



Statement by the International Federation of Catholic Universities on the seizure of Catholic universities in Nicaragua

The International Federation of Catholic Universities strongly condemns the seizure of universities by the Nicaraguan government as a grave act of aggression against the freedom, quality and autonomy of education. The recent confiscation of the assets and the attacks against the leadership, faculty and students of the Universidad Centroamericana in Managua destroys a globally recognized pillar of higher education and infringes on the right of access to quality education for thousands of students. This action builds on the previous closure in March of the San Juan Pablo II University in a deliberate attack against Catholic higher education.

Catholic universities globally provide high quality education and are leaders in cutting edge research that contributes to societal advancement, unwaveringly bound by humanistic principles and a commitment to autonomy and freedom of education and research. They have been the pillars of social development in the countries where they operate and have resolutely worked with their communities to strengthen cohesion and foster peace, while unwaveringly standing up for the right of each individual to his/her own voice and to self determination.

The International Federation of Catholic Universities and the regional associations of Catholic Universities strongly urge the Nicaraguan government to reinstate the universities' rightful leadership and to free the student leaders it has imprisoned, abiding by the rule of law that grants any accused the right to self-defense.

IFCU extends its support to the Province of the Society of Jesus running UCA as well as to all faculty, students and staff of the seized universities and we call on the government of Nicaragua to end its repression against universities that are the cornerstone of the future in any society.

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Signatories:

Prof. Isabel Capeloa Gil, President - International Federation of Catholic Universities

Fr. Dennis Holtschneider, President – Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Rev. Prof. Stephen Morgan, Executive Secretary – Association of Southeast and East Asian Catholic Colleges and Universities

Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney, President – European Federation of Catholic Universities

Prof. Eng. Rodolfo Gallo, President - Organización de Universidades Católicas de América Latina y del Caribe