

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 28, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Mnuchin:

We write in support of additional actions to encourage timely electoral reforms in Nicaragua and to hold members of the Ortega regime accountable for enabling serious violations of human rights and destroying democratic institutions in Nicaragua.

Two years after the regime of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo brutally repressed peaceful demonstrations, Nicaraguans have not found justice for the more than 320 people killed and the nearly 800 arbitrarily arrested by the regime. While we appreciate the actions taken by the Administration to help Nicaraguans reestablish democratic rule in their country, such as sanctioning 15 high-ranking officials and six entities, including the Nicaraguan National Police (NPP) and three of its most senior commissioners, Finance Minister Montalvan, and Army General Aviles, more actions are still needed.

The majority of the Nicaraguan judiciary acts as a political arm of the Ortega-Murillo regime and is complicit in the regime's repression and preservation of power. As documented in the State Department's 2018 Nicaragua Country Report on Human Rights Practices and reports by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Public Prosecutor's Office and judges under the influence of Ortega's FSLN Party have facilitated and endorsed the abuses committed by armed pro-government groups and the NPP against demonstrators and their supporters. International human rights organizations have provided damning evidence that senior members of the judiciary have conducted prosecutions without due process and have failed to hold pro-government groups responsible for their crimes.

As you consider future actions in Nicaragua, we strongly recommend using the tools available to you under Section 5 of the Nicaragua Human Rights and Anticorruption Act of 2018 (NHRAA) and Executive Order 13851 to hold accountable members of the Nicaraguan judiciary who are directly or indirectly involved in serious human rights violations, including individuals in the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Attorney General's Office, and in the court system.

We believe that our sanctions policy must be connected to a broader diplomatic strategy regarding Nicaragua. In this case, it is important that members of the Nicaraguan judiciary understand that unless they change course and act as neutral enforcers of the law, and respect democratic norms, the international community will hold them responsible and accountable for their actions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

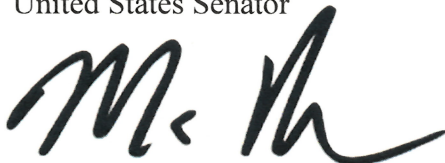
Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator



TED CRUZ
United States Senator



DAVID A. PERDUE
United States Senator



JAMES LANKFORD
United States Senator