

Nicaragua's Withdrawal from UNESCO Deepens Crisis in Freedom of Expression

On May 4, 2025, Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), [announced](#) that the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua had formally notified its withdrawal from the international organization. In light of this latest refusal by the Nicaraguan state to engage in dialogue and cooperation with multilateral organizations and human rights mechanisms, the undersigned organizations and networks urge the Nicaraguan government to restore its cooperation with UNESCO. We also call on the international community to condemn this type of action by the Nicaraguan state, as it sets a harmful precedent for the protection and promotion of freedom of expression both nationally and globally.

Nicaragua's decision comes shortly after UNESCO announced that the 2025 World Press Freedom Prize would be awarded to the Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa*. [Created in 1997](#), this prize honors journalists and media outlets that continue their work in the face of significant risks. The announcement is made annually in conjunction with the observance of World Press Freedom Day. In a [letter](#), Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega accused the international organization of attacking the country's values and national identity.

Since 2021, the independent newspaper *La Prensa* has operated in exile after being targeted by the Ortega-Murillo regime, including through the raid of its offices and the arbitrary arrest of several of its staff. Despite these attacks, the outlet has continued its journalistic work online, even though returning to Nicaragua remains impossible. It is important to note that this is not an isolated case; systematic violations against the press persist in Nicaragua. The international organization [Reporters Without Borders](#) recently ranked Nicaragua 172nd out of 180 countries in its latest World Press Freedom Index.

Nicaragua's withdrawal from UNESCO follows [previous exits](#) by the Ortega-Murillo government from other bodies within the United Nations system and the Inter-American human rights system, deepening the country's isolation from international dialogue and oversight of its human rights situation.

These multiple withdrawals from international organizations, including UNESCO, further restrict the Nicaraguan population's ability to demand the protection of their human rights. Given the Nicaraguan government's ongoing refusal to uphold its international obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights—particularly freedom of expression—we, the undersigned organizations, call on the government to reverse these decisions. We urge Nicaragua to uphold the highest standards of human rights protection and request the international community to continue closely monitoring the worsening situation in the country.

Signatories

ARTICLE 19 Oficina para México y Centroamérica
Committee to Protect Journalists - CPJ
Fundación por la Libertad de Expresión y Democracia- FLED
IFEX-ALC
Red Voces del Sur (VDS)
Periodistas y Comunicadores Independientes de Nicaragua- PCIN
World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters- AMARC ALC

