

Statement on the Release of Political Prisoners in Nicaragua
PILPG Circle of Former Ambassadors to the Human Rights Council:
- Welcomes the release of political prisoners
- Strongly condemns violations of the right to a nationality

The Public International Law and Policy Group's Circle of Former Ambassadors to the Human Rights Council is closely following recent developments in Nicaragua.

The **Circle** warmly welcomes the release of 222 political prisoners by the Ortega regime. We share the joy of their families and colleagues and, in general, of the Nicaraguan society. Furthermore, the **Circle** recognises the efforts of both Nicaraguan and international NGOs, human rights defenders and several governments, including the United States, that made such a constructive move possible.

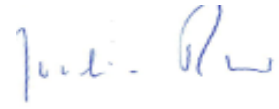
Regretfully, this positive step came along with shameful conditions that constitute major setbacks. Last minute amendments to the Nicaraguan Constitution introduced by the Ortega regime stripped the political prisoners off their nationality and political rights just before they were released, forcing them to flee their country stateless and as exiles. The amendments are in breach of article 20 of the Constitution and are likely to be invalid. More importantly, they violate article 15 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the right to a nationality and, therefore, are totally unacceptable and should be condemned, immediately and without hesitation, by the international community as the **Circle** does. In this context, the **Circle** praises the Spanish government's decision to grant Spanish citizenship to all 222 political prisoners.

Monsignor Rolando Jose Alvarez, one of the political prisoners that was freed, refused to leave Nicaragua. In retaliation, he was rearrested and condemned without trial to 26 years in prison by the Ortega regime. The **Circle** condemns in the strongest possible terms Monsignor Alvarez' incarceration and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

The **Circle** urges the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Human Rights Council, the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to urgently address the situation of Nicaragua.

February 13, 2023

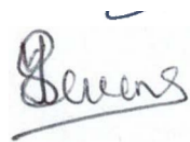
Joachim Rücker
Former Ambassador of Germany



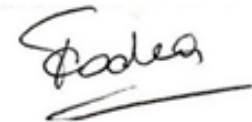
Keith Harper
Former Ambassador of the United States of America



Yvette Stevens
Former Ambassador of Sierra Leone



Filloreta Kodra
Former Ambassador of Albania



Tudor Ulianoschi
Former Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova

Tudor Ulianoschi

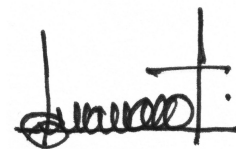
Amanda Ellis
Former Ambassador of New Zealand



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