

Why 222 Nicaraguan Criminals Were Deported and Why They and Others Lost Their Citizenship

By the Nicaragua Solidarity Coalition

[The [Nicaragua Solidarity Coalition](#) is an international coalition of organizations and individuals who support Nicaragua's sovereignty. Its purpose is to share with the public accurate information about Nicaragua and to counter misinformation and lies about the country that are published in the media. Writings are based on personal experiences in Nicaragua as well as an understanding of its history and current conditions. The Coalition welcomes others to join.]

The major US media have been less than truthful about the 222 released prisoners, formerly Nicaraguan, who traveled to Washington by agreement with the US government, in a plane provided by the US, on February 9.



Photo [tweeted](#) by Secretary of State Antony Blinken on February 24, 2023. From left to right: Juan Sebastián Chamorro, Arturo Cruz, Victoria Cárdenas, Tamara Dávila, Pedro Mena, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Violeta Granera, Medardo Mairena, Felix Maradiaga. Four of these persons are covered in the present article.

What the media should focus on is that, as in the 1980s with Reagan's Contra war, the United States has been [trying to overthrow](#) the democratically elected government of Nicaragua. These 222 received US monies directly or indirectly, through nonprofits or businesses, to manage US aggressions against the State of Nicaragua. Many of them conspired with the US embassy in Managua. Most of them were [involved in the 2018 US-directed coup attempt](#) that left 253 people dead, hundreds of Sandinistas tortured and traumatized, and billions of dollars of damage to the economy. They were planning further actions in the run-up to Nicaragua's 2021 elections when they were arrested. Details follow, to substantiate these claims.

The media should be telling the US public how their tax dollars are used for lies and violence and the overthrow of democratically elected governments – as happened in

numerous countries in Latin America since World War II beginning with Guatemala in 1954.

These persons, who may be accurately regarded as US agents, [received money directly or indirectly from the United States](#) to wage acts of extreme violence during the coup attempt, [largely ignored by the international media](#). Nicaragua gave an [amnesty](#) in June 2019 to hundreds of those found guilty of crimes, with the caveat that no further crimes be committed. But after the coup attempt, these 222 continued to direct destabilization actions, or they financed and managed actions with money from US taxpayers.

In total, 316 people have been deprived of Nicaraguan citizenship because of their treacherous crimes. International bodies such as the UN refugee agency claim that this is illegal because the action was taken on “arbitrary grounds,” completely ignoring the evidence of what they had done. Deprivation of citizenship exists in most national legal systems including the US and UK. For example, the [UK government](#) has deprived 767 people of British citizenship since 2010 and taken away UK passports in 94 other cases. In the US, [committing an act of treason](#) can be grounds for losing citizenship.

Where did the US money come from and what was it used for?

Money from agencies funded by the US government was used in three main ways:

To finance media terrorism;

To create [so-called NGOs or nonprofits](#) which, for example, trained young people to overthrow their own government;

To create or sustain so-called “human rights” organizations.

Funds were directed through US agencies like [the US Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and others. USAID alone provided [US\\$315,009,297](#) from 2014 to 2021; the biggest years, of course, were 2017 and 2018 with a total of US\$100 million to nonprofits and “human rights” organizations. In May 2018, during the attempted coup, Tom Ricker of the Quixote Center [described](#) 55 NED grants awarded between 2014 and 2017, totaling US\$4.2 million, “as part of a U.S. government-funded campaign to provide a coordinated strategy and media voice for opposition groups in Nicaragua.”

Media terrorism refers to outright lies, fake news, and news distortion, including millions of fake messages through social media, to incite and maintain the coup attempt and to foment assassinations and hate crimes. These crimes included torture, murder and actual burning of Sandinistas; arson of Sandinistas’ homes; and destruction of dozens of public buildings like schools, health centers, and city halls. Since 2007, when the Sandinistas returned to the presidency, the US helped create and fund media not just to disinform Nicaraguans but to fool US citizens.

This funding helped create a subversive front of Nicaragua-based newspapers, television stations, radio stations, websites, news agencies, and social media pages,

whose sole purpose was and is to attack the Sandinista government, while pretending to be “independent.”

The US corporate media reprinted the false propaganda narrative created by this media front in Nicaragua. Thus, [the news that most people in the US get about Nicaragua is effectively created and paid for by Washington.](#)

Setting up NGOs or nonprofits. A complementary use of US funding was to set up NGOs and “think tanks,” which provided incomes for opposition figures, promoted their views and “research,” and enabled creation of training schemes aimed at young Nicaraguans.

Kenneth Wollack, now chairman of the state-funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED), [bragged to the US Congress](#) on June 14, 2018, that these US-funded bodies had trained 8,000 young Nicaraguans to take part in the uprising. Yorlis Luna has [described in detail the indoctrination process.](#) An article for [Global Americans](#) gave details of the NED “laying the groundwork for insurrection” in Nicaragua in 2018.

“Human rights” organizations have been set up or paid for by the US in Nicaragua since the 1980s. A country of just 6.3 million people has four human rights organizations – all funded by the US and one even [founded by the US government](#) in the ‘80s to cover up for the Contra. Their function is not to deal in general with human rights, but to create and sustain an image of “human rights violations” by the Sandinista government, feeding false or distorted information to the media and to international bodies such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

US money continues to fund their propaganda work, even when done from other countries. For example, prior to the 2021 Nicaragua Presidential elections, NED allocated [US\\$1,664,321](#) for Nicaraguans and their organizations in Costa Rica to continue lying about the government.

The rest of this briefing paper provides short histories of some of the key people among the Nicaraguans deprived of citizenship.

Who is Cristiana Chamorro and what did she do?

Cristiana Chamorro is part of the famous family of oligarchs that count seven members as previous presidents and own various media outlets including *La Prensa*, funded since the 1980s by the US. Cristiana is the daughter of former president Violeta Barrios de Chamorro who was handpicked by the US as the candidate in the 1990 elections. In that election, the voters yielded to tremendous pressure from the US, which had signaled continuing support for the Contra war against the Sandinista government. Violeta won and the Sandinistas turned over the presidency in a peaceful transition. This led to 17 years under three neoliberal governments, run by and for the oligarchy and also favoring US corporations.



Cristiana Chamorro on President George H.W. Bush's right and her mother Violeta Barrios de Chamorro on his left.

Cristiana Chamorro adheres to the same neoliberal ideology. She was the director of the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation, one of the recipients and main distributors of US money in Nicaragua. On June 2, 2021, journalist William Grigsby [revealed](#) US documents which show that the US openly channeled US\$16.7 million for the coup attempt through the Chamorro Foundation. [This article](#) has a table showing these funds, leading up to the attempted coup and during it. There is also [a detailed schedule of known funding from USAID](#), which highlights in particular funding that went to the Chamorros.

Briefly:

From the USAID alone, the *Chamorro* Foundation [received and channeled](#) US\$7.14 million from 2014 to 2021 (the year of Nicaragua's most recent presidential elections). The foundation also received money from other US institutions such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which [spent US\\$4.2 million](#) in the four years leading up to the 2018 coup attempt on media and other organizations in Nicaragua. European states also gave millions to the foundation: for example, in 2020 alone, [it received €831,527 \(more than \\$1 million USD\)](#) from the Spanish Agency of Cooperation for International Development. (Note that these funding organizations previously published details of their programs in Nicaragua on their websites, but often now hide them.)

The foundation's main purpose was to channel funds to some 25 opposition media outlets, several owned by the Chamorro family itself. For example, *Confidencial* and *Esta Semana*, both owned by Cristiana Chamorro's brother Carlos Fernando who is also under investigation, received about US\$2 million. The Nicaraguan Prosecutor's Office asserted that the funds were mostly designated for a program called Media for Nicaragua, but that in practice the money was spent for purposes not within the foundation's scope.

Cristiana Chamorro and her other brother, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, a member of the foundation board, were found guilty of money laundering and other crimes in March 2022. From the time she was arrested until she was released on February 9, Cristiana was allowed to serve her time in her mansion.

Cristiana closed the Chamorro Foundation in February of 2021, saying she didn't want to comply with the Nicaragua "Foreign Agents" law because the US had audited their accounting and said it was all fine. Her statement offended many Nicaraguans, who objected publicly, asking which nation she was governed by. Under the new Nicaraguan law, organizations receiving foreign funding must now report on the use of the funding – similar to many other nations, including the US and UK. The main reason for any government's requiring nonprofits to register is to [ensure they are not receiving foreign government money for political purposes](#) - exactly what was happening in practice in Nicaragua before its new law took effect.

According to journalist William Grigsby and Liberal Party news analyst Enrique Quiñones, there was still some US\$7 million in the Chamorro Foundation account when she closed it, and this money appeared soon afterward in three of her personal bank accounts. More is explained [here](#).

Cristiana Chamorro was presented by US thinktanks such as [The Dialogue](#) as the likely next president of Nicaragua in the 2021 elections ([here](#) she is jokingly referred to as "President Cristiana") and was recently described in the [New York Times](#) as a "leading contender" for the presidency. These are false representations. She has little political experience and was not a member of a political party; only political parties can nominate presidential candidates. Moreover, she denied wanting to run for election in 2021 and only changed her mind when her arrest for money laundering appeared imminent.

Who is Carlos Fernando Chamorro and what did he do?

Cristiana's brother Carlos Fernando has his own media empire including the very slick online *Confidencial* and various expensive television programs. US money through the Chamorro Foundation supported part of these family businesses. His thinktank CINCO also received funds from the foundation, such as US\$153,000 [documented](#) and shown here in September 2018:

Violeta B. Chamorro PROGRAMA DE MEDIOS

25 de septiembre de 2018

Ref: Fondos pertenecientes al programa de cooperación y asistencia de la NED.

Fortalecimiento de la democracia y participación ciudadana en los procesos de reivindicación del periodismo independiente con un enfoque de género.

| Nombre | Monto | ZET-CHK | Medio |
|--------------------------|------------|---------|-------------|
| Carlos Fernando Chamorro | US 153,980 | 967-K | CINCO |
| Eduardo Enriquez | US 96,564 | 180-L | La Prensa |
| Anibal Toruño | US 84,476 | 874-F | Radio Dario |

Medios de comunicación beneficiados:
 Diario La Prensa
 CINCO (Confidencial - Esta Semana)
 Radio Dario (Amplitud Modulada y Frecuencia Modulada)

Violeta B. Chamorro **den**

Confidencial describes itself as an “independent” media outlet, but this is untrue. *Confidencial*'s framework of taking on Ortega with “uncommon valor” is funded, at least in part, by the National Endowment for Democracy. In 2014, for example, its holding company INVERMEDIA [received](#) a \$60,000 grant in order to “foster independent digital media in Nicaragua,” and they received an additional \$175,000 in subsequent years. Supposedly, this was to “strengthen the organizational capacity” and the “social media presence” of *Confidencial*. *Confidencial* would also “establish working relations with leading civil society organizations in order to provide a media platform for coordinated action.” Coordinated action for what purpose? This description suggests a role beyond mere “independence.”

In fact, *Confidencial* goes well beyond the role of a right-wing media outlet. It publishes as fact the outputs of other NED and USAID funded bodies, [as well as CINCO](#), whose “research” bears little relationship to the facts. Ever since 2018, it has completely whitewashed the involvement of opposition leaders in violence. For example, the murderer Medardo Mairena (see below), was [interviewed recently](#) in Washington by Chamorro without any hint at his crimes. Furthermore, it has encouraged writers from *Confidencial* and other Chamorro-controlled outlets to work for corporate international media, which then follow *Confidencial*'s version of events. Examples are Wilfredo Miranda, writing for Spain's *El Pais*, Dora Luz Romero, working for the BBC, and Gabriela Selser, writing for the Associated Press.

More information about Chamorro's media enterprises, CINCO thinktank, and their funding can be found [here](#).

Carlos Fernando Chamorro had already left the country before he was charged for the crimes of laundering money, property and assets; misappropriation and improper retention of funds; and abusive management of funds. Recently, along with 93 others, he was declared a traitor and lost his citizenship. He has never served time and has been lauded as an “independent” journalist and never discusses the funding he receives from the US and elsewhere.

Who is Juan Sebastián Chamorro and what did he do?

Juan Sebastián Chamorro is a first cousin of the other Chamorros described previously. He was chosen by the US to [head the Millennium Challenge Corporation](#) under former neoliberal President Enrique Bolaños. The Millennium Challenge Corporation is another “independent” US foreign assistance agency created by Congress in 2004.

This [video](#) shows Chamorro's arrogant classism. You can see him yelling at a humble street vendor and calling him a “*come mierda*,” which is equivalent to a “piece of shit.” The man responds that he isn't a piece of shit like Chamorro – because Chamorro sells out his country for dollars.

Juan Sebastián Chamorro was found guilty on Feb. 23, 2022, and sentenced to 13 years in March 2022. One criminal conviction was for requesting US intervention toward

a change of government in Nicaragua. On Sept. 26, 2019, in Washington, DC, Chamorro asserted, “We are carrying out important actions to isolate the Ortega-Murillo family.” Other crimes involved channeling funds for illicit purposes from US institutions like the International Republican Institute (IRI), the NED, and USAID through his nonprofit, Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (FUNIDES). In the 2020-2021 lead up to the presidential elections, FUNIDES received US\$1,373,142 from USAID:

| Organización | Programa | Agencia | Monto | Periodo |
|--|---|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Fundación para la Autonomía y el Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua | Programa Educación Para el Éxito | FADCANIC | US\$ 457,759.00 | 2020-2021 |
| Asociación de madres y familiares víctimas de guerra. Waslala | Donaciones | ANFVW | US\$ 321,223.00 | 2020-2021 |
| Comisión permanente de Derechos Humanos | Apoyo a víctimas de violaciones de derechos humanos | CPDH | US\$ 825,671.00 | 2020-2021 |
| Asociación multidisciplinaria para el desarrollo | Gobernanza local Derechos civiles y violencia de género | AMDES | US\$ 241,353.00 | 2020-2021 |
| Fundación Nicaragüense para el Desarrollo Económico y Social | Estudios económicos de impacto social | FUNIDES | US\$ 1,373,142.00 | 2020-2021 |
| Asociación Nicaragüense Pro Derechos Humanos | Fiscalización Derechos Humanos | ANPD | US\$ 701,032.00 | 2020-2021 |

FUNIDES had an important role in disseminating dangerous anti-government propaganda during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, the BBC [carried a report](#) in May 2020, written by Dora Luz Romero who worked for Chamorro-owned newspaper *La Prensa*, which included a FUNIDES forecast that within a month there would be at least 120,000 virus cases and 650 deaths. While the BBC cast doubt on the Nicaraguan government’s own figures about Covid cases, it reproduced the FUNIDES figures without questioning them, despite the fact that FUNIDES does not work in the health sector and two years earlier it had received over \$120,000 from the National Endowment for Democracy (information collected from the NED website but since deleted).

Chamorro was charged with participating in an international criminal organization to commit grave crimes against the security of the State of Nicaragua. Like his cousin Cristiana, Juan Sebastián claimed to be an election candidate in 2021, but no political party chose to nominate him.

Who is Manuel Orozco and what did he do?

Manuel Orozco, based in the US, is director of the Center for Migration and Stabilization of Creative Associates International (CAI). CAI is a global agency that is funded by the US to [“engineer political transitions”](#) with over \$2 billion in US government contracts. Much of the funding comes from USAID; see their website for more information. [Orozco was the lead in a group of Nicaraguan agents](#) (in this link scroll down to the week’s *Briefs*) which, according to the public prosecutor, included Juan Sebastián Chamorro, Felix Maradiaga and many others, that proposed and lobbied for economic sanctions

against the state of Nicaragua; requested other foreign interference in internal affairs; and promoted destabilization against the democratically elected government of Nicaragua – all with foreign funding.

Orozco is one of the 94 Nicaraguans who have been deprived of citizenship for acts of treason.

Who is Félix Maradiaga and what did he do?

Félix Maradiaga, one of the 222, recently [appeared on PBS Newshour](#) and [on NPR](#), where he was described as “a former Nicaraguan presidential candidate.” Yet he has never been a leading political figure or electoral candidate. His nonprofit, the Institute for Strategic Studies and Public Policy (IEEPP), has been a [major conduit](#) for US funding and interference in Nicaragua through a US-funded “Municipal Governance Program.” From the NED alone it received at least \$260,000 in the period 2014-2018.



Youth trained in “democracy promotion” by Felix Maradiaga’s organization IEEPP. Maradiaga front row blue and white-striped shirt. One of those trained who was very involved in the 2018 violence is circled in the back row – George Henriquez.



Mission Local



Activists from Nicaragua tell SF audience of country's violent ...

Activists from Nicaragua tell SF audience of country's violent turmoil. Claudia Ochoa ...

In the above post, George Henriquez, one of those trained by Maradiaga, was in San Francisco soon after the coup attempt, telling US citizens how violent Nicaragua is while failing to mention his part in the violence.

During the attempted coup in 2018, a known gang leader named Christian Mendoza, aka “Viper,” was captured by police. Viper’s subsequent full confession linked Félix Maradiaga, who emerged as one of the leaders of the coup attempt, to organized crime and a plot to overthrow the government. Viper [described](#) a multi-pronged plan to destabilize the government by channeling rage and attacking symbols of the Ortega government and the FSLN party, as well as the goal to recruit 28-35 individuals with as many arms as possible.

Viper also [stated](#) that Maradiaga and another opposition figure, Hugo Torres, came to UPOLI (Polytechnic University) to give money to a group called “8 de Marzo” (March 8th). The funding was for the group to buy arms and drugs and to perform acts of terrorism. A [damaging video](#) showed Maradiaga at UPOLI with a man called Pio Arellano who was brandishing a handgun.



Photo taken from video of Maradiaga (front right) with leadership of thugs who had taken over the technical university UPOLI during the first week of the coup attempt. On the right, the person next to Maradiaga is Pio Arellano who is waving a pistol. UPOLI was one of the major centers of violent operations in Managua; the other was the UNAN (National Autonomous University), where Dora María Téllez was [reported](#) to oversee operations.

When Viper was arrested, Felix Maradiaga sent out a tweet saying, “Let’s all go and demand that our prisoners be released from Chipote [the prison].” But after the damaging video surfaced with Pio Arellano, Maradiaga reportedly avoided going to UPOLI, and he denied knowing Viper. Viper made a statement, saying, “Yeah, my job was to foment crime across Managua, to create panic, including car jackings, including assaults and even murder;” and, “Yeah, the one who was telling me what to do was Felix Maradiaga.”

Maradiaga sought sanctions against his own country at the Organization of American States ([in June 2018](#)): he was presented as a Nicaraguan representative to the OAS general assembly without any permission or even prior notification to Nicaraguan authorities.

On July 2 2021, Maradiaga was sentenced to 13 years in prison for the crime of undermining national integrity to the detriment of the State of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan society. He had apparently been [planning further violence](#). The Court of Appeals of Managua confirmed the conviction sentence of the criminal district judge.

Who is Christian Josué Mendoza Fernández and what did he do?

As previously noted, Christian Josué Mendoza Fernández was known by the alias “El Viper.” He was paid by Maradiaga to commit acts of violence, [including torturing and murdering a young man and throwing his body over the Cuesta de Plomo](#), where the Somoza regime had historically dumped bodies. This was an effective terror tactic, playing on the fears of Nicaraguan society’s lived trauma.

Viper’s [confession](#) to police detailed his connections to his own gang and to organized crime more widely. Viper used UPOLI as a meeting site, reportedly bringing in as many as 35 persons with arms and making Molotov cocktails. The third floor was off-limits to those occupying the university, except for the gang; some persons were reportedly tortured on the third floor.

Mendoza is one of the 94 who were recently declared a traitor. He had his citizenship revoked.

Who is Dora Maria Téllez and what did she do?

Dora Maria Téllez is seen as left-wing because she is a former guerilla fighter. But after 1990 she shifted sharply right, supporting right-wingers such as Eduardo Montealegre and supporting the 2019 coup in Bolivia in which President Evo Morales lost power.



Tellez, first left, with right-wing election candidate Eduardo Montealegre and (far right) Hugo Torres.

Téllez and her partner Ana Margarita Vijil were in frequent contact with the US embassy in the years before 2018, as documented [here](#) and revealed in documents released by WikiLeaks. They are members of UNAMOS, formerly Movimiento Renovador Sandinista (MRS). Other information about Téllez’ move to the right in the early 90s and her actions since can be found [here](#).

In April 2018, Téllez was at the forefront of organizing the violent roadblocks in Masaya, one of the cities most affected by the violence. On April 18, the first day of the violence, and on subsequent occasions, she was seen distributing money, food, drugs and munitions to the criminals who were attacking the police and later controlling the

roadblocks. She used a safe house near Masaya which was guarded by armed patrols. In December 2018, the national police obtained a warrant and raided Carlos Chamorro's office, searching for evidence of coup activities. Among items found was a receipt for [US\\$3,000](#) signed by Carlos Chamorro and made out to Téllez on the day the coup attempt began, April 18.

Her acts of treason also continued after the failed coup attempt. As mentioned [here](#) and generally known, she called on the OAS to expel Nicaragua. In an interview with *Confidencial*, she expressed the hope that Nicaraguan military leaders would launch a putsch similar to the one she had previously lauded in Bolivia. And, of course, she publicly lobbied the US to impose harsher sanctions on Nicaragua.

Still supported by many on the left in international circles, Téllez is little respected in Nicaragua because of her direct involvement in the 2018 violence. Téllez, Ana Margarita Vijil and student "leader" Lesther Alemán were found guilty of the crime of conspiracy to undermine national integrity in three separate trials by different judges.

Who are Medardo Mairena, Pedro Mena and Francisca Ramírez and what did they do?

These three are considered together because they were all leaders of the so-called "Rural Workers Movement" which controlled a large area of central Nicaragua during the violence of 2018, managing many of the roadblocks. Mairena and Mena are among the 222, while Ramirez was already in exile in Costa Rica where she has been accused of misusing funds aimed at helping Nicaraguan "refugees." She was one of 94 that were found to be traitors and deprived of Nicaraguan citizenship.

In February 2019, a Criminal Court judge sentenced Medardo Mairena to 216 years for the murder of four police officers and a school teacher and the kidnapping of nine police officers on July 12, 2018, in the small municipality of Morrito, Rio San Juan. The Morrito attack, one of the worst events in 2018 involving up to 200 armed assailants, is the subject of [a film by Dick Emanuelsson](#), based on interviews with the survivors. The assault was the subject of highly misleading reporting [by Carlos Fernando Chamorro](#), in which he tries to minimize the opposition's use of violence.

Apart from the Morrito attack, all three of these criminals had run a vicious campaign against government offices, police, and Sandinistas in the large region that they controlled with violent groups from April to July 2018. There is detailed evidence of their crimes in the report [Nicaragua 2018, Uncensoring the Truth: Testimonies of Victims of Opposition Violence During the Failed Coup Attempt](#). They assaulted other police stations, committed other murders, and ran an extortion racket at the brutal roadblocks in the region estimated to have garnered as much as US\$4 million.

Both Mairena and Mena were arrested at the international airport on July 13, 2018, the day after the murders, trying to flee the country. Evidence of their planning the Morrito massacre was on their cell phones and was also substantiated by two people who had

been present when the attack was planned. When the case went to trial, Mairena was also found guilty of ten kidnappings, organized crime, and aggravated robbery. Mairena's actual sentence was to have been 210 years but he would have served 30 years because that is the maximum allowed by Nicaraguan law. Also sentenced to 210 years was Pedro Mena. But both were then set free in 2019 under the terms of the government amnesty that year.

While Francisca Ramirez has remained in Costa Rica, in 2020 and 2021 Mairena was attempting unsuccessfully to find a party to adopt him as its presidential candidate. He was disowned by the traditional Liberal Constitutional party (PLC), which ran its own candidates in the 2021 elections. A split between Mairena and Ramirez in the approach to the 2021 election, involving mutual recriminations, divided the "Rural Workers Movement," which never had official status in any case. On July 5, 2021, Mairena and Mena were rearrested and charged with the original crimes, having broken the terms of the amnesty by continuing to organize criminal activities.

Both Medardo and Ramirez feature prominently in reports by bodies such as [Front Line Defenders](#) and [Global Witness](#), despite these organizations receiving complaints about the criminal records of such "people who inspire us" (as Global Witness describes Ramirez).

Who is Sergio Ramirez and what did he do?

The author Sergio Ramirez is a former Sandinista, Nicaragua's Vice-President from 1985 until 1990, who founded the MRS in 1995 in opposition to Daniel Ortega. When he competed for the presidency in 1996, he received a derisory 7,665 votes nationwide. Clearly, he is more popular among elites abroad than in his homeland.

Since opposing the FSLN, Ramirez's non-profit organization, Fundación Luisa Mercado, has received US money via the Chamorro Foundation. He must have forgotten that in 1988 he [said](#) it was a "crime" to receive US government funds, "because they are part of a campaign against Nicaraguan sovereignty and integrity."

The office of the Public Prosecutor in Nicaragua found that Ramirez's non-profit foundation was among the recipients of foreign funds used, not for legally permitted non-profit purposes, but rather for political activities aimed at destabilizing the country. Therefore, a court order was sought and obtained for his arrest. There is more about Ramirez [here](#).

Like Dora Maria Tellez, Ramirez has a [documented](#) history as a US informant since at least 1978, as published by WikiLeaks.

Ramirez lives abroad and is one of the 94 to have lost their citizenship. He is believed to hold passports from several other countries, however.

Who is Miguel Mora and what did he do?

Miguel Mora, ex-director of the media outlet *100% Noticias*, was found guilty on Feb. 4, 2022, of conspiracy to undermine national integrity. Mora had used his media position to promote the 2018 roadblocks and spread false news. At the beginning of the coup attempt, he spread the false news that the president and his family had fled Nicaragua. On May 22, he claimed falsely that Sandinistas were attacking his radio station. He called on the opposition to attack the Sandinista station, Radio Ya, which then was attacked three times and finally completely destroyed by fire – while the occupants were forced to escape under gunfire.

In July 2018, Mora publicly threatened 22-year-old community policeman Gabriel Vado Ruiz, who was traveling in plain clothes with no gun to see his mother. Six days later, Vado was tortured, murdered, and burned to a pulp at a roadblock. In a [July 2018 video interview](#) with the Grayzone at Mora's TV station in Managua, [Mora asked the US to invade Nicaragua](#) and take out the president and his family, as with President Noriega in Panama in 1989, when hundreds of Panamanians were killed.

Mora was granted conditional amnesty in June 2019 but continued to propagate false news on his television station *100% Noticias* and was later rearrested for crimes against "independence and sovereignty."

Who is Harving Padilla and what did he do?

Harving Padilla is a parish priest who [directed the terrorist gang](#) that tortured, killed and burned the body of police officer Gabriel de Jesus Vado Ruiz. [Messages to the terrorists](#) were found on Padilla's phone, identifying himself and saying, "Hide these *\$%, even in the bottom of a latrine...try to get them not to upload photos and videos to Facebook of the one you are burning, so there won't be a problem." He was never arrested or granted amnesty and is one of the 94 who lost their citizenship.

Who is Bishop Rolando Álvarez and what did he do?



Bishop Rolando José Álvarez carried in a Palm Sunday procession

The former bishop of Matagalpa, Monsignor Rolando Álvarez, was one of the main members of the [Catholic hierarchy directing](#) priests and others in carrying out the US-directed coup attempt in 2018, along with Bishops Mata and Báez – the first now retired and the other now based in Miami (when Mata retired, his Estelí diocese was also handed to Álvarez). Details of their role are supported in the report prepared by the Apostolic Nuncio, which he sent to the Pope.

Radio stations and tv channels in Matagalpa run by Álvarez since 2016 received US funding that was channeled for undermining the government. Despite government warnings that these activities were in [violation of the law as well as their status as religious media](#), he never closed the channels down or ceased his destabilizing efforts. Eventually, seven radio stations and two TV channels were closed for [legal violations](#) in 2022 by Telcor, the entity that regulates communications.

Álvarez had continued his subversive actions since 2018, especially in the department of Matagalpa. After 2018, he was the only bishop using radio and TV and the church pulpits in Matagalpa and Estelí to call openly to the Nicaraguans to organize and overthrow the elected government. In 2022, Álvarez was called to Rome, and unnamed sources say the Pope told him to stop promoting violence in Nicaragua.

After a warning issued on August 4, 2022, the police in Matagalpa [invited Alvarez and his colleagues to dialogue](#). They [ignored the invitation](#) and continued with their acts of incitement to hatred and violence from the curia in Matagalpa, in which they [barricaded themselves](#) for several days.

Álvarez was arrested on August 19, 2022, and was later tried and [found guilty](#) of crimes including undermining national integrity, promoting hatred and violence via information and communication technologies, aggravated obstruction of state functions, and contempt of authority. An international media blitz ensued, portraying the Nicaraguan government as repressing religious freedom; but the [multitude of false images](#) were easily identified and dismissed as coming from other countries like Chile.

Álvarez was held under house arrest until February 9, 2023, in his family's mansion with special food, doctor's visits, and other privileges. He was visited by Nicaragua's Cardinal Brenes, and on August 21 the Pope expressed the wish for "dialogue," thought to be a reference to the need for the bishop to agree to negotiate with the authorities. Notably, the Pope did not condemn the bishop's arrest.

Álvarez was then given the opportunity to go to the US on February 9, and he was one of just two people who refused (the other had a criminal record which might have put him at risk in the US). Álvarez had not been sentenced at that stage, and on Feb. 10 was sentenced to 26 years. He is now in the prison not far from the airport known as "La Modelo." He is one of those who has lost his citizenship.

Conclusion

These descriptions, bolstered by cited evidence as well as extensive on-the-ground observation, are intended to counter some of the massive mis- and disinformation about Nicaragua disseminated by the major media, supporters of the Nicaraguan oligarchy, and the US government. The people of Nicaragua have repeatedly expressed their desire to live in peace, to build their country together, and to select their leaders without foreign interference or threats of violence.