

NICARAGUAN EX-POLITICAL PRISONERS

CHAMPIONS FOR JUSTICE



On Feb. 9, 2023, thirty-three Nicaraguan women political prisoners were released from prison, expelled from Nicaragua, and stripped of their nationality, property, and citizenship rights.

They had been taken captive and held in inhumane conditions—some for up to two years—for their non-violent protests against the repression of the dictatorial regime. They are social and political leaders, students, lawyers, feminists, community activists, and one former presidential candidate.

Many were kept in isolation, some in solitary confinement, others in severely overcrowded conditions. Police confiscated family photos, taunted and humiliated the women, accusing mothers of being bad parents and prohibiting several who have young children from seeing or communicating with them for a year and a half. One prominent woman leader was illegally held in the men's cellblock for 20 months in constant darkness.

The women's families refused to abandon hope of seeing the political prisoners alive and free. They joined forces with

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activists from all over the world calling for the release of Nicaragua's political prisoners. GWI was proud to stand with them in that struggle.

The sudden release, deportation to the US, and stripping of Nicaraguan nationality of the thirty-three women and 200 other political prisoners brings with it the joy of freedom from incarceration but also many challenges.

While some of the ex-political prisoners have a relative living in the US, more than half do not. Almost all of them are separated from their closest family members and face major challenges to be able to visit them. They are having to navigate the complexities of the immigration and settlement process in a new country. Most of them do not speak English. All are dealing with the trauma of their experiences while also striving to reunite their dispersed families, figuring out their next steps, and continuing their fight against the Nicaraguan regime's repression.

We stand in solidarity with these women who are Champions for Justice—Defensoras de la Justicia—and who work to bring greater equality and rights for women in Nicaragua and elsewhere.

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Above: Some of the Nicaraguan ex-political prisoners and Champions for Justice. Photo: Courtesy of GWI.

Front left and right: Nicaraguan women human rights defenders marching for justice. Photo: Courtesy of GWI.

GWI is committed to partnering with all who endeavor to end gender-based violence. Starting in our tenth anniversary year, we are shining a light on the struggles and successes of individuals and organizations that inspire us.

We celebrate their achievements as **Champions for Justice**, and we redouble our efforts to resist inequity, demonstrate solidarity with women human rights defenders, and defend the rights of women and girls everywhere.

For more information on our staff, affiliated faculty, Leadership Council, and more partnerships, visit:

<https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/about-gwi>

