

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 8, 2018

Luis Almagro Lemes  
Secretary General  
Organization of American States  
1889 F Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Secretary General Almagro,

We write to express our profound concern regarding the deteriorating situation in Nicaragua, and to request, within all applicable rules and regulations, that you publicly and openly work within the OAS organization to help restore democratic order in Nicaragua. Toward that end, and following the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report condemning Nicaragua's increasing repression, we also request that you begin to consider the process of invoking Article 19 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

According to numerous reports, the Ortega regime's police and paramilitary operatives have used violence including live ammunition against civilians to quash dissent. There are also allegations of chemicals being used against protesters. The *Centro Nicaragüense de los Derechos Humanos* has reported that more than one hundred people have been killed since the protests began on April 18, 2018. Over more than eleven years of rule, the Ortega regime has corrupted Nicaragua's judicial, legislative, military, security, and electoral institutions, filling top positions with Sandinista cronies. Meanwhile, independent media, pro-democracy activists and civil society groups have faced increasingly severe repression. Despite increased demands for free, fair, and multi-party elections, Ortega continues to insist that his wife Rosario Murillo, whom he appointed Vice President in 2016, will assume the presidency in 2021 to continue his corrupt and oppressive regime.

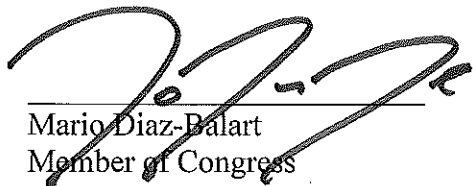
Now is a pivotal time for Nicaragua's future. Despite escalating repression and violence, the Nicaraguan people courageously continue to demand essential liberties and basic human rights. Although we were disappointed to see a weak resolution passed at the OAS on June 5, 2018, we believe that it is not too late for this organization to unequivocally stand with the Nicaraguan people and demonstrate ardent dedication to the democratic principles enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

You expressed in your May 23, 2018 announcement that, you want three things for Nicaragua: democracy, truth and justice, and the full exercise of human rights in Nicaragua. Since that statement, more protesters have been killed and the Ortega regime has sunk to new lows in repressing dissent. Accordingly, we respectfully urge you to openly and unequivocally condemn the Ortega regime's human rights abuses in Nicaragua, demand accountability for the murders and other acts of violence against activists, and call for free, fair, and multi-party presidential elections overseen by credible domestic and international electoral observers. We also urge you to begin to


consider the process of invoking Article 19 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter because the repression and blatant power grabs in Nicaragua constitute “an unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order or an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order.” The Ortega regime must be held accountable for its crimes and failure to adhere to basic democratic principles.

Toward democracy, truth, justice and the full exercise of human rights in Nicaragua, we urge you to demand accountability for the Ortega regime’s human rights abuses and publicly press for genuine democracy on behalf of the Nicaraguan people. Thank you for your attention to this matter of utmost importance.

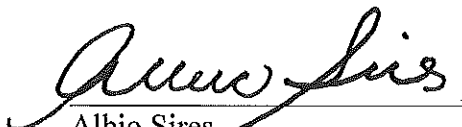
Sincerely,



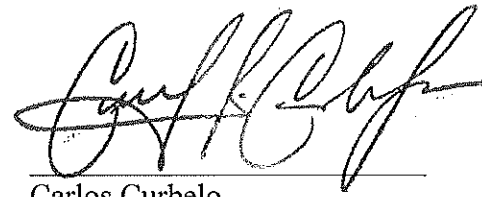
Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo  
Member of Congress