

# LASA Condemns Nicaragua's Illegal closure of the Central American University

August 2023

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) strongly condemns the illegitimate closure of the Central American University (UCA) by the State of Nicaragua. On August 15, 2023, the Tenth Criminal District Court of Hearings Managua District ordered the seizure of UCA's movable and immovable assets, as well as the freezing of its bank accounts and financial products. The measure was taken due to unfounded accusations that the Central American University was a center of terrorism where criminal groups were organized. Given the serious events and the violation of academic freedom, the UCA suspended all academic and administrative activities as of August 16, 2023. Since then, there have been reports of the persecution and detention of members of the institution's academic body, including four student leaders.

The UCA, a Jesuit university founded in 1960, has been a fundamental institution in the development of critical thinking in Nicaragua and has become a benchmark university in Central America for its commitment and excellence in higher education and free and independent research. It was the first university in Nicaragua to offer courses essential to the social sciences and humanities, such as sociology, psychology, social communication and economics. Moreover, the UCA is a private institution that has historically defended truth and justice and fought against oppression, authoritarianism and repression of freedom of protest and thought.

LASA firmly demands the restoration of the University's autonomy and the immediate cessation of the persecution and violation of the human rights of the members of the Central American University. We also demand that the safety of the UCA's administration and students be guaranteed, that its cultural heritage and archives be protected, and that an impartial investigation be carried out to clarify the serious accusations that the Nicaraguan government has made against the UCA.

Finally, LASA reiterates its condemnation of the systematic persecution and administrative and legal harassment of higher education institutions carried out by representatives of the Nicaraguan State.

Approved by the LASA Academic Freedom and Human Rights Committee on August 27, 2023.

## About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the world's largest professional association constituted by individuals and institutions devoted to the study of Latin America and the Caribbean. LASA currently has over 12,000 members from around the world and a committee that defends academic freedom and human rights.

If you wish to interview a LASA Executive Council member, you can contact the LASA communications office at (412) 648-7929 or send an email to [lasa@lasaweb.org](mailto:lasa@lasaweb.org).

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