

Nicaraguan authorities have responded violently to demonstrations taking place throughout the country in disagreement with reforms to the social security system, and violated their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Since April 18, at least 28 people including students have been killed in this context.

Although you announced the derogation of social security reforms on April 22, reports of demonstrators detained and disappeared persist. Repression against journalists has been particularly strong and scaling. On April 18, security forces and armed civilians who sympathize with the government hit several journalists and threatened them with stealing their equipment. On the following day, the government censored national media, and took three channels off the air. On April 21, an unknown assailant fatally shot a journalist in the head while he was doing a Facebook Live broadcast of the commotions taking place in Bluefields.

I call on you to immediately guarantee the rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

I urge you to engage in dialogue with civil society sectors, including the victims of state repression, to find a peaceful solution to this grave situation.

I also call on you to launch a timely, impartial and independent investigation into the attacks and killings, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice, and immediately release those detained only on the grounds of their peaceful exercise of their freedom of expression.

Thank you for your prompt attention to the above.

Sincerely yours,