

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION PROJECT

Lawyers for the Movement

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Nicaragua DOS Report Comparison

2023 Report	2024 Report	Notes
Executive Summary		
<p>Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings, including extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearance; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by prison guards and parapolice; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detentions; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; political prisoners; transnational repression against individuals located in another country; arbitrary and unlawful interference with privacy; punishment of family members for alleged offenses by a relative; serious restrictions on free expression and media freedom, including threats of violence against journalists, unjustified arrests and prosecution of journalists, and censorship; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, including overly restrictive laws on the organization, funding, or operation of nongovernmental and civil society organizations; restrictions on religious freedom; restrictions on freedom of movement and residence within the country and on the right to leave the country; inability of citizens to change their government peacefully through free and fair elections; serious and unreasonable restrictions on political participation; serious government corruption; serious government restrictions on and harassment of domestic and international human rights organizations; extensive gender-based violence, including femicide; crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting members of ethnic groups and Indigenous peoples such as the Mayangna and Miskito communities; trafficking in persons, including forced labor; crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex persons; significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association; and the worst forms of child labor.</p>	<p>The human rights situation in Nicaragua worsened during the year. The government intensified attacks on civil liberties and also violated religious liberty by harassing and detaining churchgoers and religious leaders.</p> <p>Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; disappearances; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest and detention; transnational repression against individuals in another country; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including violence or threats of violence against journalists, unjustified arrests or prosecution of journalists, censorship, and serious restrictions on internet freedom; restrictions on religious freedom; trafficking in persons, including forced labor; significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association; and worst forms of child labor.</p>	<p>Both reports document that the government did not take credible steps (or any at all) to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses.</p> <p>The 2024 report changes the language on some section headers.</p>
<p>Parapolice – nonuniformed, armed, and masked units with marginal tactical training and loose hierarchy that acted in coordination with government security forces and reported directly to the Nicaraguan National Police – and individuals linked to the government of President Daniel Ortega Saavedra carried out a campaign of harassment, intimidation, and violence toward perceived enemies of the regime, such as former political prisoners and their families, farmworker activists, prodemocracy opposition groups, human rights defenders, private-sector leaders, and clergy, other religious actors, and church-affiliated civil society groups. Authorities did not investigate or prosecute these actions.</p>	<p>Parapolice – nonuniformed, armed, and masked units with marginal tactical training and loose hierarchy that acted in coordination with government security forces and reported directly to the Nicaraguan National Police and individuals linked to the government of President Daniel Ortega Saavedra – carried out a campaign of harassment, intimidation, and violence toward perceived enemies of the regime, such as former political prisoners and their families, farmworker activists, prodemocracy opposition groups, human rights defenders, private-sector leaders, clergy, other religious actors, and church-affiliated civil society groups, as well as members of the ruling party who expressed dissent or the will to defect. Authorities did not investigate or prosecute these actions.</p>	<p>2023 and 2024 report documents the same content, 2024 report adds "as well as members of the ruling party who expressed dissent or the will to defect".</p>
Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person	Section 1. Life	2024 report has updated section header.

<p>a. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life and Other Unlawful or Politically Motivated Killings</p>	<p>a. Extrajudicial Killings</p>	<p>2024 report has updated section header.</p>
<p>Human rights organizations and independent media alleged some killings were politically motivated, an allegation difficult to confirm because the government refused to conduct official inquiries.</p>	<p>There were several reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year. Ruling party and parapolice harassment and persecution hindered human rights groups from obtaining information. Nonetheless, human rights organizations and independent media alleged some killings were politically motivated, an allegation difficult to confirm because the government refused to conduct official inquiries.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report includes, "There were several reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year. Ruling party and parapolice harassment and persecution hindered human rights groups from obtaining information."</p>
<p>Reports of killings were common in the North Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACN). Human rights groups stated that these killings illustrated a continuation of a campaign of terror against Indigenous groups by members or affiliates of the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) seeking to encroach and seize land and natural resources from autonomous Indigenous territories. On March 11, these squatters shot and killed five Mayangna Indigenous persons and wounded two in an attack in Wilu, Sauni As. The Nicaraguan National Police (NNP) arrested Rafael Mendoza Escoto and Darling Antonio Davila Escoto for this and previous attacks on Indigenous individuals, including the killing of at least 10 persons in 2021 for which four Indigenous persons had allegedly been wrongly convicted.</p>	<p>Reports of killings were common in the North Caribbean Autonomous Region. Human rights groups stated these killings illustrated a continuation of a campaign of terror against Indigenous groups by members or affiliates of the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) seeking to encroach on and seize land and natural resources from autonomous Indigenous territories. On March 22, 30 colonos (non-Indigenous armed outsiders) attacked an Indigenous community in Amrukna in the Mayangna Sauni As territory. Colonos fired on unarmed civilians and set fire to several houses. It was difficult to assess the severity of the attack due to the lack of an official investigation.</p>	<p>Both reports document the same content, and both use different examples of killings that were common in the North Caribbean Autonomous Region.</p>
<p>b. Disappearance</p>	<p>c. Disappearance and Abduction</p>	<p>2024 report has updated section header.</p>
<p>There were reports of disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities. Various human rights organizations inside and outside of the country claimed NNP and prison authorities committed forced disappearances against political opposition members. These organizations cited more than 30 cases in which authorities detained political opponents without informing family members or legal counsel, without providing information regarding where they were being held, without presenting the prisoners in a public court of law, and denying all access to legal recourses such as habeas corpus. In at least 30 cases, authorities kept political prisoners incommunicado for up to 40 days, occasionally moving the prisoner to different prisons without an express order from civilian authorities and without informing the prisoner's chosen legal counsel or family.</p>	<p><u>Disappearance</u>: There were reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities. Various human rights organizations reported the NNP and prison authorities forcibly disappeared political opposition members. These organizations cited many cases in which authorities detained political opponents without informing family members or legal counsel, without providing information regarding where they were held, without presenting the prisoners in a public court of law and denying all access to legal recourses such as habeas corpus. In at least nine cases, security forces kept political prisoners incommunicado for up to three months, occasionally transferring them to different prisons and to and from hospitals and medical clinics without securing an order from civilian authorities or informing the prisoners' legal counsel or families. Authorities did not publish many of the cases against political prisoners in the judiciary's online information system. Authorities detained, imprisoned, and banished to Rome at least nine priests without informing family members or legal counsel or formally pressing charges against them.</p>	<p>The 2024 report documents the same content as the 2023 report, but with some language changes. Unlike the 2023 report, the 2024 report records a significant decrease in cases of authorities holding political prisoners. The 2024 report also adds, "Authorities did not publish many of the cases against political prisoners in the judiciary's online information system. Authorities detained, imprisoned, and banished to Rome at least nine priests without informing family members or legal counsel or formally pressing charges against them."</p>
<p>c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Other Related Areas</p>	<p>a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</p>	<p>2024 report found under Section 3. Security of the Person. 2024 report has updated section header.</p>
<p>Although the law prohibited such practices, government officials carried out acts that resulted in severe physical or mental suffering for the purposes of securing information, inflicting punishment, and psychologically deterring other citizens from reporting on the government's actions or participating in civic actions against the government. Members of civil society, opposition leaders, and student leaders involved in the protests that began in April 2018 were more likely than members of other groups to receive such treatment.</p>	<p>Although the law prohibited such practices, government officials carried out acts that resulted in severe physical or mental suffering for the purposes of securing information, inflicting punishment, and psychologically deterring other citizens from reporting on the government's actions or participating in civic actions against the government. Torture and mistreatment against prisoners bore similarities to treatment against prisoners released in 2023 that the UN Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua concluded "reached the threshold of torture."</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; they both include different examples of torture and mistreatment.</p>
<p>Prison authorities subjected 59 prisoners held in the Directorate of Judicial Assistance temporary holding cells, known as El Chipote, to cruel and degrading treatment. Family members reported the prisoners were intentionally underfed and fed spoiled food, continually interrogated after conviction, subjected to extended periods of darkness or light, deprived of sunlight, prevented from speaking, subjected to psychological torment, denied access to reading material and religious objects such as rosaries and bibles, and at times kept in solitary confinement for extended periods. On February 9, the government unilaterally released these 59 prisoners and another 163 political prisoners held in other prisons and house arrest – forcing them to choose between immediate exile from the country or a return to prison – and subsequently stripped them of their nationality after they left the country.</p>	<p>Prison authorities subjected more than 150 prisoners held in the Jorge Navarro "La Modelo" prison to cruel and degrading treatment. Human rights organizations reported the prisoners were intentionally underfed and fed spoiled food, continually interrogated after conviction, subjected to extended periods of darkness or light, deprived of sunlight or kept outside in extreme heat, prevented from speaking, subjected to psychological torment, denied access to reading material and religious objects such as rosaries and bibles, and kept in solitary confinement for extended periods.</p>	<p>The 2023 report documents examples from a different prison than the 2024 report. They both document those prisons having cruel and degrading treatment, both documenting different examples, the 2023 report going more in-depth.</p>
<p>Impunity persisted among police and parapolice forces in reported cases of torture or other abuses. The government made no effort to investigate allegations regime opponents were tortured or otherwise abused.</p>	<p>Impunity was a significant problem among police and parapolice forces in reported cases of torture or other abuses. The government made no effort to investigate allegations regime opponents were tortured or otherwise abused.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; some language has been changed.</p>

There is no Similar Language in this report.	Human rights organizations reported parapolice forces, prison officials, and police regularly subjected women prisoners to strip searches, degrading treatment, threats, and other violence against women while in custody. One human rights organization reported that in 2023, one of every four women prisoners had been raped while in custody. Family members of prisoners also suffered degrading treatment by police and prison guards during visits, including strip searches, forced squats, and body cavity searches. Prison authorities threatened family members with loss of visiting opportunities or further punishment of the prisoners if they reported acts of torture.	The 2023 report does not document specific inhumane/torture tactics that were inflicted on women prisoners.
Prison and Detention Center Conditions	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Prison conditions were harsh and potentially life threatening. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, difficulties obtaining medical care, and violence among prisoners remained serious problems in prison facilities.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<u>Abusive Physical Conditions:</u> Prison conditions worsened due to antiquated infrastructure and an increasing inmate population. Despite relatively new temporary holding cells in the Directorate of Judicial Assistance, also known as El Chipote, the rest of the prison system was in poor condition. In 2020, the government reported overcrowding in five of the seven prisons for men, holding 15,333 prisoners with capacity for 12,600. The government did not provide updated figures. More than 1,000 inmates were held in the notorious La Modelo prison, known as the regime's torture prison. The NNP began using a jail in the third district of Managua as a long-term holding facility for political prisoners in lieu of El Chipote jail, which was not equipped to house prisoners for long periods. Additionally, the NNP moved several political prisoners from the cities where they were arrested to this jail.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Inmates suffered from parasites, inadequate medical attention, inadequate and contaminated food, contaminated water, and inadequate sanitation.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Conditions in jails and temporary holding cells were also harsh. Most facilities were physically decrepit and infested with vermin; had inadequate ventilation, electricity, or sewage systems; and lacked potable water.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Many prisoners suffered mistreatment from prison officials and other inmates. Human rights organizations confirmed at least six prisoners detained in connection with the 2018 protests or the 2021 crackdown on opposition were subjected to solitary confinement in maximum-security cells, in some cases for months. Ten other political prisoners from before the 2018 protests faced similar conditions.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<u>Administration:</u> Authorities often ignored or did not investigate credible allegations of inhuman conditions.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<u>Independent Monitoring:</u> The government did not allow most independent organizations to monitor the prison system. The government allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to perform one visit to the prison system in February but did not include access to political prisoners held in El Chipote.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention	Prolonged Detention without Charges	2024 report has updated section header.
The law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of persons to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government, however, generally did not allow those arrested during protests to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention. In cases of political opponents, judges regularly denied or ignored constitutional protections for detainees, including habeas corpus.	The law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of persons to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government, however, generally did not allow those deemed political opposition to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention. In these cases, judges regularly denied or ignored constitutional protections for detainees, including habeas corpus. According to independent nongovernmental organizations, authorities made many detentions based on political decisions made by the president and vice president or a small group of intelligence officers working under their command with the help of FSLN neighborhood committees.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report adds, " According to independent nongovernmental organizations, authorities made many detentions based on political decisions made by the president and vice president or a small group of intelligence officers working under their command with the help of FSLN neighborhood committees".
Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees	There is no Similar Language in this report.	The 2024 report does not have a dedicated section to Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees.

<p>The law required police to obtain a warrant from a judicial authority prior to detaining a suspect and to notify family members of the detainee's whereabouts within 24 hours, but this rarely happened in arrests related to civil unrest or perceived instances of political dissent.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not include the law's requirement.</p>
<p>Police could hold a suspect legally for 48 hours before arraignment or release; however, a 2021 amendment to the criminal procedural code allowed the Public Prosecutor's Office to request an extension for 15 to 90 days if a judge deemed the case complex. A judge then was required to order the suspect released or transferred to jail for pretrial detention. The suspect was permitted family member visits after the initial 48 hours. A detainee had the right to bail unless a judge deemed there was a flight risk. The criminal code listed crimes that could be tried by a judge without a jury and that would not qualify for bail or house arrest during the duration of the trial. Detainees had the right to an attorney immediately following their arrest, and the state provided indigent detainees with a public defender.</p>	<p>Police could hold a suspect legally for 48 hours before arraignment or release and the Public Prosecutor's Office could request a judicial order for the NNP to hold suspects for 15 to 90 days if the judge deemed the case complex. A judge then was required to order the suspect released or transferred to jail for pretrial detention. Human rights organizations reported police and parapolice agents routinely detained persons deemed as opposition to the ruling party for longer than the 48-hour window, without fulfilling the requirement of requesting the extension limited to no more than 90 days to continue its investigation. The NNP and penitentiary guards held several prisoners for three to five months before they were arraigned.</p>	<p>2024 report in Section 2c. Disappearance and subsection Prolonged Detention without Charges. The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content in the beginning. The 2023 report mentions the right to bail and the right to an attorney, while the 2024 report mentions police and parapolice agents detaining persons for longer than they are supposed to.</p>
<p>The government used money laundering laws, a foreign agents law, a cybercrime law, and a law for the defense of sovereignty to threaten, harass, and unjustly detain political opponents, journalists, and civil society activists. Human rights organizations and civil society activists asserted these laws constituted part of a larger scheme by the government to exert its own concept of sovereign security, laid out in the 2015 Sovereign Security Law, which significantly broadened the definition of state sovereignty and security, as a pretext to arrest protesters and other persons the government deemed in opposition to its goals.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention the mistreatment the government used against the law.</p>
<p><u>Arbitrary Arrest:</u> Human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) noted cases of arbitrary arrests by police and parapolice forces, although parapolice had no authority to make arrests. In several cases, police made arrests without a warrant. Detentions of political opponents mostly occurred without a warrant or formal accusation and for causes the law did not authorize.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention NGOs Arbitrary Arrests.</p>
<p>According to human rights groups, arbitrary arrests occurred regularly, particularly of persons the government deemed active opposition members or participants in previous prodemocracy protests. The government detained several members of the Roman Catholic Church for extended periods without formal charges. Between April 1 and April 6, the NNP arrested without a warrant at least 15 persons related to political opposition or Catholics participating in religious processions during the Catholic celebration of Holy Week in the period preceding Easter Sunday.</p>	<p>The government detained several members of the Roman Catholic Church for extended periods without formal charges. Experts on security affairs claimed a small group of intelligence officers under the direction of Ortega and Murillo led monitoring activities that informed the arbitrary arrests of opposition members, party members who could defect, or disgruntled public-sector staff. On January 1, authorities arrested Carlos Bojorge after he shouted "Viva la Iglesia Católica" at the end of Sunday mass in Managua. His family was able to identify his place of detention only in June after searching for him throughout the detention centers in the city.</p>	<p>2024 report in Section 2c. Dissappearance and subsection Prolonged Detention without Charges</p>
<p>In several cases, police raided and ransacked the houses of those detained, also without court warrants. Police often took personal items from homes and businesses unrelated to the alleged crimes for which they were detaining citizens. Many arrests allegedly occurred without informing family members or legal counsel. Reports of armed, hooded men in plain clothes acting alone or together with police to arrest and detain prodemocracy protesters were common. Human rights organizations indicated delays in the release of prisoners after they finished prison terms led to many cases of arbitrary continuation of a state of arrest.</p>	<p>Human rights organizations indicated delays in the release of prisoner after they finished prison terms led to many cases of arbitrary continuation of a state of arrest. On September 5, the government released 135 political prisoners who had been held for prolonged periods and expelled them from the country.</p>	<p>The 2023 report mentions police raiding and stealing items from detainees, and alleged arrests. While the 2024 report removes this information and only includes content on delays in the release of prisoners after they finished their terms.</p>
<p><u>Pretrial Detention:</u> Lengthy pretrial detention continued to be a problem. Many opposition leaders and prodemocracy protesters were detained and held with no charges and without being granted due process. Observers noted that in several instances authorities deliberately imposed lengthy pretrial detentions against specific protest leaders and Catholic clergy.</p>	<p>Lengthy pretrial detention was a problem. Many opposition leaders and prodemocracy protesters were detained and held with no charges and without being granted due process. Observers noted that in several instances authorities deliberately imposed lengthy pretrial detentions against specific protest leaders and Catholic clergy.</p>	<p>2024 report in Section 2c. Disappearance and subsection Prolonged Detention without Charges. Both reports document the same content.</p>
<p>e. Denial of Fair Public Trial</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>

<p>The law provided for an independent judiciary, but the government did not respect judicial independence and impartiality. In October, the government purged the Supreme Court, firing or arresting an estimated 600-900 persons, including judges, magistrates, and administrative staff. In addition, the National Assembly approved a law to move oversight of all national registry documents from the courts to the office of the attorney general. The actions further cemented power in the executive branch.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>NGOs complained of delayed justice caused by judicial inaction and widespread impunity, especially in cases involving family and domestic violence and sexual abuse. Members of the judiciary, including those at senior levels, were widely believed to be corrupt or subject to political pressure. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) August report, in cases against political activists, judges handed down biased judgments at the bidding of the government. Lawyers for political prisoners reported judges routinely dismissed defendants' evidence and accepted prosecutors' anonymous sources. In many cases, trial start times were changed with no notification to one or both parties to the trial, according to human rights organizations. Authorities occasionally failed to respect court orders. On May 25, the Supreme Court canceled the licenses of 25 exiled lawyers associated with the opposition. The regime had already stripped these lawyers of their citizenship in February.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Trial Procedures</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>The law provided the right to a fair and public trial, but the judiciary generally did not enforce this right. The law allowed judges to deny jury trials in a wide range of cases, deny bail or house arrest based on unclear rules, and arbitrarily move a case from other judicial districts to Managua, to the disadvantage of defendants, their families, or their counsel. Defendants were often denied the right to be informed promptly of the charges against them; have a fair, timely, and public trial; be present at their trial; have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense; have representation by or access to private defense counsel; confront prosecution or plaintiff witnesses and present their own defense or witnesses; not be compelled to testify; or appeal. In at least one case, a defendant standing trial via video call was provided no video into the courtroom, posing critical problems when the defendant was asked to confirm details of evidence shown in the courtroom the defendant could not see. While the law established specific time periods for cases to come to trial, most cases encountered long delays. Prisoners also reported a lack of immediate access to an attorney or legal counsel and were not afforded one during their detention.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>According to the constitution, defendants were presumed innocent until proven guilty. Observers claimed, however, that the extension of a pretrial detention from 48 hours to up to 90 days while an investigation took place posed an undue presumption of guilt against defendants. Additionally, those accused of undermining national integrity, spreading false news, or treason – accusations based on laws traditionally used by the regime to persecute political opponents – did not have access to fair trials, and FSLN judges universally convicted them.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Women's rights organizations believed the court system continued to operate under unofficial orders not to impose imprisonment or pretrial detention in domestic violence cases. This informal policy reportedly applied only to domestic violence cases that authorities considered mild.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Political Prisoners and Detainees</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.

Human rights NGOs characterized as political prisoners those detained for supporting or participating in prodemocracy protests, as part of the government's crackdown on the political opposition during 2021, or for expressing perceived dissent. According to human rights organizations, the government continued to hold 91 political prisoners as of November. The government did not recognize political prisoners as an inmate category and held them with common criminals.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Domestic NGOs, Catholic Church representatives, journalists, and opposition members alleged the government monitored their email, phone chats, social media accounts, and telephone conversations. Church representatives also stated their sermons and homilies were monitored. As part of a continuing social media campaign against prodemocracy protests, ruling party members and supporters used social media to publish personal information of human rights defenders and civil society members. Government supporters marked the houses of civil society members with derogatory slurs or threats and then published photographs of the marked houses on social media.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Political prisoners were severely undernourished, given no access to sunlight, and denied adequate healthcare services, including access to medicine and medical treatment for chronic illnesses, even when family members provided medications to prison authorities during prison visits. Human rights organizations received several reports of political prisoners being beaten, threatened, held in solitary confinement for weeks, and suffering from poor ventilation and poisoned or contaminated food and water.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
f. Transnational Repression	e. Instances of Transnational Repression	2024 report has updated section header.
No Similar Language in this Report.	The government engaged in acts of transnational repression.	
<u>Threats, Harassment, Surveillance, and Coercion:</u> Family members of opposition members in exile were surveilled, harassed, detained, and wrongfully convicted as part of government attempts to force exiled opposition members to return to the country and face arrest. The government routinely denied these family members access to public documents such as birth certificates of children under joint guardianship or passports. In several cases, authorities demanded that a parent who had been forcibly exiled by the government be present to request public documents for minors.	<u>Threats, Harassment, Surveillance, or Coercion:</u> Family members of opposition members in exile were surveilled, harassed, detained, and wrongfully convicted as part of government attempts to force exiled opposition members to return to the country and face arrest. The government routinely denied these family members access to public documents such as birth certificates of children under joint guardianship or passports. In several cases, authorities demanded that a parent previously exiled by the government be present to request public documents for children.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; there has some language change.
Exiles in Costa Rica and elsewhere alleged harassment and political oppression by parapolice and FSLN sympathizers who crossed the border to target exiles, as well as by intelligence officials within the Nicaraguan embassy in Costa Rica.	Exiles in Costa Rica and elsewhere reported harassment and political oppression by parapolice and FSLN sympathizers who crossed the border to target exiles, as well as by intelligence officials within the Nicaraguan embassy in Costa Rica. Certain organizations created by exiles in Costa Rica reported being surveilled outside their offices, with unknown individuals taking photographs of persons entering and exiting their offices. Additionally, staff members from these organizations reported receiving threatening text messages reminding them of past aggressions against Nicaraguans in Costa Rica.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report goes more in-depth with examples of organizations created by exiles in Costa Rica.
<u>Misuse of International Law Enforcement Tools:</u> There were credible reports the regime attempted to misuse Interpol Red Notices for politically motivated purposes as reprisal against individuals it deemed as opposition, including against clergy going into exile.	<u>Misuse of International Law Enforcement Tools:</u> There were credible reports the regime attempted to misuse Interpol Red Notices for politically motivated purposes as reprisal against individuals it deemed opposition, including against clergy going into exile. For example, opposition leader Douglas Gamaliel Álvarez Morales was extradited to the country from Costa Rica in February after the government entered a Red Notice against him.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report adds an example of the misuse of the law.
<u>Efforts to Control Mobility:</u> There were credible reports authorities attempted to control mobility to exact reprisal against citizens abroad by denying them consular services. Migration authorities inside the country and through consular offices abroad denied access to passports to perceived political opponents and their family members, preventing them from traveling to a third country. Additionally, the government – primarily using email notifications sent by airlines – denied entry to more than 40 citizens trying to return to the country.	<u>Efforts to Control Mobility:</u> There were credible reports authorities attempted to control mobility to exact reprisal against citizens abroad by denying them consular services. Migration authorities inside the country and consular offices abroad denied access to passports to perceived political opponents and their family members, preventing them from traveling to a third country. Migration authorities analyzed incoming flight manifests and international bus line occupant lists to prevent citizens from returning to the country, requiring airlines and bus lines to notify those citizens that authorities would not allow them to return.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; language is changed and added.

g. Property Seizure and Restitution	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The government regularly failed to take effective action with respect to seizure, restitution, or compensation of private property. Some land seizures were politically targeted and directed against specific individuals, such as business owners considered independent or against the ruling party. The government routinely seized the property of NGOs and private businesses by stripping them of their legal status or otherwise accusing them of breaking the law. In many instances, the government repurposed the property to serve party interests.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The government froze the personal assets of 316 citizens it stripped of their nationality in February. In several cases, the regime seized properties of family members of those 316 individuals. On March 27, prosecutor Andrea del Carmen Salas Gomez filed an accusation against businessman Piero Coen for treason; judge Karen Vanessa Chavarria Morales found him guilty in absentia and ordered the seizure of his properties. In April, the regime seized from Coen his equity in more than 50 properties. On June 23, NNP officers seized several more properties Piero Coen owned partially or fully.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The regime also canceled the operating rights of 11 private universities, including the largest remaining independent institution, the Central American University, which the State Prosecutor's Office accused of terrorism, and judge Gloria Saavedra ordered the transfer of its assets to the state. The government refurbished the campus to become a public university within 24 hours and allowed victims no legal recourse. The Ministry of Interior canceled the legal status of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit order operating in the country since 1995, and seized the house that was home to retired Jesuit priests. The Ministry of Interior also ordered the seizure of the association's assets.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Authorities routinely either rejected requests to evict illegal occupants of real property or failed to respond to the requests altogether. National and local police also routinely refused to evict illegal occupants of real property. Police often took no action against violence perpetrated by illegal occupants, while acting swiftly against any use of force by legitimate property owners. Police also enforced evictions of properties belonging to alleged opposition supporters, arriving with local government representatives to remove owners and tenants from their homes and other properties. The judicial system delayed final decisions on cases against illegal occupants. When judges issued orders in favor of landowners, local officials frequently failed to enforce court orders. In the face of government inaction, some landowners were forced to pay squatters to leave their property.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
h. Arbitrary or Unlawful Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The law prohibited arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence. The government, however, failed to respect these prohibitions. Police raided homes and businesses without legal warrants, particularly against political opposition members. During the April arrest of businesswoman Anielka Garcia, the NNP and parapolice raided her business and took assets unrelated to the accusation of conspiracy to undermine national integrity and of spreading fake news.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
FSLN grassroots organizations such as the Citizen Power Councils colluded with parapolice or party loyalists to target the homes of prodemocracy protesters. Without a warrant and under no legal authority, these groups illegally raided homes and detained occupants, often using violence, including against family members or occupants of the household unrelated to political activities. Authorities routinely stationed police vehicles and officers outside the homes of opposition members, harassing visitors and often prohibiting opposition members from leaving their houses. These actions were widespread in large cities, particularly Managua, Bluefields, Matagalpa, Esteli, Masaya, Rivas, Leon, and Jinotega.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.

Domestic NGOs, Catholic Church representatives, journalists, and opposition members alleged the government monitored their email, phone chats, social media accounts, and telephone conversations. Church representatives also stated their sermons and homilies were monitored. As part of a continuing social media campaign against prodemocracy protests, ruling party members and supporters used social media to publish personal information of human rights defenders and civil society members. Government supporters marked the houses of civil society members with derogatory slurs or threats and then published photographs of the marked houses on social media.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Police and parapolice groups harassed and surveilled Catholic clergy and laity, including by preventing Catholic priests from leaving church property for days at a time and monitoring their homilies for alleged messages of dissent or antigovernment rhetoric. The regime revoked the legal status of two orders of foreign nuns, confiscated their property, and pressured them into fleeing the country.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Inhabitants in northern towns, particularly in the departments of Nueva Segovia, Jinotega, and Madriz, as well as the RACN and the South Caribbean Autonomous Region (RACS), alleged repeated government interrogations and searches without cause or warrant. Several opposition members who were former Contras claimed they were regularly surveilled, stopped, and detained by police for questioning for several hours, usually in connection with alleged contact with rearmed groups or antigovernment protests. The individuals also said progovernment sympathizers verbally threatened them outside their homes and surveilled and defaced their houses.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties	Section 2. Liberty	2024 report has updated section header.
a. Freedom of Expression, Including for Members of the Press and Other Media	a. Freedom of the Press	2024 report has updated section header.
The law provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, but the government did not respect this right. Restrictions on press freedom, the absence of an independent judiciary, and a nondemocratic political system combined to obstruct freedom of expression, including for members of media.	The law provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media, but the government did not respect this right. Violations concerning press freedom, the absence of an independent judiciary, and a nondemocratic political system combined to obstruct freedom of expression, including for members of media. Independent media faced official and unofficial restrictions. The government penalized arbitrarily those who expressed views counter to the ruling party's ideology.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report adds, "Independent media faced official and unofficial restrictions. The government penalized arbitrarily those who expressed views counter to the ruling party's ideology".
<u>Freedom of Expression:</u> The government used reprisals and the law to restrict the ability of individuals to criticize the government. Persons who criticized the government, the ruling party, or its policies, including in discussion of matters of public interest, were subjected to police and parapolice surveillance, harassment, imprisonment, and abuse. Favorable expressions of the Catholic religion were similarly restricted.	The government used reprisals and the law to shut down the ability of individuals to criticize the government. Police and parapolice subjected persons who criticized the government, the ruling party, or its policies, including in discussion of matters of public interest, to surveillance, harassment, imprisonment, and abuse. Favorable expressions of the Catholic religion were severely attacked.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content with some language changes.
Government supporters considered the use of the national flag and the national colors of white and blue as acts of defiance and attacked opposition activists flying the flag or national colors.	There is no Similar Language in this report.	The 2024 report does not mention government supporters.
<u>Violence and Harassment:</u> Journalists were subject to government violence, harassment, cyberattacks, and death threats. In addition, some media owners and journalists were exiled and stripped of their nationality. Authorities blocked others from leaving or re-entering the country, withdrew their passports, or purposefully did not renew them. According to a March report by the Nicaraguan Independent Journalists and Communicators Group, 77 percent of independent journalists were reporting from exile, and 33 percent of them stopped reporting due to governmental threats.	Journalists were subject to government violence, harassment, cyberattacks, and death threats. In addition, the government exiled some media owners and journalists and stripped them of their nationality. Authorities blocked others from leaving or re-entering the country, withdrew their passports, or purposefully did not renew them. According to a July report by the Nicaraguan Independent Journalists and Communicators Group, surveillance, harassment, and persecution by police, parapolice, or FSLN members forced 10 journalists into exile, bringing the total number of journalists in exile to 276 since 2018. According to the same report, no independent news was produced in more than half the country.	The 2024 report found in Section 2a, under Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure. Both reports document the same content, but both use different examples of violence and harassment of journalists.
Authorities detained briefly and released other journalists with the threat they would be imprisoned unless they ceased publishing news counter to official narratives. By July, the regime blocked at least nine independent journalists from returning to Nicaragua after they exited the country briefly.	Authorities detained briefly and released other journalists with the threat they would be imprisoned unless they ceased publishing news counter to official narratives.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2023 report adds an example, while the 2024 report doesn't.

<p>The government seized the property and equipment of media whose licenses had been canceled. The government continued to occupy the offices of La Prensa, Confidencial, and 100% Noticias television channel.</p>	<p>The government seized the property and equipment of media whose licenses had been canceled. The government continued to occupy the offices of La Prensa, the weekly newspaper Confidencial, and the 100% Noticias television channel.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 report documents the same content.</p>
<p><u>Censorship or Content Restrictions for Members of the Press and Other Media, Including Online Media:</u> Independent media faced official and unofficial restrictions. The government continued to penalize arbitrarily those who expressed views counter to the ruling party's ideology.</p>	<p>Independent news outlets, a few of which operated from inside the country but a majority from exile, faced restrictions on gathering information, such as not being permitted to attend official government events, being denied interviews by government officials, and receiving limited or no direct access to government information. Official media were not similarly restricted.</p>	<p>2024 report found in Section 1a, under Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups</p>
<p>Although the law providing the right to information could not be subjected to censorship, the government and actors under its control retaliated against the press and radio and television stations by blocking transmissions, confiscating recording equipment, blocking reentry to the country, imprisoning journalists and citizens for expressing news and opinions on social media, and committing violence against journalists. Many independent news outlets reported from exile; the few journalists remaining in the country operated clandestinely to avoid censorship, restrictions, and threats.</p>	<p>Although the law providing the right to information did not permit censorship, the government and actors under its control retaliated against the press and radio and television stations by blocking transmissions, confiscating recording equipment, blocking reentry to the country, imprisoning journalists and citizens for expressing news and opinions on social media, and committing violence against journalists. Many independent news outlets reported from exile; the few journalists remaining in the country operated clandestinely to avoid censorship, assaults, and threats.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content.</p>
<p>Restrictions on acquiring broadcast licenses and equipment and arbitrary cancellation of licenses prevented media from operating freely.</p>	<p>Restrictions on acquiring broadcast licenses and equipment and arbitrary cancellation of licenses prevented media from operating freely.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content.</p>
<p>The government cancelled the registration of at least 26 media outlets during the year, including eight radio stations and two television stations owned and managed by the Catholic Church. The government also ordered all cable television providers not to broadcast two television stations run by the Catholic Church. Additionally, five local newscasts, one nationally broadcast newscast, and five talk shows were informally ordered to avoid political news.</p>	<p>The government cancelled the operating licenses of six media outlets, including Radio Maria, a radio station with nationwide coverage linked to the Catholic Church. According to the Nicaraguan Independent Journalists and Communicators Group, in the preceding six years the government closed 56 media organizations; in addition, 22 news programs and 13 opinion talk shows ceased operations due to harassment and persecution.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the cancellation of licensed media. Both use different examples and different language.</p>
<p>Significant state influence, ownership, and control over most media outlets continued. National television was largely controlled either by business associates of the president or directly owned and administered by his family members. Eight of the 10 basic channels available were under direct FSLN-party influence or owned and controlled by persons with close ties to the government. Media stations owned by the presidential family generally limited news programming and served as outlets for progovernment or FSLN propaganda and campaign advertisements. Other media operating in the country significantly self-censored to avoid official retaliation.</p>	<p>The state exercised considerable influence, ownership, and control over most media outlets. The ruling party merged all official media and private media under their direct ownership under a Communication and Citizenry Council headed by the president and vice president's son, Daniel Edmundo Ortega Murillo. The council served to coordinate targeted messaging by the ruling party and to procure training for staff of these media in China and the Russian Federation or by their in-country "experts." Business associates of the president or his family members largely controlled or directly owned and administered national television outlets. Eight of the 10 basic channels available were under direct FSLN influence or owned and controlled by persons with close ties to the government. Media stations owned by the presidential family generally limited news programming and served as outlets for progovernment or FSLN propaganda and campaign advertisements. Other media operating in the country significantly self-censored to avoid official retaliation.</p>	<p>The 2023 report documents this one paragraph of state influence, ownership, and control over media outlets, while the 2024 report documents the next 3 paragraphs. Including various examples of oppression of channels, broadcasts, and various media forms.</p>
<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>A decree obliging all private cable stations to broadcast official television and radio emergency and special interest messaging was in effect and was used regularly, even for nonemergencies. The government obligated independent press to use official media to cover presidential activities and used troll farms – groups of internet commenters paid to manipulate political opinions – both inside and outside the country to amplify its own messaging or attack independent media websites. There were credible reports the government censored online content. A September cybercrime law barred anyone, including those outside the country, from disseminating information that could produce "anxiety" in the public.</p>	<p>The 2024 report adds examples of private cable stations and broadcasts that were affected.</p>

<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>Press and human rights organizations claimed the use of state funds for official media, as well as biased distribution of government advertising dollars, placed independent outlets at an extreme disadvantage. Some independent-media owners also alleged the government exerted pressure on private firms to limit advertising in independent media, although other observers believed the lack of advertising resulted from self-censorship by private companies. Many journalists practiced self-censorship, fearing economic and physical repercussions for investigative reporting on crime or official corruption. In addition, media outlet owners exercised self-censorship by choosing not to publish news that affected public perceptions of the government or the FSLN.</p>	<p>The 2024 report adds examples of state funds used to bias media coverage.</p>
<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>Parapolice under the control of the FSLN worked in tandem with the NNP and FSLN neighborhood committees to target, surveil, and curtail any form of expression critical of the ruling party or its policies and interests. In March, NNP officers and parapolice targeted and detained Catholic laypeople participating in Holy Week events, often for publicly expressing the desire for Monsignor Rolando Álvarez's release from prison.</p>	<p>The 2024 report mentions different political groups that targeted and surveilled certain forms of expression. They targeted any media that went against them.</p>
<p><u>Libel/Slander Laws</u>: Slander and libel were criminal offenses, punishable by fines ranging from 120 to 300 times the minimum daily wage; however, there were no reports of the government invoking these laws against members of media. Instead, according to Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2022 report, the government used the 2020 special cybercrimes law to investigate and convict individuals, including opponents, journalists, and activists, for critical online speech.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p><u>National Security</u>: Human rights NGOs and civil society organizations argued the Sovereign Security Law exemplified the government's failure to respect civil liberties. Although not cited in specific cases, the law applied to "any other factor that creates danger to the security of the people, life, family, and community, as well as the supreme interests of the Nicaraguan nation." Additionally, Law 1055 and Article 410 of the criminal code, which were the bases for the crime of undermining national integrity, were often combined with the use and threats of further use of the cybercrimes law, which included as online crimes social media posts deemed dangerous by the regime and granted law enforcement authorities access to information systems and other data. Penalties for online crimes included imprisonment and hefty fines, disproportionate to the crimes defined in the law. Additionally, the National Assembly approved changes to the law, making it illegal for police officers to disobey orders or desert their post as detrimental to citizen security. The crimes were punishable with six months to two years of prison or two to three years of prison, respectively.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>According to a March report by the Nicaraguan Independent Journalists and Communicators Group, 77 percent of independent journalists were reporting from exile, and 33 percent of them stopped reporting due to governmental threats.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>- 2023 report: under subheading "violence and harassment." The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Internet Freedom</p> <p>There were credible reports the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority and in some cases restricted or disrupted access to the internet or censored online content. Independent media reported the government provided logistical support for troll farms that routinely carried out cyberattacks against opposition media websites and social media accounts. Trolls and bots reportedly tracked opposition social media accounts to retaliate against users deemed opponents of the ruling party.</p>	<p>There were credible reports the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority and in some cases censored online content or restricted or disrupted access to the internet. Independent media reported the government provided logistical support for troll farms that routinely carried out cyberattacks against opposition media websites and social media accounts. Trolls and bots reportedly tracked opposition social media accounts to retaliate against users deemed opponents of the ruling party. Paid government supporters used social media and website commentary spaces to harass prominent members of civil society, human rights defenders, individuals affiliated with Catholic dioceses and evangelical churches, and well-known journalists. Indigenous women human rights defenders were attacked online. Anecdotal evidence indicated cases of image-based abuse, doxing, cyberbullying, online gender and sexual harassment, and cyberstalking.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report adds, "Paid government supporters used social media and website commentary spaces to harass prominent members of civil society, human rights defenders, individuals affiliated with Catholic dioceses and evangelical churches, and well-known journalists. Indigenous women human rights defenders were attacked online. Anecdotal evidence indicated cases of image-based abuse, doxing, cyberbullying, online gender and sexual harassment, and cyberstalking."</p>

Several NGOs claimed the government monitored their email and online activity without appropriate legal authority. Paid government supporters used social media and website commentary spaces to harass prominent members of civil society, human rights defenders, individuals affiliated with Catholic dioceses and evangelical churches, and well-known journalists.	There is no Similar Language in this report.	The 2024 report does not mention any government actions regarding monitoring online activity.
b. Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The government restricted the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Freedom of Peaceful Assembly	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The government did not respect the legal right to public assembly, demonstration, and mobilization. Bans on prodemocracy marches and protests extended to religious processions not organized by the ruling party. Police and parapolice oppressed, harassed, and occasionally impeded private meetings of NGOs, civil society groups, and opposition political organizations. Police failed to protect peaceful protesters from attacks; they also committed attacks and provided logistical support to progovernment attackers. Human rights organizations reported police stopped traffic for and otherwise protected progovernment demonstrations.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Police routinely surrounded, surveilled, and threatened meetings of political parties and civil society organizations, as well as Catholic churches. Police entered private meeting spaces to disrupt gatherings of opposition parties and civil society organizations.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Freedom of Association	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The law provided for freedom of association, including the right to organize or affiliate with political parties; nevertheless, the Supreme Electoral Council, National Assembly, and Ministry of Interior used their accreditation powers for political purposes. As of August, the Ministry of Interior closed 199 NGOs by revoking their legal status. In several instances, the government used the pretext of enforcing Financial Action Task Force anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing standards, accusing the closed NGOs of posing high risks for illicit financial flows.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
c. Freedom of Religion	d. Violations in Religious Freedom	2024 report has updated section header. See the Department of State's annual International Religious Freedom Report at https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/ .
d. Freedom of Movement and the Right to Leave the Country	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government often did not respect these rights.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The government strictly controlled entry to the country of persons affiliated with humanitarian and faith-based organizations and citizens it deemed in opposition to the ruling party. The government could prevent the departure of travelers with pending legal cases and used this authority against individuals involved in the political opposition and media members who had not been charged with any crimes.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<u>In-country Movement</u> : Police consistently restricted the travel of opposition members to cities other than their hometowns. In many cases, police restricted the movement of political opponents outside their homes, although the individuals did not have pending charges against them or judicially imposed restrictions on their movement.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.

<p><u>Foreign Travel</u>: There were several reports of authorities restricting the right to leave the country. Migration authorities arbitrarily confiscated and refused to provide or renew the passports of some citizens trying to leave the country. Authorities told the individuals migration restrictions had been levied on them, although the individuals had no formal accusations or charges against them. Migration authorities analyzed incoming flight manifests to prevent citizens from returning to the country, requiring airlines to notify those citizens that authorities would not allow them to return. Citizens were left stranded with no further information and no access to legal recourses on the decision taken by these authorities.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p><u>Citizenship</u>: The regime stripped 317 individuals of their citizenship and ordered them into exile, although several remained inside the country. Additionally, the regime misused the law to grant citizenship to foreigners considered allies of the ruling party.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>e. Protection of Refugees</p> <p>The government did not cooperate with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern. The government had not provided updated information on refugees or asylum seekers since 2015.</p>	<p>c. Protection to Refugees</p> <p>The government did not cooperate with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern. The government provided no updated information on refugees or asylum seekers since 2015.</p>	The 2023 and 2024 report document the same content.
<p><u>Access to Asylum</u>: The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had established a system for providing protection to refugees. Only the executive branch or the country's embassies abroad could grant political asylum.</p>	<p><u>Provision of First Asylum</u>: The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had a system for providing protection to refugees. Only the executive branch or the country's embassies abroad could grant political asylum.</p>	The 2023 and 2024 report document the same content.
<p>f. Status and Treatment of Internally Displaced Persons</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>There were reports of several Indigenous communities in the north Caribbean region being forcibly displaced due to non-Indigenous miners, farmers, and cattle ranchers encroaching on Indigenous communal land. The government did not take actions against this encroachment and, according to human rights advocates, occasionally sponsored it. The government did not have policies and protections for internally displaced persons in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>g. Stateless Persons</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>The country contributed to statelessness, including through arbitrary or discriminatory denationalization and with birth registration problems. Registration of births in rural areas was difficult due to structural constraints, and the government took no measures to address this, resulting in many de facto stateless persons in the country. The regime erased all public records of the 317 citizens it stripped of their nationality. Many of these persons had no other permanent legal status abroad and were rendered effectively stateless but for citizenship offers made by other countries.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process</p>	<p>Section 3. Security of the Person</p>	2024 report has updated section header.
<p>While the law provided citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections based on universal and equal suffrage and conducted by secret ballot, government restrictions on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, the arrest of opposition candidates, cancellation of opposition party registration, and institutional fraud, among other obstacles, precluded opportunities for meaningful choice.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Elections and Political Participation</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.

<p><u>Abuses or Irregularities in Recent Elections:</u> National elections were widely reported to not be fair and free of abuses and irregularities. Ortega and his FSLN party canceled the legal registration of all credible opposition political parties, jailed opposition presidential candidates on spurious charges, and committed blatant electoral fraud. The government did not allow credible, independent electoral observers into the country. The 2021 national elections also expanded the ruling party's supermajority in the National Assembly, necessary to make constitutional changes to extend the reach of executive branch power and eliminate restrictions on reelection for executive branch officials and mayors. Independent observer groups and international organizations characterized the 2022 municipal elections, in which the ruling party won all 153 of the country's municipalities and no other political parties were allowed to participate, as not credible.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p><u>Political Parties and Political Participation:</u> The government controlled political parties either by obtaining direct allegiance or by threatening to cancel their legal status. On October 3, Supreme Electoral Council director general of Attention to Political Parties Julio Acuña revoked the legal status of Indigenous political party YATAMA, providing no explanation and leaving no legal recourse. YATAMA's cancellation came five days after the government arrested its leader, Brooklyn Rivera, and legal representative, Nancy Henríquez, and seized the party headquarters and its two community radio stations. The law barred from running for office anyone whom the government designated a "traitor," defining the term so broadly that it could apply to anyone who expressed opposition to the ruling party. Judicial authorities included permanent bans on running for office in the official sentencing of Bishop Rolando Álvarez and several clergy. The government used state resources for political activities to the ruling FSLN party's advantage in elections. Independent media and human rights groups reported the government used public funds to provide subsidized food, housing, vaccinations, access to clinics, and other benefits directly through either FSLN-led "family cabinets" (community-based bodies that administered government social programs) or party-controlled Sandinista leadership committee (CLS) systems, which reportedly coerced citizens into FSLN membership while denying services to opposition members. Observers noted the government pressured public servants into affiliating with the FSLN and participating in party activities and mass public gatherings, including sports events, political rallies, and marches.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Independent observer groups and international organizations characterized the 2022 municipal elections, in which the ruling party won all 153 of the country's municipalities and no other political parties were allowed to participate, as not credible.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>- 2023 report: under subheading "abuses or irregularities in recent elections". The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Section 4. Corruption in Government</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>The law provided criminal penalties for corruption by officials, although the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>

<p><u>Corruption:</u> Executive branch officials were involved in private businesses with little to no oversight. Businesses tied to high-ranking FSLN members and former police and military members provided the bulk of government services in sectors such as security, construction, and pharmaceuticals. Nine security companies owned in part or fully by FSLN members who were also former police, military, and members of the executive branch won all government bids to provide public services. A limited number of party-linked construction businesses similarly won public bids, mainly in road construction. Private businesses complained customs authorities produced arbitrary and inflated fines and excessive revisions, primarily affecting businesses unassociated with the FSLN party. With FSLN control over oversight agencies, the NNP, and the judicial branch, corruption continued with impunity. Cases of mismanagement of funds by public officials were reportedly handled personally by FSLN members and President Ortega's immediate family, rather than by the government entities in charge of public funds.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Section 5. Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Monitoring and Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>The government did not allow international and domestic human rights organizations to operate legally in the country. In May, the government dissolved the Nicaraguan Red Cross Society. On June 6, the ICRC Regional Delegation for Mexico and Central America closed its office and discontinued activities in the country, at the request of the government. The Nicaraguan Pro-Human Rights Association operated from exile in Costa Rica and focused more on the Nicaraguan exile community. The Permanent Commission for Human Rights remained deprived of its legal status since 2022, as did the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights, canceled in 2018.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Other human rights organizations were also canceled or faced significant harassment and police surveillance. Humanitarian organizations faced denial of reentry or obstacles to operating from abroad, and government officials harassed and intimidated domestic and international NGOs critical of the government or the FSLN. Some NGOs reported government intimidation created a climate of fear intended to suppress criticism. Groups reported difficulties in moving donated goods through customs and stated government officials were rarely cooperative or responsive to their complaints.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>The government enforced the law requiring any citizen working for "governments, companies, foundations, or foreign organizations" to register with the Ministry of Interior, submit monthly reports on their income and spending, and provide prior notice of how the foreign funds were intended to be spent. The law established sanctions for those who did not register.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Retribution against Human Rights Defenders: The government stripped several human rights defenders of their citizenship and disbarred several of them as lawyers with no recourse to appeal. The government forced most of these human rights defenders into exile and surveilled, harassed, or otherwise impeded from performing their duties freely those remaining in the country.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>The United Nations or Other International Bodies: The government did not allow OHCHR or the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to send working groups to monitor the human rights situation in the country. The government did not cooperate with these groups, including the Human Rights Council's Group of Experts on Nicaragua, as noted in OHCHR and IACHR reports.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>

The government continued to block the entrance of the Organization of American States (OAS) high-level commission to help resolve the country's sociopolitical crisis. The government did not send a representative to any IACHR sessions held during the year. The government did not send a representative to OAS Permanent Council meetings, based on its 2021 notification of intent to withdraw from the organization, which took effect in November. In several instances, government supporters detained or harassed human rights defenders protected by IACHR precautionary measures.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Government Human Rights Bodies: The Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights, led since 2019 by Darling Rios, a sociologist with no previous human rights experience, and Adolfo Jarquin, also with no previous human rights experience, was perceived by observers as politicized and ineffective.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Women		The 2024 report mentions women in other sections, but does not have a designated section just on Women.
<u>Rape and Domestic Violence:</u> The law criminalized all forms of rape of men or women and domestic or intimate partner rape and other forms of domestic and sexual violence, including so-called corrective rape of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+) persons. Sentences for rape ranged from eight to 12 years' imprisonment. The law criminalized domestic violence and provided prison sentences of one to 12 years.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The government failed to enforce rape and domestic violence laws, leading to widespread impunity and reports of increased gender-based violence. The government continued to use FSLN-led family cabinets and CLSs to mediate cases of domestic violence. According to observers, both entities were politicized and did not operate according to rule of law standards. Women's rights organizations complained that FSLN mediators themselves were often perpetrators of domestic violence and that unofficial agreements existed to not prosecute domestic violence cases, especially if the cases were seen as "not serious."	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Groups working on women's issues reported that gender-based violence remained high and police generally understated its severity. The government continued cancelling the registration of NGOs working on women's rights, including nine cancellations during the year. On July 11, police raided the headquarters of the Condega Female Construction Worker's Association, an NGO that provided capacity building and room and board for women who worked in the construction sector in the northern part of the country.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<u>Other Forms of Gender-based Violence or Harassment:</u> The law prohibited sexual harassment and stipulated penalties of one to three years in prison, or three to five years if the victim was younger than 18. No information was available on government efforts to prevent or prosecute complaints of sexual harassment. The NGO Catholics for the Right to Decide reported 36 femicides through June, the majority committed after the victims suffered sexual violence. Indigenous women were particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, especially during attacks by outsiders encroaching on Indigenous lands. Reports of rape and sexual violence during such attacks were common. Additionally, the lack of coverage by government agencies in such territories made it particularly difficult for Indigenous women to find refuge, justice, or health care after such attacks or from domestic violence in general. There were several reports of cases of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including the online sharing of intimate images, doxing, and trolling.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.

<p><u>Discrimination</u>: The law provided for gender equality in access to education, labor rights, and civil rights. Nevertheless, women often experienced discrimination in employment, obtaining credit, and receiving equal pay for similar work, as well as in owning and managing businesses. While the government enforced the law effectively in the public sector, the authority of women in positions of power was limited compared with that of men. For example, despite a law requiring equal participation of men and women in elected positions, male political party leaders often made decisions on public policy without internal debate or input from female political leaders.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Discrimination in employment took many forms. Although women generally had equal access to employment, few women had senior positions in business and worked in the informal sector in higher numbers than men; in the public sector or in elected positions, the ruling FSLN political party limited women's independence and influence. In addition, women's wages were generally lower compared with those of male counterparts, even for the same position and work performed. Enforcement was not effective in the private sector or the larger informal sector.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p><u>Reproductive Rights</u>: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.</p>	There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.	2024 report found in section 1b. Coercion in Population Control
<p>Women in some areas, such as the RACN and the RACS, lacked widespread access to medical care or programs, and the number of maternal deaths was higher among poor rural women than among their urban counterparts. Widespread lack of access to medical services also affected Indigenous and Afro-descendant women in the RACN and the RACS more than non-Indigenous women in other regions. In addition, adolescents often faced social stigma when seeking contraception methods. According to the Pan-American Health Organization, the adolescent fertility rate during the year was 82.5 (per 1,000 girls ages 15-19). Machismo culture, low education levels, and difficulty accessing health care contributed to the high adolescent fertility rate. Women had access to emergency contraception to a greater extent in urban areas than in rural areas.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>The Ministry of Health's protocol for the provision of health services to survivors of sexual violence stipulated the provision of clinical management of rape. Women's rights organizations, however, claimed the ministry did not consistently provide this service.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Economic hardship and a lack of social safety nets to protect young mothers often impeded continued education for pregnant girls or young mothers.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination</p>	There is no Similar Language in this report.	The 2024 report does not mention any content on Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination.
<p>The law and regulations prohibited discrimination based on race but not on ethnic origin. The government did not effectively enforce the law and regulations.</p>	There is no Similar Language in this report.	The 2024 report does not mention any content on Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination.
<p>The law protected members of racial and ethnic groups and their right to decisions over their lands and customs. Neither the government nor the ruling party respected the law. Non-Indigenous persons regularly encroached on Indigenous lands and violently displaced Indigenous communities from their lands with the acquiescence of the ruling party. Many of these outsiders were retired military officers.</p>	There is no Similar Language in this report.	The 2024 report does not mention any content on Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination.

<p>Exclusionary treatment based on race, skin color, and ethnicity was common, especially in higher-income urban areas. Darker-skinned persons of African descent from the RACN and the RACS, along with others assumed to be from those areas, experienced discrimination, such as being subjected to extra security measures and illegal searches by police. These groups also faced discrimination in employment. Indigenous and other ethnic groups from the RACN and the RACS alleged discriminatory attitudes toward ethnic and racial minorities were responsible for the lack of government resources devoted to the regions. The government focused attention and resources on maintaining political control concerning decision-making bodies in the regions.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention any content on Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination.</p>
<p>Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report mentions little of Indigenous peoples in other section in the report. It does not have a dedicated section for Indigenous Peoples.</p>
<p>Indigenous persons were subjected to violence and threats of violence due to political and environmental advocacy, particularly against Mayangna and Miskito populations in the north-central and northeastern regions. Reports of outsiders threatening to encroach on Indigenous community lands and natural resources were widespread. There were reports of violence and killings of Indigenous persons due to artisanal mining, logging, and cattle grazing by outsiders –commonly referred to as colonos– on Indigenous lands. Police officers reportedly called for Indigenous populations to accept outsiders as it was an easier and more peaceful solution than ousting them from Indigenous lands. Reporting on these incidents was difficult because the government canceled the legal status of various NGOs that performed environmental advocacy and protected Indigenous rights in the area. Despite the existence of autonomous governing bodies, government authorities or FSLN representatives made most decisions affecting Indigenous lands, cultures, traditions, or the exploitation of natural resources on Indigenous lands.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention Indigenous Peoples or include much content on them.</p>
<p>While there were no legal barriers to their participation, representatives from five major Indigenous groups – the Miskito, Sumo/Mayangna, Garifuna (of Afro-Amerindian origin), Creole, and Rama – alleged government discrimination through underrepresentation in the legislative branch. Leaders from these communities decried the national government’s sidelining of autonomous government bodies and the undue administrative burdens and other barriers to access for national electoral politics, including the establishment of political parties and party affiliates and minimum geographic representation levels.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention Indigenous Peoples or include much content on them.</p>
<p>Indigenous persons from rural areas often lacked birth certificates, identity cards, and land titles. While the government did not deny these documents if requested, it favored the requests of FSLN party members over other constituents. Additionally, Indigenous groups alleged the government provided identity cards to colonos in the RACS and the RACN, leading to overrepresentation of FSLN-aligned, non-Indigenous persons in regional bodies. Most Indigenous individuals in rural areas lacked access to public services, and poor roads hindered access to health care for many.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention Indigenous Peoples or include much content on them.</p>
<p>Indigenous women faced multiple levels of discrimination based on their ethnicity, gender, and lower economic status. For example, Indigenous women did not receive medical attention, education, police protection, or representation in government at the same level as non-Indigenous women.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report does not mention Indigenous Peoples or include much content on them.</p>
<p>Although the constitution recognized Indigenous languages, Indigenous defendants were not always granted court interpreters or translators.</p>	<p>There is no Similar Language in this report.</p>	<p>2023 documentation is found in Section 1e under Trial Procedures. The 2024 report does not mention Indigenous Peoples or include much content on them.</p>
<p>Children</p>	<p>b. Protection of Children</p>	

<p><u>Birth Registration</u>: Registration in rural areas was difficult due to lack of adequate infrastructure, and the government took no measures to address this, resulting in a growing number of de facto stateless persons in the country. Persons without citizenship documents were unable to obtain national identity cards.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p><u>Child Abuse</u>: The law prohibited child abuse. Government efforts were insufficient to combat child abuse and sexual violence against children.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p><u>Child, Early, and Forced Marriage</u>: The minimum legal ages for marriage were 18 for men and women and 16 with parental authorization. There were credible reports of forced early marriages in some rural Indigenous communities. No information was available on government efforts to address or prevent forced and early marriage.</p>	<p><u>Child Marriage</u>: The minimum legal ages for marriage were 18 for men and women and 16 with parental authorization. There were credible reports of forced early marriages in some rural Indigenous communities. No information was available on government efforts to address or prevent forced and early marriage.</p>	The 2023 and 2024 reports mention the same content.m
<p><u>Sexual Exploitation of Children</u>: The law prohibited sexual exploitation in general, such as the sale, grooming, or use of children for commercial sexual exploitation, and designated as an aggravating condition behavior enticing children or adolescents to engage in sexual activity. The government generally did not enforce the law pertaining to child sex trafficking. The law defined statutory rape as sexual relations with children ages 14 to 16. Any sexual relations with children younger than 14 were considered rape.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>The law also prohibited child pornography, and the government generally enforced it.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>The country was a destination for child sex tourism.</p>		
<p>Antisemitism</p>	<p>d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement</p>	2024 report has updated section header.
<p>The country had a very small Jewish population. There were few reports of antisemitic incidents. On October 21-22, unidentified subjects vandalized Jewish graves located in a small corner of Managua's main cemetery with red paint and swastikas. Similarly, a small public monument with a menorah was vandalized with red paint and damaged. According to reports, the government removed the markings.</p>	<p>The country had a very small Jewish population. There were few reports of antisemitic incidents.</p>	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2023 report adds an example.
<p>Trafficking in Persons</p>	<p>e. Trafficking in Persons</p>	See the Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons Report at https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/ .
<p>Acts of Violence, Criminalization, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p>Criminalization: The law did not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults, cross-dressing, or other sexual or gender characteristic-related behaviors.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
<p><u>Violence and Harassment</u>: In general, LGBTIQ+ groups reported police condoned and tolerated violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals, did not take complaints of violence against them seriously, and did not fully investigate such cases when they occurred.</p> <p>Despite government inclusivity campaigns, the government and FSLN supporters frequently targeted LGBTIQ+ participants in civil protests, using online smear campaigns and physical attacks in some cases. Police, parapolice, and pro-government supporters targeted LGBTIQ+ opposition members for sexual violence. The Observatory for Human Rights Violations Against LGBTIQ+ Persons stated there were 20 attacks against LGBTIQ+ persons in the first six months of the year; more than half were against transgender women. In April, La Mendoza, a transgender woman, was found dead in a vacant lot with visible signs of violence.</p> <p>LGBTIQ+ activists said LGBTIQ+ political prisoners hid their orientation, fearing increased abuse from prison guards. Reliable data on the breadth of such discrimination were not available. No laws existed that specifically punished hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ persons.</p>	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.

<p><u>Discrimination:</u> Although it did not mention sexual orientation and gender identity specifically, the law stated all persons were equal before the law and provided for the right to equal protection. LGBTQI+ groups reported discrimination, lack of access to justice, and no response from police. LGBTQI+ persons faced widespread societal discrimination and abuse, particularly in housing, education, and employment. LGBTQI+ persons often received slurs or were discriminated against in their employment by being requested to dress, style, or act according to their biological gender. LGBTQI+ organizations complained the law curtailed the rights of LGBTQI+ households by defining families as necessarily headed by a man and a woman; this definition particularly hindered LGBTQI+ households' access to social security, survivor benefits, and adoption rights.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p><u>Availability of Legal Gender Recognition:</u> The law did not provide for legal gender recognition.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p><u>Involuntary or Coercive Medical or Psychological Practices:</u> There were no reports of involuntary or coercive medical or psychological practices specifically targeting LGBTQI+ individuals in an attempt to change their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. There were anecdotal reports of psychotherapy and faith-based attempts at conversion therapies, but victims were often hesitant to report such cases due to societal discrimination. There were no known attempts to perform medically unnecessary surgeries on children or nonconsenting intersex adults.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p><u>Restrictions of Freedom of Expression, Association, or Peaceful Assembly:</u> LGBTQI+ groups deemed in opposition to the ruling party faced constraints to gather or express their views freely. The government did not give permission to local LGBTQI+ groups for a Pride march, consistent with its policy of denying permission for any large gatherings.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>The law required access to education, health services, public buildings, and transportation for persons with disabilities. The government did not enforce the law effectively. Persons with disabilities faced severe problems accessing schools, public health facilities, and other institutions. There was a lack of educational opportunities and public-services positions, despite a legal requirement that a certain percentage be available to them.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Children with disabilities attended schools with peers without disabilities; specialized school materials were not readily available, and on occasion the Ministry of Education refused to provide them. Anecdotal evidence suggested children with disabilities completed secondary education at a significantly lower rate than other children. Public schools were rarely well equipped, and teachers were poorly trained in providing appropriate attention to children with disabilities.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Police stations and public healthcare facilities did not have staff trained in sign language. Many voting facilities were not accessible. Advocates for persons with disabilities complained of a lack of accessible public transportation. Some persons with disabilities reported taxi drivers often refused them service due to the perceived extra burden on the driver to aid customers with disabilities. Advocates for persons with disabilities claimed interpreters for the deaf were not accessible at schools and universities. Government clinics and hospitals provided care for persons with disabilities, but the quality of care was generally poor.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>
<p>Discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities was widespread, despite being prohibited by law. Laws related to persons with disabilities did not stipulate penalties for noncompliance, although penalties could be issued under the general labor inspection code. The government did not enforce the law effectively; did not mandate accessibility to buildings, information, and communications; and did not make information available on efforts to improve respect for the rights of persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.</p>

Advocacy organizations for persons with disabilities reported persons with disabilities accounted for fewer than 1 percent of public-sector employees, despite a legally mandated minimum representation of 2 percent. Further reports indicated public institutions did not sufficiently coordinate with the Ministry of Labor to accommodate persons with disabilities in the workplace. Although there were no official reports of violence, harassment, or intimidation against persons with disabilities by government officials, there were several anecdotal reports of violence and harassment. These incidents generally went unreported because victims did not want to face the burdensome process of filing a complaint.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Other Societal Violence or Discrimination	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
The law provided specific protections against discrimination in employment and health services for persons with HIV or AIDS, but such persons suffered societal discrimination.	Section eliminated in 2024 report.	The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language in the report.
Section 7. Worker Rights	b. Worker Rights	2024 report under section 1.
a. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining	Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining	
The law provided for the right of all workers, except the military and police, to form and join unions without prior authorization, to bargain collectively, and to conduct strikes. The government's control of all major unions effectively nullified the right of workers to join independent unions of their own choice. The ruling party used its control over major unions to harass and intimidate workers in several sectors, including construction, education, health care, the public sector, and free trade zones.	The law provided for the right of all workers, except the military and police, to form and join unions without prior authorization, to bargain collectively, and to conduct strikes. Nonetheless, workers lived in what the International Labor Organization's Committee of Experts called a "persistent climate of intimidation and harassment of independent workers' and employers' organizations." The government's control of all major unions effectively nullified the right of workers to join independent unions of their own choice. The ruling party used its control over major unions to harass and intimidate workers in several sectors, including construction, education, health care, the public sector, and free trade zones.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same context with some language changes.
Collective bargaining agreements lasted up to two years and were automatically renewed if neither party requested their revision. Collective bargaining agreements in the free trade zone regions, however, were for five-year periods. Companies in disputes with their employees were required to negotiate with the employees' union if one existed. By law, several unions could coexist at any one enterprise, and the law permitted management to sign separate collective bargaining agreements with each union. Although the law established a labor court arbitration process, it was subject to long wait times and lengthy, complicated procedures, and many labor disputes were resolved out of court. The government sought to foster resolution of labor conflicts through informal negotiations rather than formal administrative or judicial processes.	Collective bargaining agreements lasted up to two years and were renewed automatically if neither party requested their revision. Collective bargaining agreements in the free trade zone regions, however, were for five-year periods. Companies in disputes with their employees were required to negotiate with the employees' union if one existed. By law, several unions could coexist at any one enterprise, and the law permitted management to sign separate collective bargaining agreements with each union. Although the law established a labor court arbitration process, it was subject to long wait times and lengthy, complicated procedures, and many labor disputes were resolved out of court.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content, 2023 report adds, "The government sought to foster resolution of labor conflicts through informal negotiations rather than formal administrative or judicial processes."
Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining were not respected, and the government often intervened for political reasons. The government did not effectively enforce the laws. The law did not establish specific fines for labor law violations, and penalties imposed at the discretion of Ministry of Labor officials were commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights, such as discrimination. Penalties were sometimes applied against violators.	Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining were not respected, and the government often intervened for political reasons. For example, the government suspended one union and arrested its leader for questioning because the union planned a conference in the country that would have included attendees from an international labor organization. The government did not effectively enforce the laws. The law did not establish specific fines for labor law violations; penalties imposed at the discretion of Ministry of Labor officials were commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights, such as discrimination. Penalties were sometimes applied against violators.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content; the 2024 report adds an example of the government suspending a union and arresting its leader. The reports have language changes or have been eliminated.
The constitution recognized the right to strike, with restrictions. The law prohibited antiunion discrimination and provided for the right to reinstatement for workers dismissed for union activity. Burdensome and lengthy conciliation procedures and government control of all major unions impeded workers' ability to call strikes. In smaller businesses where major unions were not present, the government created government-aligned unions to diffuse efforts to organize strikes or other labor actions. In addition, if a strike continued for 30 days without resolution, the Ministry of Labor could suspend the strike and submit the matter to arbitration.	The constitution recognized the right to strike, with restrictions. The law prohibited antiunion discrimination and provided for the right to reinstatement for workers dismissed for union activity. Burdensome and lengthy conciliation procedures and government control of all major unions impeded workers' ability to call strikes. In smaller businesses where major unions were not present, the government created government-aligned unions to diffuse efforts to organize strikes or other labor actions. In addition, if a strike continued for 30 days without resolution, the Ministry of Labor could suspend the strike and submit the matter to arbitration.	The 2023 and 2024 reports document the same content.

<p>Politically motivated firings occurred. Labor experts highlighted instances of public-sector employees being fired without receiving severance pay. FSLN party affiliation or letters of recommendation from party secretaries, family cabinet coordinators, or other party officials were allegedly required from applicants seeking public-sector jobs or retain employment in the public sector. The government stopped retirement pension payments to several citizens it stripped of citizenship in February. Retirement pensions accumulated over time of employment and were unseizable by law. By law, during a strike employers could not hire replacement workers, but unions alleged this practice was common. Wildcat strikes – those without union authorization – were historically common. Employers interfered in the functioning of workers' organizations and committed other violations related to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Labor leaders noted employers routinely violated collective bargaining agreements and labor laws with impunity. Observers accused official union federations of protecting employer interests by identifying and isolating workers who attempted to organize independent unions. The government was accused of frustrating such attempts through arbitrary procedural delays.</p>	<p>Politically motivated firings occurred. FSLN party affiliation or letters of recommendation from party secretaries, family cabinet coordinators, or other party officials allegedly were required from applicants seeking public-sector jobs or retain employment in the public sector. By law, during a strike, employers could not hire replacement workers. Observers noted a sense of impunity when ruling party-aligned employers or unions interfered in the functioning of workers' organizations and committed other violations related to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Labor leaders noted employers routinely violated collective bargaining agreements and labor laws with impunity. Observers accused government-affiliated union federations of protecting employer interests by identifying and isolating workers who attempted to organize independent unions. The government was accused of frustrating attempts to form independent unions through arbitrary procedural delays.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports generally cover the same topics: politically motivated firings and mistreatment of employees, and strikes. The 2023 report goes more in-depth with examples.</p>
<p>Many employers in the formal sector continued to blacklist or fire union members and did not reinstate them. Many of these cases did not reach the court system or a mediation process led by the Ministry of Labor. Employers often delayed severance payments to fired workers or omitted the payments altogether. Employers also avoided legal penalties by organizing employer-led unions that lacked independence and by frequently using contract workers to replace striking employees. There were reports FSLN party dues were automatically deducted from paychecks. Workers who disagreed with government recommendations were fired.</p>	<p>Many employers in the formal sector continued to blacklist or fire union members and did not reinstate them. Many of these cases did not reach the court system or a mediation process led by the Ministry of Labor. Employers also avoided legal penalties by organizing employer-led unions that lacked independence and by frequently using contract workers to replace striking employees. There were reports FSLN party dues were automatically deducted from paychecks. Public-sector staff reported being forced to take weapons training, supposedly to defend the country against another attempted coup.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document similar content, some of which has either had its language changed or eliminated.</p>
<p>b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>-2023 report: See the Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons Report at https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/.</p>
<p>c. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment</p>	<p>Child Labor</p>	<p>See the Department of Labor's Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor at https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/.</p>
<p>d. Discrimination (see section 6)</p>	<p>Section eliminated in 2024 report.</p>	<p>The 2024 report eliminated this section and does not include similar language.</p>
<p>e. Acceptable Conditions of Work</p>	<p>Acceptable Work Conditions</p>	
<p><u>Wage and Hour Laws:</u> The law established a statutory minimum wage for 10 economic sectors. According to independent analysts, the average legal minimum wage covered less than 50 percent of the cost of basic goods.</p>	<p>Wage and Hour Laws: The law established a statutory minimum wage for 10 economic sectors. According to independent analysts, the average legal minimum wage covered less than 50 percent of the cost of basic goods.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 report documents the same content.</p>
<p>The standard legal workweek was limited to 48 hours, with one day of rest. The law dictated an obligatory year-end bonus equivalent to one month's pay, proportional to the number of months worked. The law mandated premium pay for overtime, prohibited compulsory overtime, and set a maximum of three hours of overtime per day not to exceed nine hours per week.</p>	<p>The standard legal workweek was limited to 48 hours, with one day of rest. The law dictated an obligatory year-end bonus equivalent to one month's pay, proportional to the number of months worked. The law mandated premium pay for overtime, prohibited compulsory overtime, and set a maximum of three hours of overtime per day not to exceed nine hours per week.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 report documents the same content.</p>
<p><u>Occupational Safety and Health:</u> The Ministry of Labor's occupational safety and health (OSH) experts actively identified unsafe conditions. The Ministry of Labor, through its Office of Hygiene and Occupational Safety, was responsible for enforcing wage, hour, and OSH laws. By law, workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. It was unclear whether authorities effectively protected employees in such cases. The National Council of Labor Hygiene and Safety, and its departmental committees, was responsible for implementing worker safety legislation and collaborating with other government agencies and civil society organizations in developing assistance programs and promoting training and prevention activities. According to labor contacts, the council was inactive throughout the year. Companies were required to form worker management OSH committees.</p>	<p>There were occupational safety and health (OSH) standards for the countries' main industries. The Ministry of Labor's OSH experts actively identified unsafe conditions and responded to workers' complaints. The Ministry of Labor, through its Office of Hygiene and Occupational Safety, was responsible for enforcing OSH laws. By law, workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. It was unclear whether authorities effectively protected employees in such cases. The National Council of Labor Hygiene and Safety, as well as its departmental committees, was responsible for implementing worker safety legislation and collaborating with other government agencies and civil society organizations in developing assistance programs and promoting training and prevention activities. According to labor representatives, the council was inactive throughout the year. Companies were required to form worker-management OSH committees. Safety and health accidents most often occurred in manufacturing, agriculture, and ranching.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 report documents the same content. The 2024 reports add, "There were occupational safety and health (OSH) standards for the countries' main industries," and "Safety and health accidents most often occurred in manufacturing, agriculture, and ranching."</p>

<p>The minimum wage was generally enforced in the formal sector. Legal limitations on hours worked often were ignored by employers, who claimed workers readily volunteered for extra hours for additional pay. Compulsory overtime was reported in the private-security sector, where guards often were required to work excessive shifts without relief.</p>	<p>Employers often ignored legal limitations on hours worked and would claim workers readily volunteered for extra hours for additional pay. Compulsory overtime was reported in the private-security sector, where guards often were required to work excessive shifts without relief. Employers often delayed severance payments to fired workers or omitted the payments altogether.</p>	<p>Some content is similar, but the 2024 report mentions that employers were noncompliant with rules on payment and hours, while the 2023 report discusses the sector for these companies.</p>
<p><u>Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement:</u> The government did not effectively enforce minimum wage, overtime, and OSH laws. Penalties for violations of minimum wage and overtime laws were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud. Penalties were rarely applied against violators in the formal sector and even more rarely in the informal sector. The law allowed labor inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions for violations. Private businesses complained about arbitrary and allegedly targeted labor inspections and being pressured to pay bribes to avoid citations.</p>	<p><u>Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement:</u> The government generally enforced minimum wage laws in the formal sector but did not effectively enforce overtime and OSH laws. Penalties for violations of minimum wage and overtime laws were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud. Penalties were rarely applied against violators. The law allowed labor inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions for violations. There were reports of inspector corruption. The Ministry of Labor was the primary enforcement agency. The government did not allocate adequate staff or other measures to enforce compliance with wage, overtime, or OSH provisions. Penalties for violations of OSH laws were commensurate with those for crimes such as negligence but were rarely applied.</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports document familiar content; the 2023 report mentions private businesses' complaints, while the 2024 report goes more in-depth into examples of inspector corruption.</p>
<p>The informal sector was estimated to be 77 percent of employment. The government did not enforce labor laws in this sector.</p>	<p>Independent groups estimated the informal sector to be more than 80 percent of the workforce. The government did not enforce labor laws in this sector</p>	<p>The 2023 and 2024 reports have different percentages of sector employment/workforce. Both documenting the government did not enforce labor laws in these sectors.</p>