

# EIGHTH REPORT

Nicaraguan Observatory  
Against Torture

# A SYSTEMATIZATION OF 158 CASES OF TORTURE

Executive Summary



Colectivo  
de Derechos Humanos  
Nicaragua Nunca +



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The Human Rights Collective Nicaragua Nunca Más presents “the 8th report of the Nicaraguan Observatory against Torture” as part of its work of documenting, systematizing and analyzing complaints of acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This Observatory was created as a response to serious human rights violations perpetrated against political prisoners since protests started in April 2018. Since this moment until today, a state of terror has been established, based on policies such as arbitrary detention and torture against persons considered to be “opponents” and hence deserving of **being treated as enemies without rights**.

This report is the result of a systematization of 158 cases of victims of torture. 130 of these are men and 28 are women, including a transgender woman. Each case is supported by an internal file made up of several components including: statements by political prisoners and/or members of their families, photographs and/or videos, public complaints, files of precautionary and provisional measures, among other elements necessary in the documentation of these crimes **against humanity**.

It is essential to mention that express authorization was given by political prisoners or their relatives to include their cases in reports made by the Collective. The seriousness of the context in which we find ourselves leads us to redouble security measures and prevent acts of repression against the victims or their families. Therefore, we have chosen to maintain confidentiality in all cases, mentioning in the text our internal file only, which has random letters and numbers.

This report is proposed as a tool that **contributes to victims’ demands for justice as well as** the construction of historical memory to preserve the truth of the atrocities committed against political prisoners and their families. It is also intended for international advocacy toward human rights protection organizations and multilaterals in order to advance: legitimate and urgent measures against these crimes against humanity, the prosecution of the perpetrators and comprehensive reparation to the victims. That is why this report focuses on the information collected and systematized, which demonstrate patterns of action and forms of torture, of which more than 40 forms or methods were identified.

Among the 158 people documented, 9 of them were older adults at the time of arrest, with an age range between 60 to 69 years. They were detained between 2018 and 2022. This shows that the age of the people was not a deterrence to detention or the practice of torture exercised by state or parastatal agents. Neither were their medical condition prior to detention. Seven of these nine elderly people reported diseases or medical conditions prior to their deprivation of liberty. These included: herniated lumbar discs, diabetes, hypertension, prior bouts of cancer, kidney problems, insomnia, heart and gastric problems. The detention of these older adults was reported in Matagalpa, Masaya, León, Rivas and Managua.<sup>1</sup>

Medical issues prior to detention were reported in 43 out of the 158 cases. Among these, hypertension, diabetes and kidney problems were the most common. However, other

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<sup>1</sup> Records: [XBF1666-7104](#), [LSV5495-0345](#), [RGJ8543-2017](#), [MGS0446-0112](#), [QJC1593-578](#), [LOZ2245-8131](#), [DLD6128-8158](#), [RBJ0897-1652](#), and [FKA5812-8130](#)

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conditions like migraines, arm or leg injuries, congenital diseases, allergies, among others, were also reported. Despite this, the victims did not receive quality and timely medical care, whether general or specialized.

Among 158 people included in this report, 153 participated in the protests that began in April 2018, whether by attending demonstrations or sit-ins, painting graffiti or denouncing on social media the serious human rights violations committed by the state. Of the total number of cases received, 123 people were threatened or harassed prior to their arrest, evidencing a surveillance scheme.

Of the total number of documented cases, taking as a parameter the intensity of the suffering reported by each of the persons interviewed, as well as the overall analysis of each file, we can affirm that at least 151 of the 158 suffered torture, and the remaining 7 were victims of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

This practice of torture usually started from the first moment of arrest. 136 people, representing 86% of the cases, were victims of violent arrests, either through physical aggression such as beatings, pushing, dragging, beatings with weapons, threats with weapons, or verbal violence, such as threats of rape and death threats, among others. These threats or attacks were also made against family members, but it is particularly serious that in the midst of these arrests, in seven cases it was reported that police officers beat or pointed firearms at children (children or nephews or nieces of those arrested).<sup>2</sup>

Detainees were held in various torture sites. In preparing this report, the Collective identified acts of torture perpetrated in 33 police stations located in 29 municipalities (14 departments), clandestine or irregular centers in 8 municipalities, 7 prisons, and El Chipote, both old and new; The **data** show that these sites were found throughout different regions of the country. This shows that torture was a systematic and widespread practice.

Over the past five years we have uncovered evidence of more than 40 acts or methods of torture against political prisoners, among which are:

- 1) Extreme and inhumane conditions of detention (151 cases)
- 2) Degrading verbal treatment (102 cases)
- 3) Beatings (130 cases)
- 4) Death threats against them and/or their families (84 cases)
- 5) Temporary enforced disappearance (34 cases)
- 6) Burns (18 cases), electric shocks (15) and torture by suspension or "hanging" (17 cases)
- 7) Pulling out nails (7 cases) and simulated execution or murder (9 cases)
- 8) Other acts such as dragging people, dry and wet asphyxiation, lacerations or cuts with knives, strangulation, threats with weapons, mutilation and similar acts, "Russian roulette," incitement to commit suicide, poisoning by tear gas bombs or fumigation, deprivation of medical care, food and hydration, coercion to ingest drugs, overcrowding, among others.

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<sup>2</sup> Files: OGX8933-8087, WST9077-8140, CTJ25963107, PKL2567-7043, ICR7267-4954, SXC6506-4682 and MHD6665-9635

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We reiterate that these references and data illustrate the experiences of only some of the political prisoners and were taken from testimonies and stories shared with the Collective by released people and the families of those still imprisoned in arbitrary and unconstitutional confinement.

According to analyzed information, the practice of torture has been part of a widespread and systematic strategy of repression sustained during these five years, in most of the national territory, perpetrated against the civilian population considered as "opposition" or enemies. The government acted viciously against these people with the purpose of punishing them for having participated in protests. Of the total of 158 documented testimonies we received 1,429 complaints about the commission of the more than 40 types of torture described in the report.

The practice of torture in the country has been widespread but has changed over time. In the first two years (2018-2019) the practice of physical aggressions predominated, but this has gradually changed to "psychological aggressions" aimed at weakening and destroying the personality and emotional and mental stability of political prisoners. Techniques such as isolation (66 registered cases) or sensory overexposure, including continually keeping the light on, began to be used more often.

In addition, this report denounces the systematic practice of sexual violence in its various manifestations by the state. Sexual violence was used by the forces responsible for arbitrary detentions over the last five years. Of the cases covered in this report, there were 158 acts of sexual violence committed by State agents or on behalf of the State against 111 persons that were victims of some form of sexual violence, and in which at least 158 individual situations of sexual violence committed by state agents, and for state.

The 111 victims of sexual violence include men (91/130) and women (20/28); However, a higher proportion of the women victims suffered sexual violence as compared to the men. Moreover, the practice of sexual violence is exponentially more serious in the case of women due to the particularly egregious types of sexual violence perpetrated against them, the circumstances, purpose or intent and cruelty with which they were used, and hence the greater damage caused to the female victims, as well as the existence of a multifaceted expressions of sexual violence against women in Nicaragua, In addition to sexual violence, other forms of gender violence were inflicted on women.

The systematic practice of sexual violence in Nicaraguan prisons constitutes the crime of torture against the 111 victims. Likewise, considering that it was systematically directed at specific populations, the intentionality, the severity of suffering caused and the purpose of these acts, the most serious forms of sexual violence (such as sexual abuse and rape) also constitute *crimes against humanity*. These are actions for which the direct and indirect perpetrators of these serious human rights violations must be held responsible. Yet, until now, the state of Nicaragua remains in impunity.

This report includes a specific chapter on sexual and gender-based violence against women as a form of torture and manifestation of sexism. Women were victims of death threats and threats to have their children taken away, forced labor, forced nudity, interrogations under

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nudity, rape and threats of rape, sexual abuse, among others. It is alarming that 1 in 4 women who were deprived of their liberty was a victim of rape.

As mentioned, the Collective identified several torture centers. This report describes each of them and the forms of torture that predominated. The establishment of clandestine or irregular centers in at least 8 municipalities, which operated almost simultaneously and with similar torture techniques are evidence of a directive or order given from highest levels of the state. This is all the more evident considering that almost all people detained in these centers were sooner or later taken to a police unit. In addition, a testimony indicates that in once instance, police officers transferred a detainee to a clandestine center.

In the department of Carazo it was possible to identify 3 clandestine or irregular detention centers through the testimonies of the victims; one of them was located near a former police station checkpoint known as "Las 4 Esquinas" on the outskirts of the city of Diriamba; another was in the municipal hall of Diriamba, in which they held a person for a few hours prior to his transfer to the Jinotepe police station; and finally, a property located near the "Hogar Pajarito Azul" on the way to "Ojochal," in a sparsely populated area relatively far from the center of the municipality. Victims said that the property seemed belongs to "a soldier with money".

Unlike the clandestine or irregular centers identified in Carazo, those in Managua were often ostensibly private properties or homes, located in urban areas; in at least 3 of those 7 cases were located points close to the site; one person identified a clandestine center in a property located in "El Carmen", which is the neighborhood where the presidential couple lives. Another person said that their clandestine center was located approximately seven minutes from Molinos Francis Number 1; and, finally, another person took as a reference point "El Almendro Bar", without referring to a specific location. In the last case, the complainant was fleeing from his captors, so he could not remember more details.<sup>345</sup>

Both the clandestine centers and "El Chipote viejo" were erected as one of the worst torture centers in the country. The Collective has collected 89 cases of victims of torture and / or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in El Chipote Viejo, which is the center with the highest number of reported cases; These cases, which include 14 women and 85 men, occurred over the period from April 2018 to February 2019, and represent a significant sample of the hundreds of people deprived of their liberty in that place during those 10 months.

As a form of torture against political prisoners, prolonged solitary confinement was used in this center. 26 of the 89 documented cases were victims of this practice of torture inside the "Chipote Viejo." The practice of solitary confinement was accompanied by inhumane conditions of detention, including deprivation of food, lack of access to drinking water, denied access to reading material or news from the outside world, among others. This led to the political prisoners experiencing symptoms of despair, discouragement and depression; This

<sup>3</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: CRE8602-8110

<sup>4</sup> File: RBJ0897-1652

<sup>5</sup> File: AES7668-1190

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practice of torture was usually combined with interrogations as a form of constant pressure. Police officers endeavored to inflict as much physical suffering as possible on political prisoners and used various torture techniques.<sup>6</sup>

Of the 158 people included in this report, 36 were deprived of liberty in the "Judicial Assistance Direction," known as "El nuevo Chipote." 5 of them are women and 31 men. The change in types of torture in the country has not meant the reduction of suffering by political prisoners. Moreover, these changes, have been guided by a policy of destruction of the personality of detainees sustained over time, which could imply more lasting consequences on victims.

Of the total of 158 persons included in this report, 111 of them were held in at least one police station different from El Chipote (both old and new), and 13 of them were held in two police stations. We were able to identify police centers where torture and abuses were committed in at least 29 municipalities, located in 14 departments of the country. This constitutes a significant sample, which demonstrates that the practice of torture has been widespread and systematic. In addition, these cases show that torture has been applied since 2018, when this practice started to be reported, as well in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. Available information indicates that the practice of torture against political prisoners and their families continues as of the publication of this report.

Torture in penitentiary prisons has been a constant, mainly in the "Jorge Navarro", Máxima Seguridad and "La Esperanza", although acts of torture were also reported in prisons of Chinandega, Cuisalá, Granada and Estelí.

All of the various forms of torture that political prisoners have suffered and continue to suffer have negative impacts on their overall health. The following conditions have been and continue to be a constant in Nicaraguan prisons and are applied with greater viciousness and severity against those who are, or are suspected of being adversaries of the regime.

- 1) Isolation, which produces sensory deprivation, that is, the brain stops receiving sensory, social, emotional, and affective stimuli and begins to function at its lowest capacity. It makes people more suggestible, anxious and irritable, and can even cause hallucinations and psychotic symptoms.
- 2) Sleep deprivation, which, like isolation, has multiple harmful effects: it alters the body's immune balance, facilitating the emergence of cardiovascular, respiratory and infectious diseases, cancer, etc. It damages cognitive and thought processes, executive brain functions such as attention, memory, problem solving, comprehension, reasoning, maintenance of the level of consciousness, motivation, goal setting, association capacity, flexibility, creativity, and can cause mental confusion, hallucinations and psychosis.

<sup>6</sup> Files: KAM4489-8139, PYZ7454-8135, MEF3967-1231, ZFH8442-8127, RLE6666-8140, VWX2856-7506, AHR6658-8706, KUX7920-8119, LSV5495-0345, SVK5075-8125, LQD4109-8120, CPV2388-2419, JKS1167-178445, FSE3385-8097, QYG6533-5085, SSP4095-8127, ZTP0003-8106, MYU0804-6163, HIG9651-2151, TEA9944-1938, YCM3510-9874, CEW2197-0558, EAW5425-2391, FKA5812-8130, OTS8347-8122, and ZMK1134-2890.

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- 3) Decreased water intake, which leads to kidney damage and alterations of electrolyte balance, in addition to damage to all body systems such as the respiratory system, digestive system, liver, among others.
- 4) Food deprivation, which leads to acute malnutrition, pain resulting from permanent hunger, and the deficiency of basic nutrients needed to maintain a physiological balance so that all organs function properly. This leads to greater possibility of irreversible organ damage, including the weakening of the entire immune system, making the victim easy prey to new ailments.
- 5) The deprivation of human contact, mainly with relatives and trusted persons, while maintaining contact solely with their torturers: this is a technique known in torture manuals whose objective is to create a relationship of submission between torturer and victim and obtain false and incriminating confessions from the latter, submitting the victim to the will of the system. Since 2018 at least twenty mothers, grandmothers and fathers of political prisoners have died without permission to say goodbye to their imprisoned loved ones. The regime also deprived the prisoners of the opportunity to attend funerals, despite this being a right that is guaranteed in penitentiary regime laws. This technique has been applied with special viciousness against political prisoners with minor children to whom the regime has prohibited any type of relationship with their fathers and mothers, including by correspondence. This situation has become more flexible since December 2022, as a result of hunger strikes by political prisoners and public denunciations by family members in the last three months prior to the release and subsequent exile of 222 political prisoners.
- 6) Denial of medical care: political prisoners only had occasional access and at the discretion of officials, to medical services offered by the prisons, and were denied multiple requests for visits by the prisoners' personal doctors or medical personnel from the International Red Cross. It is known that political prisoners were occasionally administered medication, but it is not known by whom or for what reasons. Detainees with chronic illnesses were banned access to their personal physicians, "breaking the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which require that all prisoners, without discrimination, have access to medical services, including psychiatric services, and that a doctor visit all prisoners who are ill or seeking treatment on a daily basis"<sup>7</sup>
- 7) Sun deprivation: solar radiation is necessary for the production of vitamin D, which has important functions in maintaining health. Being deprived of sunlight constitutes in itself a deprivation of sensory stimulation, which is a form of torture as already pointed out above, and its deficiency alters calcium and bone metabolism, and also affects cardiovascular health, innate and acquired immunity and the regulation of cell growth, hence becoming a factor in cancer generation.

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<sup>7</sup> Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and Procedures for the Effective Implementation of the Standard Minimum Rules". Adopted by the United Nations in 1995.



- 8) The process being carried out in secret, without due process or legal guarantees, and without the assistance of a lawyer appointed by the kidnapped victim: this leads to a feeling of helplessness and contributes significantly to the intensity and severity of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Political prisoners held in the Máxima Seguridad prison also claimed to suffer psychological violence and constant verbal aggression, including: 1) total isolation, remaining alone in cells for several days or weeks, 2) guards arriving at dawn to knock on the doors so that they could not rest, 3) the guards constantly shouting at them outside the doors and remarking that they would not come out alive, 4) being taken out of their cells for interrogations, which lasted approximately 10 minutes as a form of intimidation, 5) constant verbal aggressions such as " You thought you owned us and that we were just dogs". <sup>8</sup> **These practices highlight an extremely violent, dehumanizing, consciously designed state strategy to transmit a message to an entire social group.**

Torture and deprivation of medical care caused steady deterioration in the health of torture survivors. Since 2020 the Nicaragua Nunca Más Collective, within the framework of a joint action with the Fund for Victims of Torture of the United Nations (UN) and various cooperation agencies, began support to former prisoners who were victims of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. 34 released people, including 12 women started individual therapy with the aim of counteracting the aftereffects of this painful episode in their lives that destroyed the individual psychic structure of victims and affected their families and social structures as well as their capacities to overcome these traumatic events.

Frustration, fear and anger stemming from trauma are often expressed negatively toward those closest to the victims. Yet, these emotions are often not properly recognized as products of trauma and can lead to isolation and stigmatization. Victims are then left feeling that they must face the challenge of survival alone. Trauma can also cause physical disease, including gastrointestinal disorders, allergies, hypertension etc.

Torture can totally modify the way of thinking and behavior of an individual. It is therefore of vital importance that victims receive immediate mental health attention and psychosocial accompaniment for the prevention and treatment of associated diseases. It is essential to address the visible and invisible effects of trauma on everyday life, especially for people readapting to the various spaces that were taken from them in imprisonment, including: family, culture, the workplace, and social life.

Victims have the right to heal and to recover their physical and mental integrity, security and dignity. They also have the right to express what they have experienced, to have their truth known and to rebel against the power imposed by silence as a way to avoid conflict and contradiction. Confronting the discourse that imposes arbitrariness, that does not allow questioning, or independent thinking is part of the healing process that breaks this cycle of endless violence.

16 persons included in this report were banished from their country on February 9 of this year, arbitrarily deprived of their nationality, their properties, and, presumably, of all of their

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<sup>8</sup> **Internal file number of the complainant: LOY5189-6751**

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rights as Nicaraguan citizens, turning this practice into a new form of repression against opponents and political prisoners, leaving them in a special situation of vulnerability and maximizing the suffering experienced.

Due to the seriousness of these abuses, the Collective carried out an investigation to identify the possible perpetrators. Among the 158 documented cases, 156 perpetrators or persons involved in detention and subsequent practice of torture were identified. Most of them were mentioned multiple times, that is, they were identified by two or more documented victims. These perpetrators have been identified with names, position and location at the time of arrest and / or torture. It is important to mention that people who were only identified by a physical description or some specific characteristic such as being "foreign" were not included in the list of perpetrators, as they could not be fully identified.

We were able to fully uncover the chain of command within the National Police. Within this chain of command, we have found officers from the lowest rank to the highest position within the institution, the latter being First Commissioner Francisco Díaz, who was denounced on one occasion for making threats against a political prisoner. This individual is the Director of the police, which is the main institution accused of systematic practices of torture. We have also identified 9 General Commissioners: General Commissioner Fidel Domínguez (León), General Commissioner Luis Barrantes (Masaya), General Commissioner Pedro Argueta (Carazo), General Commissioner Luis Alberto Pérez Olivás (DAJ-Chipote), General Commissioner Marvin Castro (Jinotega), General Commissioner Adolfo Marengo, General Commissioner Juan Valle Valle, General Commissioner Vladimir Cerda Moraga and General Commissioner Ramón Avellán.<sup>9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18</sup>

These Commissioners were denounced for threatening political prisoners, ordering arbitrary detentions and/or directing torture practices, among which were beatings, burns, pulling out teeth, torture by suspension, inhumane conditions, among others. Both General Commissioners Ramón Avellán and Fidel Domínguez were denounced by multiple victims -- twelve and six complaints respectively. The former was denounced for acts of torture perpetrated and directed and arrests made, and the latter for ordering and directing arrests, for constantly making death threats, as well as for harassing the political prisoners and their families.

The National Penitentiary System authorities acted in similar ways. There are complaints against its two highest authorities: Prefect Julio Orozco was identified as making death

<sup>9</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: WST9077-8140

<sup>10</sup> Files: OGX8933-8087, DMB0029-7259, DPR1649-8122, TTL4092-9941, RLE6666-8140 and MYE4555-8135

<sup>11</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: XTW0705-1649

<sup>12</sup> Files: AHQ6887-2103 and YKX0175-9010

<sup>13</sup> Files: ZAL8543-4947, CPV2388-2419 and LOY5189-6751

<sup>14</sup> Files: QMQ8541-8128, FKS1418-8124 and SWK7269-8122

<sup>15</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: LQD4109-8120

<sup>16</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: LOY5189-6751

<sup>17</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: WSK5582-9029

<sup>18</sup> Files: PKL2567-7043, ICR7267-4954, GKS8105-8121, JBY3929-8097, SXC6506-4682, PYZ7454-8135, FSE3385-8097, AEL1000-9103, MVV6962-8136, VVZ1431-8107, VNI5721-8097 and QOK6967-1791

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threats to political prisoners, and even of their forced disappearance; and<sup>19</sup> Sub-Prefect Venancio Alaniz, has been <sup>20</sup>linked to abusive searches and the events that occurred on December 31, 2018. January, February and March 2019 and the extrajudicial killing of Eddy Montes, events already addressed previously, as well as individual events such as beatings or death threats.

Different institutions and authorities were involved in the planning of these abuses. Among these, six mayors were identified as having carried out acts of surveillance, and threats and even ordering arrests of certain people between 2018 and 2019. They are: 1) Mayor of Nagarote Juan Gabriel Hernández Rocha, 2) Mayor of <sup>21</sup>Matagalpa, Zadrach Zeledón, 3) Mayor of El Rosario Ebert López, 4) Mayor of San Carlos Johnny Gutiérrez, 5) Mayor of Ticuantepe, Ligia Ramírez, and, 6) Mayor of Tipitapa César Vásquez Valle.<sup>22 23 24 25 26</sup>

Coordination between the Chief of Police, the Chief of the Penitentiary System, the Deputy General Treasurer, Mayors, Councilors and other workers of public institutions can only be possible if there is a single directive that compels them to work in a coordinated way for the same purpose -- the arrests and torture of political prisoners. Taking into account the Nicaraguan context and the absolute concentration of power in the Executive, it can be categorically stated that the main responsibility for the establishment of a policy of state terror based on torture lies with the presidential couple, that is, Daniel Ortega Saavedra and Rosario Murillo Zambrana.

The seriousness of these abuses led the international community to implement a series of mechanisms to denounce and investigate these crimes, such as the GIEI, MESENI or GRHEN, which, through constant reporting, have informed of continuous repression, as well as the commission of illegal and arbitrary detentions. While the practice of torture has been denounced within the country, before a totalitarian state with no democracy, the action of the international community is indispensable to protect the human rights of both political prisoners and the population in general. This is essential for the search for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of these serious violations such as torture.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Based on testimonies and information presented in this report, we can conclude that a widespread and systematic practice of torture, sustained from 2018 until today, is evident. This report is based on the systematization of 158 cases of victims

<sup>19</sup> Files: VNI5721-8097 and FSE3385-8097

<sup>20</sup> Files: VNI5721-8097, MHD6665-9635, OGX8933-8087, TRM1406-8125, VWX2856-7506, VNO0444-8096, KUX7920-8119, XBF1666-7104, QIH9128-8112, GXG2053-5154, MYE4555-8135, BKY3893-8098, BKY3893-8098, JAW4695-7422 and OQC2820-1910.

<sup>21</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: OGX8933-8087

<sup>22</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: KUX7920-8119

<sup>23</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: UZK8590-8137

<sup>24</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: NUR4142-7987

<sup>25</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: MHD6665-9635

<sup>26</sup> Internal file number of the complainant: AZT4729-6875

of torture, of which 130 are men, including 2 minors, and 28 women including one transgender woman. Each file contains different pieces of information that clearly demonstrate that practices of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment have been systematically committed in Nicaragua.

Within the 158 testimonies of victims of torture, there were 1,429 complaints about the commission of more than 40 types of torture enumerated in this report. Most of these different types of torture were perpetrated on more than one occasion or continuously and at different times during the period of arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

Taking into account the clear pattern of directing torture at a specific group of people, the intentionality, the severity of the suffering caused and the purpose of punishment for which the acts were perpetrated, in addition to the existing and sustained state framework for committing these crimes, allow us to affirm that the practice of torture in Nicaragua constituted crimes against humanity.

2. The implementation of torture is characterized by its systematic nature, by its widespread application in practically the entire national territory and by the viciousness of the methods used. It was possible to identify more than 40 forms or methods of torture used in these five years. Most of these were used systematically in detention centers, police, penitentiary, clandestine and irregular, evidencing a policy of torture against political prisoners.

Detainees were held in various torture centers; acts of torture were registered in 33 police centers, in 29 municipalities (14 departments), clandestine or irregular centers in 8 municipalities, 7 prisons, and El Chipote, both the old and the new. This distribution map of detentions and torture centers helps us to make torture visible as a systematic and widespread practice, throughout most of the country.

3. The practice of torture during these five years has varied; in the first two years (2018-2019) the practice of physical aggressions predominated. This gradually changed to a predominance of "psychological aggressions" aimed at weakening and destroying the personality and emotional and mental stability of political prisoners, so that techniques such as isolation (66 registered cases) or sensory overexposure began to be increasingly utilized. Continually keeping the light on, as well as subhuman conditions of confinement for extended periods are among the techniques used.

4. There is evidence of a pattern of surveillance and repression against persons considered opponents. Of the 158 people included in this report, 153 participated in the protests that began in April 2018; Therefore, of the total number of cases reviewed, 123 people were threatened or harassed prior to their arrest, either by state or parastatal agents. These threats and harassments were carried out by political operators, public officials, police and prison agents, state and military forces, especially during the arrests.

5. In most cases torture began from detention, and were perpetrated by police, parastatal agents and even members of the military. Of the 158 people included in this report, at least 136 of them suffered violence during arrests, either physical or

verbal, which in some cases was also perpetrated against family members. It is especially serious that in seven cases it was reported that police officers beat or pointed firearms to children in the midst of these arrests.

6. One of the most serious forms of torture we found was sexual violence; at least 113 of the 158 people were victims of it. This form of torture has turned out to be exponentially more detrimental for women due to the types of sexual violence perpetrated, the circumstances, intent and cruelty with which they were perpetrated and the impact caused to victims. 20 of the 28 women included in the report were subjected to sexual and/or gender-based violence, with at least 71 acts of violence identified, in addition to sexual violence against 13 female relatives of the persons documented. Due to the characteristics of sexual violence in the documented cases, it constituted *per se* a crime against humanity.

7. Among the torture centers identified, the establishment of clandestine or irregular centers in at least 8 municipalities was highlighted. These operated almost simultaneously and with similar torture techniques, reflecting a directive or order given from highest spheres of the state. Both the clandestine centers and "El Chipote Viejo" were erected as one of the worst torture centers in the country. The Collective received 89 cases of victims of torture and / or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in El Chipote Viejo (?), being the center with the highest number of reported cases occurring from April 2018 to February 2019. Of these cases 14 are women and 85 men.

The majority of documented persons (111 out of 158) were held in at least one police facility other than El Chipote (old or new). It was therefore possible to identify at least 29 municipalities in whose police centers acts of torture were committed. These are located in 14 departments of the country. The number of cases constitute a significant sample that demonstrates that the practice of torture has been widespread and systematic from 2018 until today.

Torture in penitentiary prisons has been a constant, mainly in the "Jorge Navarro", Máxima Seguridad and "La Esperanza" prisons, although acts of torture were also reported in the prisons of Chinandega, Cuisalá, Granada and Estelí.

Within these prisons, the testimonies of the people imprisoned in the Máxima Seguridad prison were especially serious. These victims claimed to suffer: 1) total isolation, remaining alone in their cells for several days or weeks, 2) guards arriving at dawn to knock on the doors so that they could not rest, 3) the guards constantly shouting at them outside the doors that they were not going to come out alive, 4) being taken out of their cells at certain times for interrogations, which lasted approximately 10 minutes, as a form of intimidation, 5) constant verbal aggression. These testimonies speak of an extremely violent, dehumanizing, strategically and consciously designed state practice to transmit a message to an entire social group -- a message to instill fear, that is, a practice of true state terror.

8. Due to the practice of torture and the deprivation of medical care, survivors have suffered a steady deterioration in their health. Since 2020, the Nicaragua Nunca Más Collective, within the framework of a joint action with the Fund for Victims of Torture of the United Nations (UN) and various cooperation agencies, began to support released victims of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment with the aim of counteracting the consequences of this painful episode in their lives that destroys the individual psychic structure, and affects the family structure and social life. Providing psychosocial care and supporting social integration of forcibly displaced Nicaraguan populations constitutes a major challenge for civil society organizations, the international community and host countries. Considering the damage caused by these traumatic events and the legal and social vulnerability of these populations, support programs are essential for their physical and emotional recovery.

9. The systematic nature of torture necessarily implies the involvement of a large number of people who must process information, make decisions and order or allow torture, especially when it is carried out in a generalized way. This is why not only police, penitentiary and parastatal agents, but also the entire structure that makes both arrests and the practice of torture possible in the country have been identified as perpetrators.

Through the analysis of the information and its systematization, it was possible to identify 156 perpetrators or persons involved in detention and subsequent practice of torture, most of whom have multiple mentions, that is, they were identified by two or more documented victims. These 156 perpetrators involved in detention have been identified with names, position and location at the time of arrest and/or torture. It is important to mention that there were people who were only identified by a physical description or some specific characteristic such as being "foreign" who were not included in the list of perpetrators. Persons identified as being foreign were mentioned as having participated in torture in at least 5 of the 14 identified departments where this practice was perpetrated.

In some of the cases, victims identified perpetrators, as well as places and other important data which determine criminal responsibilities. These constitute fundamental information for the success of the criminal processes that may eventually be opened against those responsible for these crimes.

We were able to identify the complete chain of command in the National Police, including officers from the lowest to the highest position within the institution, the highest being First Commissioner Francisco Díaz, who was denounced on one occasion for making threats against a political prisoner, in addition to being the Director of the main institution accused of systematic practices of torture. Nine General Commissioners have also been identified as perpetrators. The National Penitentiary System acted similarly, and there are complaints against its two highest authorities: Prefect Julio Orozco, and Sub-Prefect Venancio Alanís. In addition to these authorities, six Mayors were identified as having carried out acts of surveillance, threats and even having ordered the arrest of certain people.

10. The serious human rights violations in Nicaragua and the regime's strategy based on repression as the only alternative to the crisis have led to regrettable social consequences such as the establishment of a state of terror, polarization, loss of credibility in the justice system, and self-censorship of citizens due to fear of reprisals. In addition to the collective impact, it is worth highlighting the most direct or individual ones, such as the emotional and economic effect on the victims and their families. In addition, we must take into account the family disintegration due to the high number of Nicaraguans who have had to flee the country in search of refuge and international protection due to state violence and impunity.

11. Throughout these five years of crisis, the international community and various protection mechanisms have been attentive to the Nicaraguan situation, promoting various efforts that have culminated in relevant reports describing the evolution of the regime's strategy, in addition to making a registry of the victims and classifying the crimes committed. In 2022, progress was made in the creation of an accountability mechanism (Group of Experts for Nicaragua) to advance the identification of perpetrators and contribute to justice, a demand still in force despite the repression and persecution of victims.

Despite these efforts in search of justice, a greater commitment from the international community is absolutely necessary to advance toward the justice demanded by the victims, including bringing truth to light and ensuring reparation. In that regard, it should be noted that the serious situation experienced by the Nicaraguan people as a result of the existence of a cruel regime marked by the systematic commission of crimes against humanity is not a problem only of Nicaragua, but of all of humanity.

12. We reiterate as our main conclusion that, in Nicaragua, there is systematic persecution, criminalization and punishment of anyone who speaks out against the regime, for which there is an entire state and state machinery that by action or omission are also responsible for crimes against humanity, and specifically the crimes of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and extreme methods of terror --all serious violations of human rights committed against the Nicaraguan people.

## Actions against physical and psychological integrity during detention

1. Total isolation and communication deprivation. Exposure to total darkness or constant bright light.
2. Suffocation, cuts, burns, electric shocks, immobilization, tied to structures in a crucifixion-like manner.
3. Exposure to constant humidity (leading to fungal infections and serious skin conditions).
4. False information about the prisoner's family. Often showing photographs and videos of the prisoner's immediate family, with threats of harm or even claiming they are deceased.
5. Violent interrogations where intentional use of force, physical abuse, threats against the person's life and their family are employed as methods to obtain false confessions.
6. Striking vital body parts, using techniques such as the "telephone" (open-handed blows to both ears), repeated blows to the eyes, mouth, nose, testicles, breasts, neck, stomach, head, knees, and other sensitive areas using fists or high-caliber weapons. Extraction of teeth and nails.
7. Denial of medical assistance, including withholding medication for individuals with chronic illnesses.
8. Denial of food or provision of contaminated food (rat feces, cockroaches, crushed glass).
9. Witnessing or hearing violent acts against other incarcerated individuals.
10. Sleep deprivation.
11. Administration of sedatives or hallucinogenic substances.
12. Cruel, humiliating, and degrading treatment, including vulgar language and intentional use of physical force to inflict severe blows, exposure of the person naked to police, prison officials, and other detainees.
13. Rape, group rape, and multiple instances of sexual violence.
14. Sexual violence, including sexual harassment (public sexual touching, particularly prevalent in the LGBTQ+ population).

## Actions against physical and psychological integrity after detention

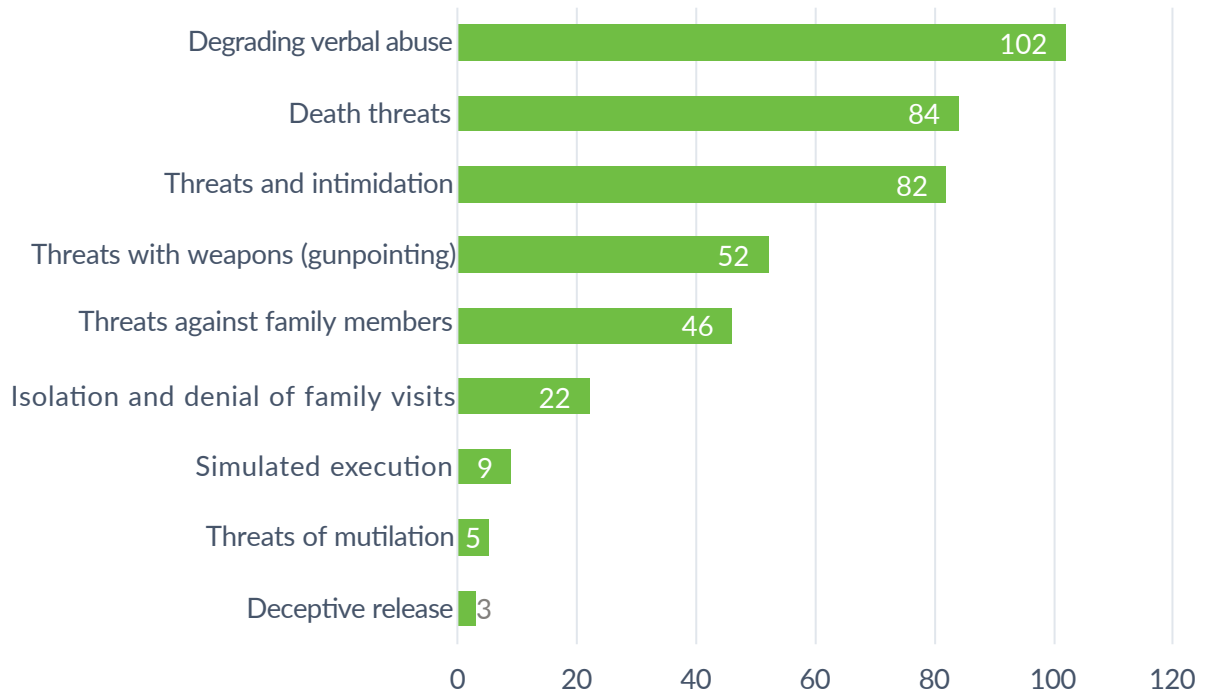
1. Unlawful confiscation or seizure of property that increases the person's vulnerability.
2. Stripping of identity (Individuals are erased from the civil registry system).
3. Exile
4. Destruction of their means of livelihood and sustenance, including harassment of their businesses and fiscal persecution by other administrative entities.
5. Persecution/Siege/Threats.
6. Violation of the right to freedom of movement, obstruction by police and paramilitary forces from entering or attending certain places, including the person's own residence, forcing exile as the only way out.
7. Violation of the right to nationality.

## Actions against physical and psychological integrity before detention

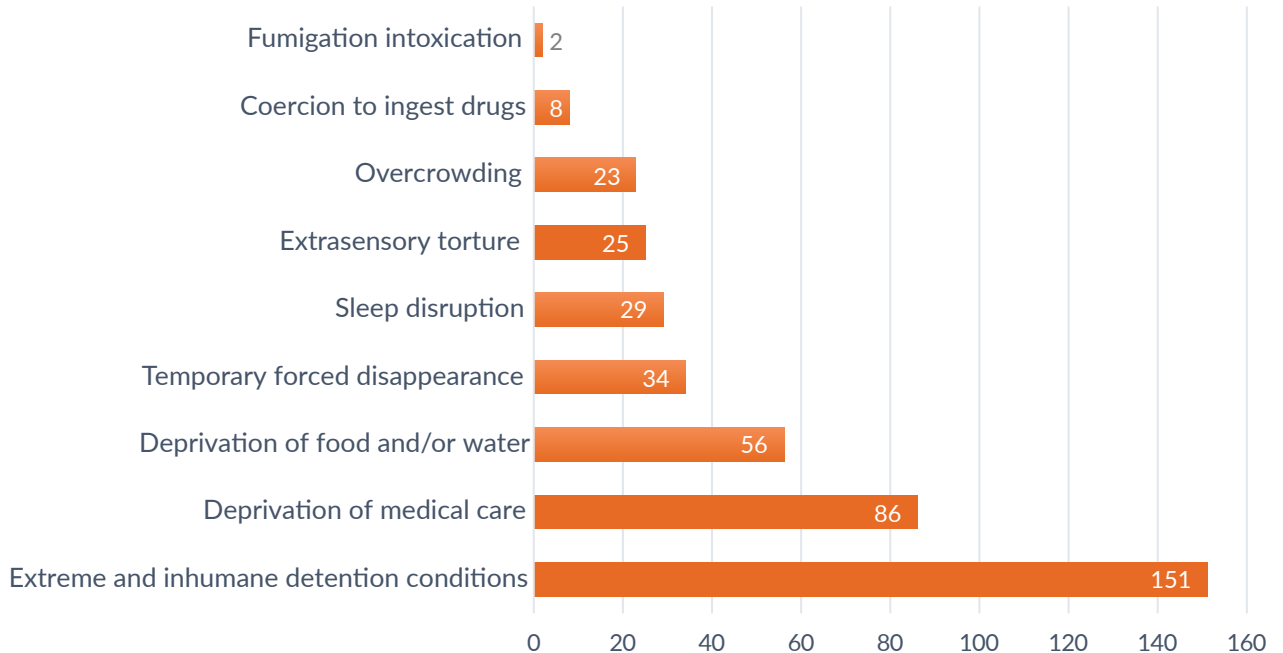
1. Threats
2. Persecution/Siege
3. Cruel, humiliating, and degrading treatment, including the use of offensive language and intentional use of physical force to cause severe harm.
4. Violation of the right to freedom of expression. No possibility to speak out and defend oneself.
5. Violation of the right to freedom of movement, obstruction by police and paramilitary forces from entering or attending certain places, including the person's residence.
6. Violation of the right to health (denial of medical care in public hospitals).
7. Violation of the right to assembly, demonstration, and association.



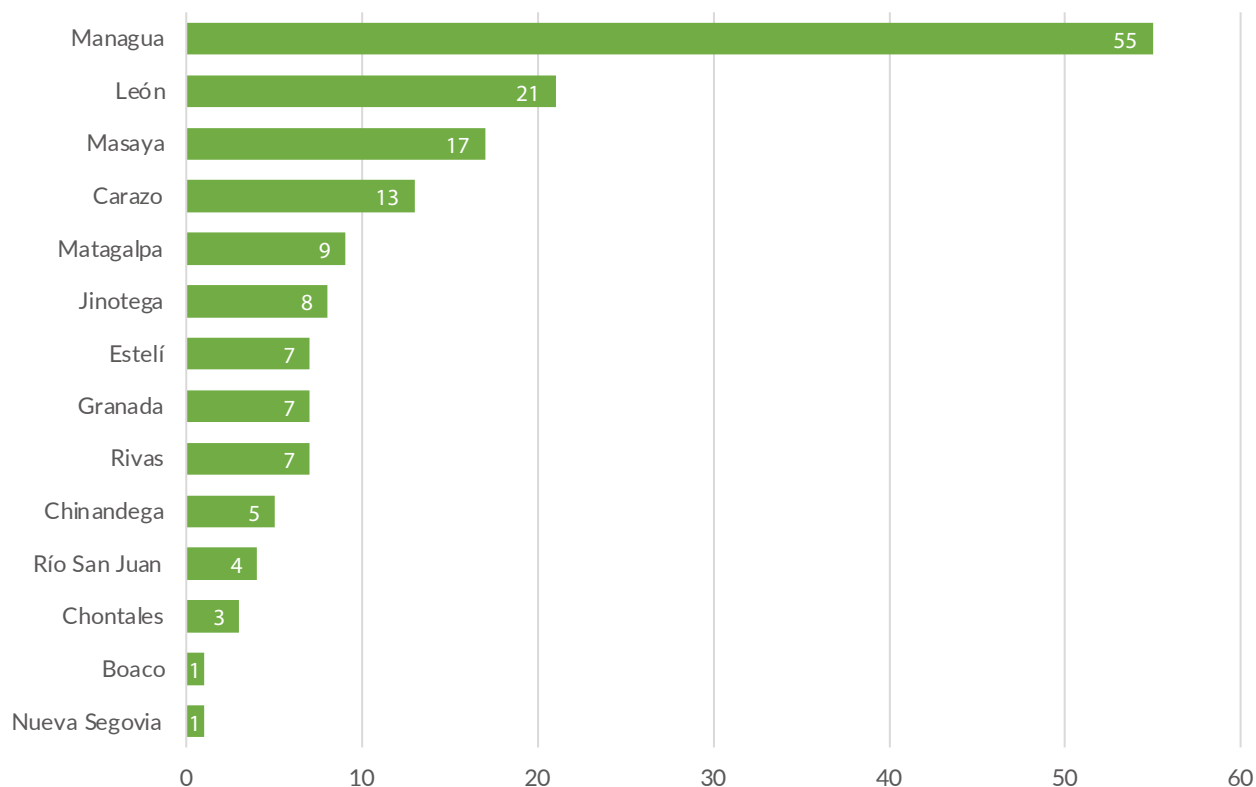
## INDIVIDUALS VICTIMS OF TORTURE RELATED TO DETENTION CONDITIONS



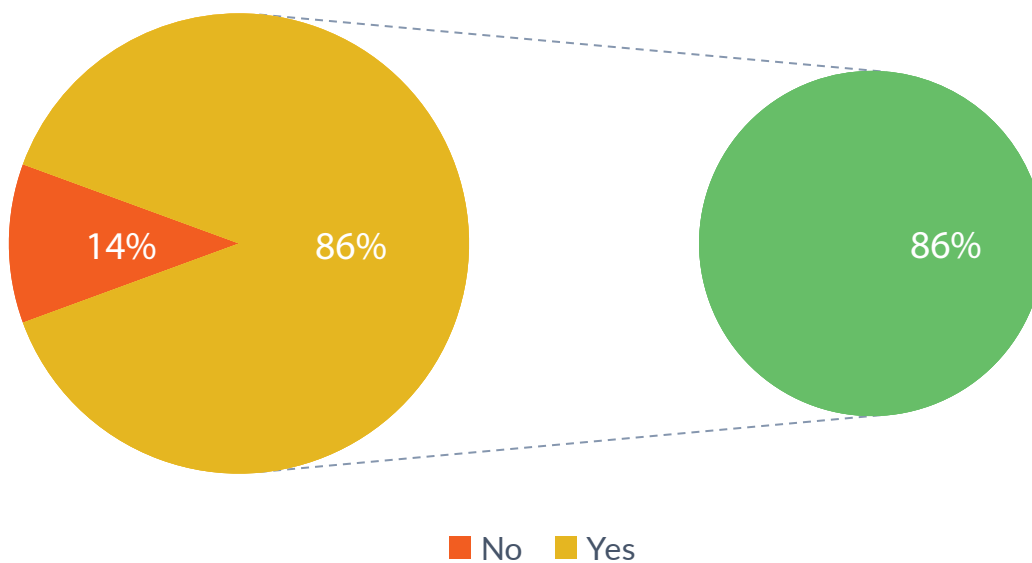
## INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF TORTURE RELATED TO DETENTION CONDITIONS



### INDIVIDUALS DETAINED BY DEPARTMENT/PLACE OF ARBITRARY CAPTURE



### USE OF VIOLENCE DURING DETENTION







Colectivo  
de Derechos Humanos  
Nicaragua Nunca +