The Association of Jesuit Universities entrusted to the Society of Jesus in Latin America (AUSJAL) is concerned about the new aggression of the Nicaraguan government towards their own university students, and, in particular, toward those who benefit from the budgetary assignment of 6% of the government’s income, in accordance with the legislation currently in effect.

In a new attempt to go against the rule of law and the equality of educational opportunities for students, the Nicaraguan government aims to curtail the legitimate aspirations of all youth seeking an adequate university education, by eliminating state grants assigned to the University of Central America (UCA) annually. If implemented, this measure will affect more than half of the university’s student population. Nearly 5,000 UCA students would be affected by this arbitrary decision.

We cannot overlook this measure that the government proposed to criminalize legitimate protests from UCA students against the government, which – with these types of actions – continues to lose legitimacy. It is an aggression against freedom of thought, [including that which is] critical of authoritarianism and defends the university’s right to autonomy.

We stand in solidarity with the UCA Nicaragua community and support it in the actions that it is considering taking in defense of its 6% budgetary assignment, which has been in place since 1990. The 30 AUSJAL universities, based in 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries, will spread what is occurring in Nicaragua through whatever media they each consider appropriate. We solicit collaboration in solidarity from our 200 sister universities across the world that form the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU), in which they declare themselves to be in support of UCA within their respective countries.

Let’s not let them steal our hope! -Pope Francis

Rectors of the 30 universities of AUSJAL, December 7, 2018 (followed by a list of universities that have signed on to this letter).