to dismiss the probability that the three opposition protesters who are the focus of your video documentary were killed in an exchange of gunfire that began in circumstances involving conflicting versions of the events in question? Why does your video documentary systematically exclude any discussion of that fact?
- Why have you omitted from your video documentary [footage, including video reports](#) from the opposition media outlet Radio Corporación and [other videos](#) of opposition activists carrying firearms including automatic rifles and firing automatic pistols in the late afternoon of May 30<sup>th</sup> 2018, near the area from which you claim the fatal shots were fired killing the three protesters who are the focus of your documentary?
- Why does your video documentary omit mentioning the wounding by gunfire in the same set of incidents covered in your documentary of [20 named police officers](#), a fact which completely contradicts your suggestion that all the opposition protesters were unarmed and peaceful?
- Why does your video documentary portray the police and volunteer police with weapons without explaining that the reason they are heavily armed is that just two days previously, in the same area as the incidents covered by your video, [one police officer was killed](#) and five police officers wounded by armed opposition activists preventing those police officers from going to the aid of over 20 workers of Nueva Radio Ya which was under attack by armed opposition activists?
- Why does your video documentary show no footage of police use of firearms which might have been presented to show that there were antecedents for what your organizations argue were the events of May 30<sup>th</sup> 2018, despite the claim in your video documentary that your organizations have reviewed thousands of videos showing examples of police repression?
- Why does your video documentary omit mentioning that various official documents, [press reports and witness testimony](#) contradict the version of events your video documentary presents?
- Why does your video documentary omit the strong possibility of a false flag attack similar to that at Puente Llaguno in Caracas during the failed coup attempt in Venezuela in 2002, since any genuinely scientific account of the events analyzed by your video documentary would have noted such contrary hypotheses and explained why they should be discounted?
- Why does your video documentary not follow up the mention of evidence in the Knox Associates report's sound analysis of the three shootings of "a firearm discharged near the video camera. It's difficult to determine what type of firearm it is, ... It could be a semi-automatic pistol or a rifle", apparently referring to a weapon or weapons used by protesters at the demonstration?

- Why does your video documentary mischaracterize the location of the police confronting the protesters on the Avenida Universitaria? Video footage from May 30, 2018 place them at a road junction 175 meters from the barricade, while a map on your archive website shows the police to be even closer. A comparison of the map in your video with Google maps clearly indicates that it is not to scale, and in fact shows a radius of 145-215 meters, which means that the police were not in the location from which your firearms expert said the fatal shots were fired.
- Why does your video documentary only investigate the three shots supposedly responsible for killing the three protesters on whom you focus, given that Knox Associates' evidence, even though it only covers a few minutes, indicates that there were other exchanges of fire, apparently from both sides?
- In this context, why does the video ignore the admission on page 164 of the original GIEI report, of “the presence of four armed persons among the demonstrators” [GIEI “Informe sobre los hechos de violencia ocurridos entre el 18 de abril y el 30 de mayo de 2018,”], which appears to be referring to the same incident in Avenida Universitaria?
- Why is the investigation portrayed in your video documentary limited to events on the west side of the national stadium when other shootings were taking place on the east side, and these would have influenced the behavior of the police in the entire area of the stadium, especially if they were actually under fire or had recently been under fire, as they had been on May 28th?
- SITU Research and EAAF acknowledge financial support from corporate sources in the United States, including the Open Society Foundations, suggesting a strong ideological component in the production of this video. Who funded your organizations to produce it and how much money did they invest?

We look forward very much to your observations in response to our questions.




**Alliance for Global Justice (USA)**

**Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group (UK)**

**And signed by:**

Blanca Segovia Sandino Arauz, Daughter of General Augusto C. Sandino, Nicaragua

Camilo Mejia, Human Rights Activist  
and former Amnesty International prisoner of conscience, Miami, USA

Patricia Villegas, Presidente TeleSur, Venezuela

S. Brian Willson, war veteran, author, lawyer, Granada, Nicaragua

Margaret Flowers, David Paul, Adrienne Pine, Kevin Zeese (four protectors of the Venezuelan Embassy, Washington, D.C.)

**And by the individuals and organisations in Nicaragua, USA and Europe listed overleaf**

Adrian Martínez Rodriguez	Secretario General , Confederación de Trabajadores por Cuenta Propia de Nicaragua CTCP	Nicaragua
Al Burke	Editor, Nordic News Network	Sweden
Alberto Martínez Vargas	Retired	Nicaragua
Alexandra Valiente	Editor Internationalist 360°	Canada
Andrea Pérez Espinoza	Political scientist	Nicaragua
Andreia Vizeu	Educator, NYC	USA
Anne Mitchell	Deputy principal (retired)	USA
Antonio Espinoza	Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores de la Agroindustria de Nicaragua CONFEDERACIÓN AGROINDUSTRIA	Nicaragua
Arnold H. Matlin, M.D., F.A.A.P.	Doctor	USA
Augusto Enrique Castillo Sandino	Family of General Augusto C. Sandino	Nicaragua
Aurora Elena Baltodano Toledo	Solidarity activist	Italy
Becca Mohally Renk	Jubilee House Community	Nicaragua
Ben Norton	Writer and editor of The Grayzone	USA
Calvin McCoy	Nicaragua Solidarity Ireland	Ireland
Carlos José Hurtado Ordoñez	Technical assistant	Nicaragua
Carlos José Martínez Hernández	Editor, Radio La Primerísima	Nicaragua
Cecilia Herrero	Painter	Argentina
Coleen Littlejohn	Development economist (retired)	Nicaragua
Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism	New York	USA
Coordinamento Associazione Italia Nicaragua	Solidarity group (Milan)	Italy
Courtney Childs	Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism	USA
Daniel Hopewell	Director of community development NGO	UK
Daniel Shaw	Professor	USA
Declan McKenna	Nicaragua Solidarity Ireland	Ireland
Diana Bohn		USA
Domingo Francisco Pérez Zapata	Secretario General, Unión Nacional de Empleados Públicos de Nicaragua UNE	Nicaragua
Dr Francisco Dominguez	University professor	UK
Dr. Agustín Velloso Santisteban	University professor	Spain
Edgardo Garcia	General Secretary, Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo	Nicaragua
Enrique Castillo Delgado	Technician, husband of Blanca Segovia Sandino Arauz	Nicaragua
Erika Takeo	Coordinator, Friends of the ATC	Nicaragua
Executive Committee of the Foro de Sao Paulo	In Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia	USA
Evile Umaña	Secretaria General, Central de Trabajadores de Salud de Nicaragua FETSALUD	Nicaragua

Fausto Torrez	Secretary of International Relations, Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo	Nicaragua
Fredy Franco	Secretario General, Federación de Profesionales Docentes de la Educación Superior FEPDES-ATD	Nicaragua
Friends of Latin America	Solidarity organization	USA
Gimmi Maria Cristini	Solidarity activist	Italy
Herman van de Velde	Pedagogue / retired academic	Nicaragua
Janet Pavone	Painter	UK
Jennifer Atlee	Friendship Office of the Americas	USA
Jeremy Cerna	Writer	Germany
John Perry	Housing and migration researcher	Nicaragua
Jon Barrenechea	Film marketing executive	UK
Jorge Capelán	Journalist	Nicaragua
José Angel Bermudez	Secretario Ejecutivo, Frente Nacional de los Trabajadores FNT	Nicaragua
Judith Bello	Antiwar activist, Rochester, NY	USA
Julio César Castillo Sandino	Family of General Augusto C. Sandino	Nicaragua
Karen Sharpe	Editor, Paris	France
Lauren Smith	Independent journalist	USA
Leonardo Flores	Political analyst, Washington, DC	USA
Les Blough	Journalist	Venezuela
Lisa Klein	Student	Germany
Lucy Pagoada	Teacher, NYC	USA
Luis Adolfo Barboza Chavarría	Secretario general, Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores José Benito Escobar, CST-JBE	Nicaragua
Madeliene Kießling Klein	Retired	Germany
Magda Lanuza	Community worker and writer	Nicaragua
Maria de los Angeles Obando Medina	Secretario general Confederación de Trabajadores de la Pesca de Nicaragua, CONFEPESCA	Nicaragua
Maritza Castillo	Nicaraguan activist	Nicaragua
Maritza Espinales	Secretaria General, federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Universitarios FESITUN	Nicaragua
Mark Mayer	Solidarity activist	USA
Martin Mowforth	Environmental Network for Central America.	UK
Martin Roger	Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign	UK
Max Blumenthal	Writer and editor of The Grayzone	USA
Michael Boudreau	Compas de Nicaragua	Nicaragua
Miguel Mairena	United Methodist missionary	Mexico
Mike Woodard	Jubilee House Community	Nicaragua
Mitchel Cohen	Author	USA
Nan McCurdy	United Methodist Missionary	Mexico
Nora Mitchell McCurdy	Researcher	Nicaragua
Paul Peulevé Bake	Ode to Earth coordinator	Nicaragua
Professor Jose Antonio Zepeda	Secretario General, Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de Nicaragua CGTEN-ANDEN	Nicaragua
Professor Michel Chossudovsky	Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization	Canada
Richard Kohn, Ph.D	University professor	USA
Richard Lanigan	Physician	UK
Richard Luckemeier, P.E.	Water utility engineer	USA
Rita Jill Clark-Gollub	Translator	USA
Roger Stoll	Writer	USA

Sandra Edith Baltodano Gutierrez	Solidarity activist	Italy
Scott Hagaman	Physician	USA
Sofía M Clark	Political researcher	Nicaragua
Stansfield Smith	Writer	USA
Stephen Sefton	Community worker and writer	Nicaragua
Susan Lagos	Retired teacher, Friends of the ATC, activist, translator	Nicaragua
Walter Ramiro Castillo Sandino	Family of General Augusto C. Sandino	Nicaragua
William Camacaro	Venezuela activist, New York	USA
William Grigsby Vado	Presidente Asociación de Profesionales de la Radiodifusión Nicaragüense (APRANIC) y Director General Radio La Primerísima	Nicaragua
Zoltan Tiroler	Swedish-Cuban Friendship Association	Sweden



