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Statement by the IHRN Executive Committee Concerning Assaults on Academic Freedom in Nicaragua

The Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN), an alliance of more than 90 honorary societies that defends the fundamental rights of scholars and health professionals worldwide, joins colleagues within the global scientific and research communities in condemning ongoing assaults on academic freedom in Nicaragua.

We are alarmed by the Nicaraguan government's recent decision to cancel the legal status of the Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua, a vital organization dedicated to advancing science and technology and promoting scientific education in the country. This disturbing decision follows the Nicaraguan Parliament's abrupt closure of several universities earlier this year, its withdrawal of funding from the University of Central America, and its passage of legislative amendments that strengthen governmental control over university curricula and academic programs. Attacks on academic institutions in the country are part of a wider, escalating crackdown on civil society and human rights following popular demonstrations in April 2018. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the government has closed more than 200 civil society organizations since the 2018 demonstrations, including more than 130 organizations this year.

These repressive measures have had a devastating impact on research and higher education and are inconsistent with the government's commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights. We call upon Nicaraguan authorities to cease their assaults on academic freedom and to restore the legal status of the Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua and other arbitrarily dissolved institutions. We also call on government authorities to permit access to the country by international human rights monitoring bodies for the purpose of observing, documenting, and reporting on the country's human rights situation.

**Executive Committee
International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies**