

IANAS 3rd STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA

AGGRAVATION OF THE CRISES IN SCIENCE, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In June 2022, the Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences (IANAS) issued a “Statement on the Situation in Nicaragua”. In this statement, the cancellation by the Nicaraguan government of the legal status of the Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua (ACN) was strongly condemned. Deep concern was also expressed about the cancellation of state funding for the University of Central America (UCA) and the policy changes referent to the autonomy of institutions of higher education severely compromising the academic freedom and autonomy of universities in Nicaragua.

In April 2023, IANAS issued a second statement on “The Crisis in Science, Higher Education, and Freedom of Expression in Nicaragua”. The attacks on democracy systematically perpetrated by the government of Nicaragua were strongly condemned. The statement also criticized harshly (1) the cancellation of the legal status of the Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua and of nearly 200 non-governmental organizations, (2) the cuts in state funding for higher education, (3) the closing and confiscation of assets of private and Catholic universities, (4) the restrictions imposed on scientists limiting their research and ability to develop international collaborations, (5) the cancellation of citizenship, and (6) the expulsion of dissenting voices from the country.

Since 2020, at least twenty-six Nicaraguan universities have been closed, including the University of Central America, and their assets seized by the Nicaraguan government. Additionally, more than 3,000 civic groups were shut down. Religious congregations, including Missionaries of Charity, founded by Mother Teresa, and the Holy See nunciature in Managua, were closed.

Unfortunately, instead of opening dialogue with civil society, as called for by IANAS, we now see further arbitrary actions being taken by the Nicaraguan government. Once again, IANAS, which unites the national science academies from 24 countries in North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean region, adds its voice to those who call for respect for democracy and human rights. We again urge the government of Nicaragua to review its positions, resuming dialogue with civil society, thereby paving the way for the resumption of democracy.