



San José, Costa Rica

August 15, 2024

One Year Since the Confiscation of the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA)

Asociación Iniciativa Puentes por los Estudiantes de Nicaragua and the organizations that endorse this document commemorate on August 15th the one-year anniversary of the arbitrary confiscation of the Universidad Centroamericana in Nicaragua, an action that adds to the intervention of nearly thirty private universities in the country. The UCA was a national and regional reference for educational quality and the free development of thought, and it was the last academic space to uphold university autonomy in the country. We recognize that these repressive measures have had a profoundly negative impact on Nicaraguan youth, restricting access to quality education and limiting their personal and professional development.

The confiscation of universities represents a direct attack on academic freedom and the Inter-American Principles on this matter. University autonomy is a fundamental pillar for the development of knowledge, innovation, and critical thinking; by taking control of these institutions, the Nicaraguan government undermines these principles, imposing political and partisan control that erodes diversity of thought and academic independence.

We denounce that a large number of young students from the UCA, now renamed by the government as Universidad Casimiro Sotelo, have faced restrictions on their right to receive their academic records such as grades, graduate certificates, and even professional diplomas, and that they have been intimidated when insisting on obtaining such documentation; this is a form of forced retention of students in these educational centers, preventing them from enrolling in other institutions, and it is also a pattern identified in other confiscated universities.

We express our deepest solidarity with the entire student community, faculty, and other staff of the Universidad Centroamericana and all confiscated universities. We understand that many of them have seen their academic and professional aspirations cut short and are facing an uncertain future in a hostile environment. We join in the outrage that this situation has generated.

We call on the international community to support Nicaraguan youth and the academic sector by facilitating opportunities for them to continue their studies and academic and scientific work. It is crucial that assistance and scholarships be provided to those who have been seriously affected by these repressive measures, enabling them to pursue their dreams and contribute to the global development of knowledge. It is very important to exert pressure on the Nicaraguan regime to respect the Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy. Only through respect for these fundamental principles can we ensure a future where education and knowledge develop in an environment of freedom and respect.

Finally, we urgently call on the State of Nicaragua to cease its policy of indoctrination and control of academic spaces.

Sign this statement:

Coalición por la Libertad Académica en las Américas, Asociación Centroamericana de Filosofía, Asociación Costarricense de Filosofía, Centro Nicaragüense de Educación y Formación Abierta Paulo Freire, Opportunities, Aula Abierta, Asociación Intercultural de Derechos Humanos, Centro de Estudios Transdisciplinarios de Centroamérica, Observatorio de Universidades, Centro de Asistencia Legal Interamericano de Derechos Humanos.

