As president of Loyola University Maryland and chair of the board of directors of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, Rev. Brian F. Linnane, S.J., released this statement on June 7, 2018.

The escalating tension and violence in Nicaragua are threatening—and, in fact, taking—the lives of those who are speaking out against their government. The violent suppression of non-violent demonstrators is abhorrent. As compassionate, civically engaged residents of our world, we must consider our role in working for justice.

The very lives of Nicaraguan leaders who are pushing for peaceful negotiation are threatened—including that of my brother Jesuit, Fr. José Alberto Idiaquez, S.J., the rector of Central American University (UCA) of Nicaragua. When the dignity of the individual person is at risk, our Jesuit Catholic university community must come together in prayer, thought, and intentional action.

Like all Jesuit institutions, the UCA of Nicaragua embraces its mission not only to educate students, but also to inspire their commitment to a just, humane, and environmentally sustainable world. In addition to protecting its students and speaking for justice, the UCA is also sheltering citizens whose lives are at risk—an admirable step for a university to take in this situation, and precisely the type of action you would expect of a Jesuit university.

My fellow presidents in the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities and I are calling upon the Nicaraguan government to honor the constitutional rights of its citizens, beginning with the freedom of expression and peaceful protest. We have pledged to spread the word about the situation in Nicaragua not only on our campuses, but also in our dioceses and in our communities, reaching out to lawmakers in the U.S. who may be able to have an impact.

I invite the members of our Loyola community to join me in praying that all parties can come together in peaceful, fruitful negotiations to work out solutions for the good of the people of Nicaragua and to consider how you, too, can take action.

“We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that,” said Blessed Oscar Romero. “This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.”

Together, let us do something well and raise our voices with and for the people of Nicaragua, advocating for life, for justice, and for peace.