



**NICARAGUA
SOLIDARITY
CAMPAIGN ACTION
GROUP (NSCAG)**

Annual Report 2019

Guests from Nicaraguan teachers'
union ANDEN staffing our stall at
NEU Conference, April 2019



Introduction

Throughout 2019, we campaigned against the NICA Act, which was signed into law by President Trump in December 2018. The Act imposed a raft of sanctions on Nicaragua and threatened a wide range of social programmes put in place by Nicaragua's FSLN Government. US pressure escalated during the year, with continued attempts to oust Nicaragua's democratically elected government and bring about regime change. We responded by stepping up our campaigning activities in defence of Nicaragua's sovereignty and democracy and the right of Nicaraguan people to determine their own future without foreign interference. At the same time, we stood up against an ongoing international campaign led by opposition groups outside the country and supported by media outlets such as the Guardian and the BBC.

We continued to campaign against the biased and inaccurate reporting of Amnesty International (AI), who have repeatedly and consistently criticised the Nicaraguan government and completely disregarded its massive achievements in tackling human rights issues in Nicaragua such as reducing poverty, massively improving health services and addressing gender inequality. In February, together with Alliance for Global Justice, we produced a detailed report [*Dismissing the Truth*](#) refuting Amnesty's claims. The report was sent to AI, but they failed to provide us with a satisfactory response.

As we approached the end of 2019, Nicaragua was once again fearing the worst and battenning down the hatches against the likelihood of further attempts by the US to destabilise the country and bring about regime change. At the same time, emboldened by the success of the US-backed military coup in Bolivia in November, US-financed Nicaraguan opposition groups were again seeking to cause chaos and destruction in a country which, following the failed attempted coup of 2018, was enjoying peace, stability and a return to normality.

UK Trade Union Solidarity

We are grateful to our trade union affiliates and supporters for their constant and unwavering support throughout this period. International solidarity has remained crucial in sustaining Nicaraguan trade unions through troubled times.

In April 2019, José Antonio Zepeda and Johnny Hodgson from the Nicaraguan teachers' union ANDEN visited the UK as guests of the NSCAG and the National Education Union (NEU). The visit further strengthened the solidarity links between ANDEN and the NEU and a very successful fringe meeting – *Standing up to Trump in Latin America: the Right to Live in Peace* – was held jointly with the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign. The main theme of the meeting was the Trump administration's intensification of sanctions against Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela and how critical international solidarity is in this context.

A highlight of the year was a visit to Nicaragua by a three-person delegation from UNISON West Midlands Region. The purpose of the visit was to show solidarity with UNISON's sister unions in health, local government and higher education and to join the Nicaraguan people in celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Revolution on 19th July. A copy of the delegation's report is available on request from the office.

We participated in a number of events during the year, including a Cuba Solidarity Campaign/Venezuela Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting held during the UNITE Conference in November and a UNISON Regional International Seminar in Newcastle, also held in November. We also organised stalls at all the major trade union conferences.

Our Summer Raffle, sponsored by UNISON, raised £2058, and our Winter Raffle, sponsored by GMB, raised £2201.

Our appreciation

With very limited resources, NSCAG relies almost entirely on trade union support in order to carry out its work; therefore we were very pleased to see that support from trade union regions and branches remained constant and that affiliations have increased. We were also delighted to welcome TSSA as our newest national affiliate.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to NSCAG's work, whether a trade union individual, branch, region or national office. We are also extremely grateful to the volunteers who have staffed our stalls at trade union conferences around the country and to those who have assisted us with translation work. A full copy of the NSCAG accounts is available on request.

Affiliations

In addition to TSSA, our national affiliates are: - ASLEF, BECTU, BFAWU, CWU, FBU, GMB, NEU, RMT, UNISON, UNITE and USDAW. By the end of 2019, 177 branches and regions were affiliated to us. For the breakdown of these by union see the chart below. Six trades councils were also affiliated.

Branch & region affiliation breakdown by union:

	Dec 15	Dec 16	Dec 17	Dec 18	Dec 19
ASLEF	0	0	0	0	0
CWU	15	12	12	9	10
GMB	5	5	9	10	9
NEU-NUT	8	8	9	7	9
RMT	1	1	1	1	2
UNISON	24	36	38	45	45
UNITE	57	51	45	46	38
USDAW	1	1	0	0	0
TOTALS	117	114	114	118	111

Staff: Louise Richards

NSCAG Executive Members: Dave Auger, Dave Cosgrave (Chair), Ruby Cox, Francisco Dominguez, John Drewery, Rita Drobner (until April 2019), Mark Glover, Bob Hardie, Julie Lamin, David McKnight, Ken Rustidge, Steve Sweeney

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group, 86 Durham Rd, London N7 7DT

Tel: (020) 7561 4836 Email: nscag@nicaraguasc.org.uk Website: www.nscag.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nicaraguasc/> Twitter: @NSCAG_UK