



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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House Foreign Affairs Committee
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Hearing
on

The Evolving Human Rights Crisis in Nicaragua

September 27, 2018 – 9:30-11:00 a.m.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Submitted by:

The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the Department of State for their solicitous concern for the humanitarian, political, and economic crises in Nicaragua. On August 3-6 I visited Nicaragua on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to express the steadfast support of the Church in the United States for the mediation efforts of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference. I saw firsthand the tremendous suffering of the Nicaraguan people, and yet was filled with hope, for theirs is a living faith that moves them towards reconciliation, peace, and stability.

I would offer the following three general and interrelated recommendations based on extensive interviews, consultations, and analysis:

1. I commend the United States Government's support for the mediation efforts of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference. The Nicaraguan bishops, as a corporate and institutional entity, are the only sector of civil society capable of mediating in the present crisis. I was astounded and encouraged as I witnessed the full support given to the bishops by all sectors of society, from "progressives" to "conservatives." The faith community is also united in Nicaragua, and this is a source of great strength for their society.
2. It is imperative that the parties return to the negotiating table as soon as possible. The longer the present impasse lasts, the more difficult it will be to arrive at a rational solution to the crisis. The bishops are willing; it is time that the Nicaraguan Government realizes that this impasse cannot become a *modus vivendi*.

3. And finally, I agree with the statement emitted by the U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua on June 11, 2018, that while there is a place for international observation and accompaniment, this crisis must be resolved by Nicaraguans themselves. This is essential if peace is to prove lasting.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with you on your efforts to help the Nicaraguan people arrive at a just resolution to the present crisis.

The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops