December 18, 2019

Last year, I issued a statement expressing concern about the rapid erosion of democracy and human rights in Nicaragua. Unfortunately, in the months since then, the situation has continued to deteriorate.

More than a year and a half after protests initially broke out, the Nicaraguan government continues to repress peaceful demonstrations, incarcerate political prisoners and even to “disappear” opposition figures. On November 19, there was a violent attempt to enter the Jesuit University of Central America (UCA) in Managua campus by government-controlled groups in response to student protests. Nicaraguan mothers have been conducting hunger strikes to secure the release of their incarcerated children and people have been arrested for bringing water to those on strike.

Holy Cross once again joins our Jesuit partners, including the Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology, the Ignatian Solidarity Network, the International Association of Jesuit Universities and the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, in solidarity with our Jesuit brothers and colleagues in Latin America, to express our grave concern over the conditions in Nicaragua. We call on the government of the United States to condemn these 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 extend our deepest sympathies to the families of those who have lost their lives or liberty as a result of this conflict. We again urge the Nicaraguan government to respect the rights of its citizens, including their freedom to express their views safely without violence or repression. We call upon them to stop the bloodshed, and restore civil rights to their people. I also call on members of the Holy Cross community to join in condemning this violent oppression and to pray for a peaceful resolution to the suffering that has fallen upon the people of Nicaragua.

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