November 26, 2019

Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
United States Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the four undersigned Jesuit organizations, we are writing to share with you a joint statement expressing our grave concern over the continuing erosion of democracy and human rights in Nicaragua.

Our organizations seek to bring greater attention to the plight of the people of Nicaragua under the oppression of the Ortega government. We are particularly concerned for the hunger strikers at various Catholic churches, and the students and faculty of our Jesuit sister school, the University of Central America (UCA), in Managua. There is great fear that government forces – already attacking and arresting students on and near the campus – will soon occupy the campus as well.

Mr. Secretary, we urge you to condemn acts of violence by the Government of Nicaragua against its own people, and to support peaceful efforts to restore democracy and civil rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and freedom of religion. We also ask that the United States endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the November 19 report of the Organization of American States High-Level Commission on Nicaragua, which documents “ongoing grave human rights violations and abuses of power by the Government of Nicaragua.” The U.S. Government must act and do all we can to ensure President Ortega stops this violence against his own people and restores peace in this nation. We strongly urge the United States to reject armed intervention as a means of restoring order as that will only lead to greater losses.

We pray for renewed strength for those who continue in the struggle to bring justice, peace and reconciliation to the people of Nicaragua.

With gratitude,

Rev. Michael J. Sheeran, S.J.  
President  
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

Christopher G. Kerr  
Executive Director  
Ignatian Solidarity Network

Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.  
Secretary of Higher Education  
International Association of Jesuit Universities

Rev. Ted Penton, S.J.  
Secretary  
Jesuit Conference, Office of Justice and Ecology
Cc: The Honorable James E. Risch  
Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Bob Menendez  
Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Chair of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, And Global Women's Issues  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, And Global Women's Issues  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel  
Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael McCaul  
Ranking Member, Foreign Relations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Albio Sires  
Chair, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security and Trade  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Francis Rooney  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security and Trade  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable James P. McGovern  
Co-Chair, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Christopher H. Smith  
Co-Chair, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission  
U.S. House of Representatives