

Ortega Dictates a Law of Self-Amnesty in Nicaragua

By Ismael López / Maynor Salazar (Confidencial)
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It aims to prevent the investigation of paramilitaries, police and those responsible for the killings



NO to Amnesty! I'm Innocent. I Demand Freedom. Long Live Masaya!

Relatives of the political prisoners and victims reject it. UN: “Amnesties for serious violations of human rights are prohibited by international law”

HAVANA TIMES – The government of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo have declared their own amnesty. On Friday they sent to the National Assembly what was already vox populi in the corridors of Nicaraguan politics: an amnesty law that seeks to leave in impunity all crimes committed by police and paramilitaries against the self-organized population that came out to protest in 2018 against the regime.

Considered emergency legislation, the law was passed by the Sandinista dominated Assembly on Saturday on a 70-15 vote.

The bill was signed by Ortega deputies and their allies in the legislature and aims to close the doors to the families of victims of the government repression who have said they will not tire of demanding justice.

Meanwhile, the government tries to justify its self-amnesty with a new promise to free all political prisoners, something it had already committed to at the negotiation table with the Civic Alliance since the end of March. However, to date, it has only released a portion of the prisoners and under the regime of house arrest, without giving them full freedom.

“Ample amnesty is granted to persons who have participated in the events that occurred throughout the national territory from April 18, 2018 until the date of entry into force of this law,” says Article 1 of the law.

But it goes beyond that. In search of impunity, it establishes that the amnesty is also for people *“who have not been investigated, who are in investigation processes or in criminal proceedings and in compliance with the execution of sentences”*.

“Therefore, the competent authorities will not initiate investigations; they will close the administrative processes initiated, and the criminal proceedings to determine responsibility, as well as the execution of sentences, at the time of entry into force of this law,” it further states.

“The present amnesty law covers all political and common crimes”, establishes Article two of the law.

During the protests against the dictatorship at least 325 people were killed, mostly young opposition demonstrators. More than 60 thousand Nicaraguans were forced into exile and almost 800 people were arrested, many the objects of cruel torture, according to national and international rights organizations.

For the majority of these crimes, the human rights organizations have identified police and paramilitaries related to the government as responsible. So far none of them has been investigated for any crime.

UN: such amnesties are prohibited by international law

“Amnesties for serious violations of human rights are prohibited by international law. These generate impunity, which can lead to more violations,” said Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a statement.

“Nicaraguans have the right to truth, justice and reparation,” said Bachelet, the former president in Chile and a member of that country’s Socialist Party.

The amnesty law is not endorsed by the Civic Alliance, said Jose Pallais, a spokesman of Nicaragua’s Civic Alliance. He noted that it is only a unilateral decision of the Government on the sidelines of negotiations with the opposition in the national dialogue.

Likewise, the emergency law is not endorsed by the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners. "We do not want there to be any amnesties. The Government already promised to release them completely. We know that their aim is to grant amnesty to their assassins, to the repressors, to all those on their side, because on the side of the political prisoners, none are guilty of anything," said Daniel Esquivel, a member of the Committee.