



# **GNDEM's STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN NICARAGUA**

**The Nicaraguan Government has to restore the minimum democratic principles of respect for the life and dignity of all its citizens**

*August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018*

The Global Network for Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM)<sup>1</sup> unequivocally and emphatically condemns the democratic rupture embarked and the human rights violations perpetrated by the Government of Nicaragua, headed by President Ortega.

The Nicaraguan Government is violating essential principles of representative democracy in its response to the citizen protests taking place in the country since April this year - it is undermining the division of powers, limiting freedom of expression, repressing political opposition and disregarding human rights. The repressive measures undertaken by President Ortega and the attacks perpetrated by paramilitary forces aligned with the Government against protestors have left more than 350 dead and thousands injured during the past 3 months.

GNDEM calls for President Ortega to implement available mechanisms to guarantee a peaceful and democratic solution to the present crisis. In this sense, it considers that it is imperative that the Nicaraguan Government offers the necessary guarantees for citizens - particularly the opposition - to participate in the formation, control, exercise of power freely. It is also essential that free, transparent and authentic elections that faithfully represent the will of citizens be ensured by an electoral authority - clearing any doubts about the legitimacy of electoral results from Nicaraguans and the international community. This is necessary for the country to restore its path towards the Rule of Law, democratic principles, and the respect for the life and dignity of all Nicaraguans.

GNDEM appeals the Government of Nicaragua to call for early elections as an exit for the humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, it offers its support to oversee the electoral process in the case that such mechanism be implemented. We do so also in consideration and respect for the capabilities of local organizations - including "Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia", a member organization of GNDEM and Acuerdo de Lima in Nicaragua - as well as in recognition of the legitimacy of regional systems of governance in America. In line with the latter, GNDEM calls on Luis Almagro - the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) - to invoke the implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and convene an emergency meeting of the Permanent Council of this continental organization to address and promote a solution to the critical situation in Nicaragua.

GNDEM exhorts all relevant domestic, regional and international actors to promote a peaceful and urgent solution to the crisis in Nicaragua through the oversight of the implementation of democratic mechanisms and the provision of full and verifiable guarantees for the participation of the opposition and all of the citizenry in the process.

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<sup>1</sup>\* GNDEM is a platform that brings together more than 200 civil society organizations that carry out domestic electoral observation throughout the world.

This statement was endorsed by:



**Endorsers:**

1. Acuerdo de Lima<sup>2</sup>
2. Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development
3. Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
4. European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations
5. East and Horn of Africa Election Observers Network (E-Horn)
6. Election Observation Group (ELOG)
7. European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE)
8. Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM)
9. Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)
10. National Election Watch
11. SADC-ESN
12. West Africa Election Observers Network (WAEON)

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<sup>2</sup> “Acuerdo de Lima” is the regional platform that gathers the following electoral observation organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean: Poder Ciudadano (Argentina); Bolivia Transparente (Bolivia); Misión de Observación Electoral (Colombia); Corporación Participación Ciudadana (Ecuador); Acción Ciudadana (Guatemala); Alianza Cívica (Mexico); Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia (Nicaragua); Justicia y Paz (Panama); Costa Rica Íntegra (Costa Rica) Decidamos (Paraguay); Transparencia (Perú); Participación Ciudadana (Dominican Republic); Iniciativa Social para la Democracia (Salvador); Hagamos Democracia (Honduras); and (Venezuela).