

STATEMENT

IM-DEFENSORAS REGRETS CANCELLATION OF NICARAGUA VISIT FROM UN RAPPORTUER ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' SITUATION

Mesoamerica, August 11, 2016 - The 750 women human rights defenders of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México and Nicaragua who make up the **Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders (IM-Defensoras)** lament the recent cancellation of the visit to Nicaragua from the **Special UN Rapporteur on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders, Mr. Michel Forst**.

This visit was to be made in the framework of requests made by regional and Nicaraguan groups for a regional consultation on “**Proposals to combat impunity and its impact on the situation of human rights defenders,**” to be held in Managua on August 24, along with other activities that would include an important meeting of the **Rapporteur** with members of the **Nicaraguan Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders**.

According to the official notice of the cancellation of the Rapporteur’s visit, the UN System of Security Services has not given its approval because it can neither guarantee the Rapporteur’s security, nor that of visitors from Costa Rica and Panama invited to participate in the consultation.

The cancellation of the Rapporteur’s visit is clear proof of the systematic violation of human rights engendered by the government of Daniel Ortega, such as the frequent arbitrary expulsions of human rights defenders, including journalists, scientists, international officials, human rights organizations, and citizens from other countries. These violations also include repeated attacks on human rights defenders, especially oponents of the Inter-Oceanic Canal, oponents of the extractivist model, feminist organizations, and defenders of sexual and reproductive rights, as **IM-Defenders** has frequently denounced.

We are concerned that this cancellation will place women human rights defenders in increasingly vulnerable situations by sending a message that they cannot rely on protection from international human rights mechanisms, and certainly not from the obligatory mechanisms of the State.

Accordingly, we condemn the refusal of the Nicaraguan State to facilitte the Rapporteur’s visit, as yet another example of the hostility shown towards all those who defend human rights, as reflected in the following recurrent acts:

- Criminalization and hindrance of human rights work,
- Abuse of State power and that of the ruling party and extractivist eompanies,
- Impunity with regards to attacks against individuals and organizations engaged in the



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defense of human rights,

- Persecution and smear campaigns against individuals and organizations engaged in the defense of human rights, and
- The closure of spaces and the negation of access to public information.

We also call on the United Nations system to do everything necessary to ensure that organizations and persons engaged in defending human rights in Nicaragua are not exposed to a situation of increasing vulnerability that jeopardizes their right to defend rights and invalidates the guarantee of compliance with human rights in Nicaragua.

And finally, we call on the international community to stay alert to the serious human rights situation that exists in Nicaragua.



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