

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **U.S. DELEGATION DEMANDS TO DEFEND NICARAGUA**

**Managua, October 8, 2021**

Nicaragua's Alliance for Global Justice delegation visited Nicaragua to learn about the advances of the Sandinista Government over the last 14 years, given the tsunami of false information daily churned out by the U.S. State Department and its allies in the national and international media.

The delegation was coordinated by Coleen Littlejohn, a retired development economist, who has lived in Nicaragua for most of the last 41 years and is now the local volunteer coordinator for the AFGJ Nica Network. Members of the delegation included longtime political activists and organizers working for change in the United States. Participants included Monica Moorehead of Workers World Party and a WW managing editor, Yoav Elinevsky of Massachusetts Peace Action, Sara Flounders of the International Action Center and the SanctionsKill Campaign and Stan Smith of the Chicago ALBA Solidarity Network.

The delegation reported their findings at a press briefing broadcasted internationally by the United National Antiwar

Coalition on October 8, after a week of visits with government ministries, universities, hospitals, schools; conversations with Nicaraguan small farmers and co-op organizers in addition to members of the international community, in Managua, Leon, Granada and Masaya. The delegation also met with the political affairs officer of the US Embassy to present a statement of protest against U.S. interference in the internal affairs of the Nicaraguan government.

The following is a sampling of the findings of the members of the delegation:

**Coleen Littlejohn**, in opening the press briefing, commented that she has lived in Nicaragua for most of the last 41 years but previously had worked for a major international development NGO in Chile, a real dictatorship, from 1978 to 1980. She went on to say that Nicaragua is not a dictatorship. It is a country that has achieved and continues to work towards the development of its people, doing things that you can only dream of in the U.S. Free health care and education, community policing, a country

that gets 75% of its energy from renewable sources, 92% food self-sufficiency and women in at least 50% of public and elected positions, etc.

But she also commented that reading every day about the “dictatorship” in Nicaragua in the U.S. and international media, coordinated messages with a change of a few words, you might get confused about what is really happening here.

The Nicaragua Network, a project of the Alliance for Global Justice, has been working to reach out to people and movements who want real change in the United States to tell them about what is really happening in this incredible country. And also to let the people of the United States know about how the U.S. government has been trying to destroy what she call the “threat of a good example”.

Now the Nicaragua Network is organizing delegations of U.S. movement leaders to come and see why we must defend Nicaragua and the Sandinista Revolution. And today you will

hear from four members of a delegation that is currently visiting the country. It is an important time to be here.

### **Monica Moorehead**

I was a member of an anti-war delegation that traveled to Nicaragua to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s commitment to equality, peace and justice. Thirty-seven years later from everything our delegation has witnessed first hand, this revolution continues to thrive as a real democracy by using its limited resources to commit to the well-being of all its people. The accusation made by the U.S. labeling the upcoming November 7 election in Nicaragua as “undemocratic and unfair” is an outrage and totally absurd.

How can anyone who thinks rationally take the word of a government that disenfranchises the vote of Black people, migrants, etc. after the 2020 U.S. election? How can anyone take the word of a government that claims to support “political prisoners” in Nicaragua but has held hostage in U.S. prisons for

the past 30, 40 and even 50 plus years people like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Jamil al-Amin, Ruchell Magee and many more? The U.S. has no right to intervene into the internal affairs of another country, especially their elections.

### **Joav Elinevsky**

I found Nicaragua to be a beautiful country with beautiful weather and blessed with fertile land because of the many volcanoes here. That is why Nicaragua is 80% food independent. I found Nicaragua to be like a house with open doors with warm and friendly people. Industrious, creative, hard-working and proud. During my daily walks here, I could go anywhere I want at any time of the day or night and feel safe and welcomed. Nicaragua is the safest country in Central America and Latin America by far.

Of course if you want to learn about Nicaragua the best way is to come here. But there is an easier way for the smart people that read the New York Times or The Guardian or from our

government. Just reverse what you hear, the truth is the opposite of what you hear and read.

After 16 years of right wing governments the Nicaraguans overwhelmingly elected the Sandinistas. Why?

Poverty decreased from 48% to 29% in 2014. Hundreds of thousands women received loans under the program, Zero Usury and Zero Hunger. Education at all levels is free. All the socio-economic indicators show great success with the commitment to the poor to a mixed economy and democracy.

### **Stan Smith**

Nicaragua had just over 50 hospitals when Daniel Ortega was elected president in 2007. Now there are 77 hospitals; one-third of all the hospitals in Nicaragua were built in the last 14 years.

Today all healthcare is free. Today women make up 50% of elected positions in the national, regional, and local governments.

Today education, including university, is free. Even child day care centers are free and available to all.

These are rights and benefits we do not have in the United States.

Nicaragua is the safest country in Central America. Its murder rate is half of what it was in 2006. Its murder rate is eight to ten times lower than in El Salvador.

Extreme poverty has been reduced by half.

Infant mortality and maternal mortality have been reduced by more than half since 2006. Fifty percent of the people had access to electricity. Under the Daniel Ortega government it is now 99%.

In 1989 after 10 years of the Sandinista government, illiteracy had been reduced to 10%. After 16 years of neo-liberal, pro-U.S. government rule it had jumped to 30%. It had tripled. After the

14 years of the present Daniel Ortega government it is now down to 4%.

Our delegation feels it is urgent for all of us to increase our efforts to work against U.S. interference in Nicaragua's November election. It is urgent we focus on opposing a new U.S. regime change operation.

### **Sara Flounders**

We focus on building coordination among many organizations opposing U.S. sanctions on 39 countries, one-third of the world's population. This is a crime against humanity.

The U.S. has declared Nicaragua, a developing country of 6 million people, to be "an extraordinary threat to the national security of the US." How preposterous!

But U.S. corporate power is threatened by the example of what Nicaragua is building for the people. We came to see for ourselves.

We heard vivid descriptions of the crimes of the U.S.-backed failed coup in 2018 with social media saturation, mercenary terror squads, roadblocks and demands for the popular Sandinista government to resign.

The Sandinista revolution of 1979 was a profound upheaval, a change in consciousness, a combative determination to build a new society.

Through the 1980s there was not a moment of peace. There were nonstop U.S. contra wars, combated by a mobilized population.

From 1990 to 2006 right wing governments reversed and privatized everything - education, healthcare, social services. The harshest neo-liberal economy meant nothing for the people.

In 2007 the Sandinistas won the elections and began programs that have had a huge impact in these 14 years. Their programs are free education for all, including university, free public health

programs with stunning gains, road construction, now the best in Central America. They're tackling the big problems of potable water, sewage and disaster preparation in a country of hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and erupting volcanos.

We visited schools, hospitals and health clinics. We talked to financial planners and disaster relief planners.

Using social distancing, masks and hand washing, an intense community-based strategy of health monitoring and basic care for all, utilizing 1233 health posts and door to door check-ins has resulted in the lowest documented rate of Covid in this hemisphere. Meanwhile the U.S. has the highest rate of death and infection in the world. That's the difference a coordinated free public health system makes.

We need to defend Nicaragua and rally the entire progressive political movement to understand what's at stake.

**Defend Nicaragua!**