

Sr. Presidente Daniel Ortega and Sra. Presidente Rosario Murillo  
Palacio Nacional  
4 Calle Noroeste  
Managua, Nicaragua, 11001

June 21, 2026

Dear Presidents Ortega and Murillo:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the death of Indigenous leader and lawmaker, Brooklyn Rivera. Rivera was respected for his advocacy as a community leader of the Miskito people and for his leading role in Yamata, an Indigenous political party that helped secure limited autonomy for Indigenous peoples following peace negotiations with the Sandinistas.

Rivera was brought into custody under the pretext of terrorism on September 29, 2023 after speaking out in front of the United Nations against the government of Nicaragua and was subsequently enforced into disappearance in prison. Since September 2023, there had been no confirmation of his imprisonment, and his family was barred from seeing him. But just a few days before he died on May 30, 2026, the Ministry of the Interior confirmed Rivera's detention and published photos of him intubated in a hospital. The government attributed his death to a COVID infection, but human rights groups ask for an independent investigation.

Rivera's case is one manifestation of human rights issues endemic to Nicaragua including repression, attacks on civic spaces and persecution of Indigenous and political leaders. On May 1, 2026, the UN Human Rights Council's experts warned of a pattern of enforced disappearances, incommunicado detention and detention conditions that could amount to torture or other cruel treatment. In March 2026, a report by a Group of Experts on Nicaragua described repression and persecution by authorities as systematic, amounting to crimes against humanity. In addition to having one of the worst ranking of countries on the World Press Freedom Index, there have been documented 67 violent incidents against Indigenous communities and 46 confirmed political prisoners in 2026. The continued existence of the Yatama political party is in jeopardy since the government has been stripping thousands of organizations of their legal status.

We strongly urge that the government of Nicaragua:

- conduct an independent, transparent and thorough investigation into what happened to Brooklyn Rivera
- publish an account of the specific conditions of his detention, including whether he had access to adequate medical care, and the exact sequence of events that led to his death
- release all arbitrarily detained persons and assure detention centers fully comply with international human rights standards

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordiators

copies: Mauricio Lautaro Sandino Montes, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Nicaragua in Washington, DC ~ via email  
Elias Baumann, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, US Embassy in Nicaragua ~ via US mail  
Nicaragua Desk, US State Dept ~ via email  
Riyad Insanally, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
Rosa María Payá Acevedo, Rapporteur for Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Office for Central America and Dominican Republic ~ via email  
US Senators Husted and Moreno ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes ~ via email

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**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**