



INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 28/2021

Precautionary Measure No. 127-21 Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval and his nuclear family regarding Nicaragua March 19, 2021 Original: Spanish

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. On February 12, 2021, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (hereinafter "the Inter-American Commission," "the Commission" or "the IACHR") received a request for precautionary measures filed by the Human Rights Collective "Nicaragua Nunca Más," urging the Commission to request that the State of Nicaragua (hereinafter "the State" or "Nicaragua") protect the life and personal integrity of Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval, Karina Alejandra Navarrete Sánchez, their daughter J.M.L.N. and their nephew Ángel Gabriel Umaña Navarrete. According to the request, the proposed beneficiaries are allegedly at risk as a result of their search for justice for the alleged murder of their 14-month-old son T.L.L.N. by members of the police and "paramilitary" groups.
- 2. The Commission requested information from the State, pursuant to Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure, on February 23, 2021. To date, the State has not provided a response. For their part, the applicants provided additional information on March 2, 2021.
- 3. Upon analyzing the information available, in light of the applicable context and the findings made, the Commission considers that the information provided shows *prima facie* that the rights to the life and personal integrity of Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval and his nuclear family are in a serious and urgent situation. Consequently, in accordance with Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure, the Commission requests that the State of Nicaragua: a) adopt the necessary measures to protect Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval's and his nuclear family's rights to life and personal integrity. In particular, the State must ensure that state actors respect the beneficiaries' rights in accordance with the standards established by international human rights law, and in relation to acts of risk attributable to third parties; b) consult and agree upon the measures to be adopted with the beneficiaries and their representation; and c) report on the actions taken to investigate the alleged events that led to the adoption of the precautionary measures at hand, so as to prevent them from reoccurring.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. The Commission visited Nicaragua in May 2018 and collected several testimonies on human rights violations that allegedly occurred since the beginning of a series of protests in April, later publishing a Report that included recommendations. To verify compliance with these recommendations, the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) was created, which was present in the country until December 19, 2018, when the State temporarily suspended its operation. On its side, the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) issued a report that analyzed the events that took place between April 18 and May 30 of 2018, confirming the findings of the IACHR.¹

5. During a presentation before the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, the Commission shared the data collected by the MESENI. According to this, there were 325 deaths, over 2000 were injured, 550 were detained and processed, 300 health professionals were dismissed, and at least

¹ GIEI, Report on the acts of violence that occurred between April 18 and May 30, 2018. December 2018. Available [in Spanish] at http://gieinicaragua.org/giei-content/uploads/2018/12/GIEI_INFORME_DIGITAL.pdf





144 students were expelled from the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua between April 2018 and January 10, 2019.² For its 2018 Annual Report, the IACHR included Nicaragua in Chapter IV-B, in accordance with the grounds set forth in its Rules of Procedure.

- 6. During 2019, the Commission continued to condemn the ongoing acts of persecution, urging the State to comply with its obligations. On April 25, the Commission shared the performance report and results achieved by the MESENI, which continued to monitor the country from Washington, D.C. Between February and June, the State passed a Comprehensive Care for Victims Act and an Amnesty Law that caused public statements by the IACHR as they did not comply with the international standards in matters of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition.³ During these last months, the Commission continued receiving reports of serious incidents. In August, for instance, it voiced its concern regarding the State's decision to end the "Negotiating Table for Understanding and Peace" started on February 27, 2019, between the government and the Civil Alliance for Justice and Democracy.⁴ On September 6, the IACHR reported an increase in harassment against human rights defenders and persons who, despite having been released from prison, continued to be intimidated.⁵
- 7. On November 19, 2019, the Commission once again called attention to the ongoing repression, noting that "[...]in addition to the closure of democratic spaces that currently characterizes the human rights crisis in Nicaragua, the families of people who have been deprived of their freedom during this crisis are increasingly becoming the targets of state persecution in the form of surveillance and the obstruction of peaceful actions."
- 8. During 2020, the IACHR verified the intensification of acts of surveillance, harassment, and selective repression against people considered to oppose the Government, and identified a fifth stage of repression in the context of the crisis implemented since mid-2019, which it described as "the most intense and systematic attack on public liberties to have occurred in the country since the beginning of the crisis.⁷" In May, 2020, the IACHR noted and condemned the non-compliance with its recommendations and urgently called on the State to implement them.⁸ In October 2020, the IACHR again called for an immediate end to the acts of persecution against persons identified as opponents of the government and for the restoration of democratic guarantees in Nicaragua.⁹

² IACHR, IACHR denounces the weakening of the rule of law in the face of serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity in Nicaragua, January 10, 2019.

justice, reparation and measures of non-repetition, November 19, 2019. Available a https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/297.asp

³ IACHR, IACHR and OHCHR Express Concern Over the Passing of the Comprehensive Care for Victims Act in Nicaragua, June 3, 2019. Available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/137.asp

See also: IACHR, IACHR Expresses Concern Over the Passing of the Amnesty Law in Nicaragua, June 12, 2019. Available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/145.asp; IACHR considers the Law on Dialogue, Reconciliation and Peace in Nicaragua incompatible with international standards in matters of truth, justice and reparation, February 1, 2019. Available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/021.asp

⁴ IACHR, IACHR expresses its concern at the announcement by the State of Nicaragua not to continue with the dialogue and calls on the State to comply with its obligations to guarantee and respect human rights, August 6, 2019. Available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media center/PReleases/2019/194.asp

⁵ IACHR, IACHR denounces the persistence of repression and expresses its concern over increased harassment against human rights defenders and those released from prison in Nicaragua, September 6, 2019. Available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/220.asp ⁶ IACHR, IACHR condemns persecution of victims of repression in Nicaragua and calls on the State to avoid re-victimization and to promote truth,

⁷ IACHR, Two years after the beginning of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua, the IACHR reiterates its permanent commitment to the victims and notes the consolidation of a fifth stage of repression, April 18, 2020. Available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2020/080.asp

⁸ IACHR, Two years after its visit to Nicaragua, the IACHR warns and condemns the non-compliance with its recommendations and urgently calls on the State to implement them, May 16, 2020. Available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2020/113.asp

⁹ IACHR, IACHR calls for immediate cessation of acts of persecution against persons identified as opponents of the government and the reestablishment of democratic guarantees in Nicaragua, October 10, 2020. Available at https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media center/PReleases/2020/249.asp





9. In 2021, the IACHR condemned the increased harassment in Nicaragua. ¹⁰ As reported to the IACHR, these acts are manifested in the deployment of police teams including civilians outside targeted homes over whole days. This is carried out to prevent these persons or their relatives from leaving, or otherwise identify and register any person who enters or leaves the place. In other cases, the targets are subjected to monitoring, arrests, threats, and house search warrants.

III. SUMMARY OF FACTS AND ARGUMENTS PROVIDED

1. Information provided by the applicants

10. On June 23, 2018, Nelson Lorío was holding his 14-month-old son, T.L.L.N. while walking in the "Las Américas Uno" neighborhood of Managua with his wife Karina Alejandra Navarrete Sánchez and their other daughter J.M.L.N. On that same day, the National Police and "parastatal" actors allegedly carried out the "Operación Limpieza" ("Operation Clean-up"), which left several deaths in Managua. According to the request, the street was empty except for the presence of police and "paramilitary." When they went around a corner, the proposed beneficiaries heard gunfire and a bullet reached the child T.L.L.N. while in his father's arms.

11. They reported that this had also been observed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in a report published in August 2018, stating that "on that same day, the National Police made a public statement saying that, in the morning, 'members of the police force had been carrying out operations to open the streets and ensure the unrestricted movement of people and vehicles [...] when they were attacked by criminals in the neighborhoods near the [Polytechnic University of Nicaragua], resulting in the death of a one-year-old boy due to a gunshot wound.'¹¹ However, it was alleged that the death certificate of baby T.L.L.N. stated that the cause of death was "suspected suicide."

12. Nelson Lorío and Karina Navarrete reportedly denounced the murder of their son publicly, both in the media and before human rights organizations, holding the police and "paramilitary" officers responsible. After criticism against the health authorities, the physician who made the death certificate appeared in a video, claiming that the document that she had issued to the mother of the baby was different to the one shown. However, the parents of the victim publicly showed the original document which confirmed the "suspected suicide" version. As a result of their accusations, they allegedly started to "be harassed by unidentified people on their telephones and social media." The request states that they did not file any complaints before the state authorities regarding the aforementioned murder, "out of fear and due to disbelief in ever obtaining justice, as all crimes that have been committed within the same context remain unpunished."

13. According to the request, given the aforementioned situation, Nelson Lorío and Karina Navarrete opted for "self-exile" in Costa Rica in August and November 2018, respectively. In October 2019, however, the proposed beneficiaries returned to Nicaragua for financial reasons. There, they continue their search for justice for their son T.L.L.N. In this sense, Nelson Lorío now allegedly participates in organizations that oppose the current government, such as the Association of Mothers of April (AMA)¹² and the Peasant

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¹⁰ IACHR, IACHR Condemns Growing Harassment in Nicaragua, January 6, 2021. Available at https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File =/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2021/002.asp

¹¹ OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses in the Context of Protests in Nicaragua, August 2018, para. 23. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NI/HumanRightsViolationsNicaraguaApr_Aug2018_EN.pdf

¹² The IACHR has previously granted precautionary measures to some members of the Association of Mothers of April. See: IACHR, Elizabeth Velásquez and her nuclear family regarding Nicaragua, Resolution 4/2020 (PM 1191-19), January 15, 2020. Available [in Spanish] at http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2020/4-20mc1191-19-ni.pdf. IACHR, Josefa Esterlina Meza et al. regarding Nicaragua (Mothers and family member of the "Association of Mothers of April"), Resolution 51/2020 (PM 1191-19), September 2, 2020. Available [in Spanish] at http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2020/51-20mc1191-19-ni-ampliacion.pdf.





Movement,¹³ through the National Coalition.

- 14. Upon their return, the proposed beneficiaries were again subjected to harassment and persecution, alleging that "the National Police and para-state actors monitor and harass him daily at his house," and "constantly take pictures of each of his daily activities." When questioned by the officers as to why they come to his house, Nelson Lorío stated that "they answer with foul language or ignore him." Even so, on one occasion, at the beginning of 2021, a policeman had replied that "when he sees him on the street, then he will understand." Moreover, on October 17, 2020, he was reportedly arrested and interrogated when leaving a meeting with the National Coalition.
- 15. It was added that "police officers have come every day to harass, monitor, take pictures and record videos of the house" (photographs have been provided), showing up in front of the house "from ten in the morning until noon, and from two in the afternoon to five or six in the afternoon, daily," and that they pass by every day "sounding sirens." Recently, however, harassment against Nelson Lorío has reportedly increased, "as part of the reprisal for continuing the fight for justice through public complaints through his social media, and for his participation as an activist." In that sense, on February 8 and 9, 2021, National Police officers remained day and night taking pictures and recording videos outside his house. On February 27, 2021, they allegedly did not leave until 11:30 p.m.
- 16. The applicants indicate that Nelson Lorío considers that his telephone is purportedly tapped, since "there is a patrol awaiting him wherever he goes." In addition, it was alleged that the situation of harassment and threats also affects his relatives, indicating that other members of Karina Navarrete's family live in the house where they live. By way of example, they indicated that their nephew, the proposed beneficiary Ángel Gabriel Umaña Navarrete, reportedly received threats about being "sent into jail" and "have drugs mounted on him."
- 17. Finally, Nelson Lorío alleged that whenever he leaves his house to take the bus, two motorcycles of the National Police pass him by very closely "as a form of intimidation," and that the security camera of the Citizen Power Council (CPC) is directly facing the proposed beneficiaries' house.

2. Information provided by the State

18. The Commission requested information from the State on June 18, 2020. There has been no response to date.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE ELEMENTS OF SERIOUSNESS, URGENCY, AND IRREPARABLE HARM

19. The mechanism of precautionary measures is part of the Commission's function of overseeing Member States compliance with the human rights obligations set forth in Article 106 of the Charter of the Organization of American States. These general oversight functions are established in Article 41(b) of the American Convention on Human Rights, as well as in Article 18(b) of the IACHR's Statute. The mechanism of precautionary measures is set forth in Article 25 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure. In accordance with that Article, the Commission grants precautionary measures in serious and urgent situations in which these measures are necessary to avoid irreparable harm to persons.

20. The Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ("the Inter-American Court" or "I/A Court H.R.") have established repeatedly that precautionary and provisional

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¹³ IACHR, Freddy Alberto Navas Lopez regarding Nicaragua, Resolution 46/2019 (PM 621-19), September 14, 2019. Available [in Spanish] at http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2019/46-19mc621-19-ni.pdf; I/A Court H.R. Matter of 17 persons deprived of liberty regarding Nicaragua. Provisional Measures. Adoption of Urgent Provisional Measures. Order of the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of May 21, 2019.





measures have a dual nature, both protective and precautionary. Regarding the protective nature, these measures seek to avoid irreparable harm and protect the exercise of human rights. Regarding their precautionary nature, these measures have the purpose of preserving a legal situation while it is being considered by the IACHR. Their precautionary nature aims to safeguard the rights at risk until the request pending before the Inter-American System is resolved. Their object and purpose are to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the decision on the merits and, thus, prevent the alleged rights from being violated, a situation that may adversely affect the useful effect (*effet utile*) of the final decision. In this regard, precautionary or provisional measures allow the State concerned to comply with the final decision and, if necessary, to implement the ordered reparations. For such purposes, in accordance with Article 25(2) of the Rules of Procedure, the Commission considers that:

- a. "serious situation" refers to a grave impact that an action or omission can have on a protected right
 or on the eventual effect of a pending decision in a case or petition before the organs of the InterAmerican System;
- b. "urgent situation" refers to risk or threat that is imminent and can materialize, thus requiring immediate preventive or protective action; and
- c. "irreparable harm" refers to impact on rights which, due to their nature, would not be susceptible to reparation, restoration or adequate compensation.
- 21. The Commission recalls that the facts supporting a request for precautionary measures need not be proven beyond doubt; rather, the purpose of the assessment of the information provided should be to determine *prima facie* if a serious and urgent situation exists.¹⁴
- 22. As a preliminary matter, the IACHR indicates that, in this proceeding, it is not called upon to rule on State responsibility in accordance with the American Convention in relation to the alleged murder of T.L.L.N. and other human rights violations in Nicaragua. Given the analysis on the merits required, the Commission recalls that such allegations can be assessed as part of an eventual petition or case. In this sense, on this occasion, the analysis is carried out exclusively in accordance with Article 25 of the Rules of Procedure.
- 23. When assessing compliance with the procedural requirements, the Commission takes into account the current context of the State of Nicaragua, which was verified by the Commission and is monitored by MESENI, as well as the special situation of exposure in which the persons who have demonstrated against the repressive actions of the current government are allegedly found. In this context, the Commission takes into account that the proposed beneficiaries have purportedly acquired great visibility in their quest for justice in the aforementioned case of T.L.L.N., publicly blaming State actors as responsible. Furthermore, the proposed beneficiary Nelson Lorío was allegedly also involved in the Association of Mothers of April (AMA) and the Peasant Movement. In relation to the AMA, the IACHR recalls that it has recently granted precautionary measures to protect certain members who are allegedly at risk, *inter alia*, as a result of their connection to the Association. Furthermore, with regard to the

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¹⁴ In this regard, for instance, referring to provisional measures, the Inter-American Court has indicated that a minimum of detail and information is required to prima facie assess whether an extremely serious and urgent situation exists. IACHR, Matter of Children and adolescents deprived of liberty in the "Complexo do Tatuapé" of the Fundação CASA. Request for extension of provisional measures. Provisional Measures regarding Brazil. Order of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of July 4, 2006. Considerandum 23.

¹⁵ The IACHR has previously granted precautionary measures to some members of the Association of Mothers of April. See: IACHR, Elizabeth Velásquez and her nuclear family regarding Nicaragua, Resolution 4/2020 (PM 1191-19), January 15, 2020. Available [in Spanish] at http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2020/4-20mc1191-19-ni.pdf. IACHR, Josefa Esterlina Meza et al. regarding Nicaragua (Mothers and family member of the "Association of Mothers of April"), Resolution 51/2020 (PM 1191-19), September 2, 2020. Available [in Spanish] at http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2020/51-20mc1191-19-ni-ampliacion.pdf.





Peasant Movement, the IACHR has protected leaders of the Movement, ¹⁶ and has emphasized to the Inter-American Court, in its request for provisional measures in the matter of Seventeen persons deprived of liberty regarding Nicaragua, ¹⁷ as one of the opposition groups to the government affected by the repressive actions carried out.

24. With regard to the seriousness requirement, the Commission notes that the proposed beneficiaries have allegedly been targets of follow-up and harassment as of 2018 as a result of their work to report the alleged murder of T.L.L.N., holding State actors responsible, for which they allegedly happened to "received harassment by telephone and social media from unidentified persons." It is noted that, according to the information provided, the situation placing the proposed beneficiaries at risk has allegedly led them to leave Nicaragua.

25. In that sense, after their return to Nicaragua in October 2019, state actors allegedly "watched and harassed" Mr. Nelson Lorío and his family "on a daily basis" at their house. This included taking pictures in front of the house, as well as "of each of his daily activities," having even detained and interrogated him on October 17, 2020, when he was leaving a meeting with the National Coalition, which he also integrates. In this regard, the IACHR notes the seriousness of such allegations, which directly involve state actors, one of whom allegedly indicated the reasons for the monitoring, in early 2021, in threatening tones, saying that "when he sees him on the street, then he will understand."

26. The Commission also notes that, according to the request, the alleged situation placing the proposed beneficiaries at risk purportedly extends to Nelson Lorío and Karina Navarrete's nuclear family, since they allegedly share the residence with other members of the family of the proposed beneficiary. Thus, their nephew, the proposed beneficiary Ángel Gabriel Umaña Navarrete, was allegedly threatened about being "sent into prison" and having "drugs mounted on him." In this scenario, the IACHR notes that, currently, the proposed beneficiaries allegedly continue their efforts to seek justice, alleging that, as a result, the situation of harassment had allegedly worsened since the beginning of February 2021, with the permanence of state actors "monitoring" the house of the proposed beneficiaries during long periods, all day and night, providing photographs (see *supra* para. 15).

27. For the Commission, such events reflect an ongoing risk that the persons proposed as beneficiaries have been facing. The information available shows that the threats and intimidation seek that the proposed beneficiaries limit their work in reporting and seeking justice, or that those responsible for such events be able to know their location. In this context, the Commission understands that, even though state actors are allegedly involved, the State has not deployed any protection measures in favor of the persons proposed as beneficiaries.

28. The Commission notes that, despite having requested information on February 23, 2021, to date no communication has been received from the State of Nicaragua. The Commission regrets the lack of response from the State, and although the foregoing is not sufficient per se to justify the granting of a precautionary measure, it does prevent the Commission from having observations from the State and therefore analyzing whether the allegations of the applicants turn out to be disproved or not, as well as knowing the actions that, if applicable, are being implemented to address the alleged risk. Especially serious are the allegations that state officers are involved in the events of risk that the proposed beneficiary has been facing, at least since 2018.

29. In view of the circumstances, the Commission considers that from the applicable prima facie

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¹⁶ IACHR, Freddy Alberto Navas Lopez regarding Nicaragua, Resolution 46/2019 (PM 621-19), September 14, 2019. Available [in Spanish] at http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2019/46-19mc621-19-ni.pdf.

¹⁷ I/A Court H.R. Matter of 17 persons deprived of liberty regarding Nicaragua. Provisional Measures. Adoption of Urgent Provisional Measures. Order of the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of May 21, 2019.





standard, and in the context that the State of Nicaragua is going through, it is sufficiently accredited that the rights to life and personal integrity of Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval and his nuclear family are at serious risk.

- 30. Regarding the urgency requirement, the Commission considers that it has been met given the frequent, continued, and current nature of the alleged events of harassment and threats. Furthermore, it is taken into consideration that the persons proposed as beneficiaries have continued to work in the search for justice in the case of boy T.L.L.N. The above, along with the context in which their situation is inserted, the lack of information on protection measures implemented in their favor, the lack of investigation into the alleged facts, added to the reported participation of state officers in the events of risk, indicates that they could be exposed to possible attacks coming to fruition against them at any time. The information available indicates that the immediate adoption of protection measures in their favor is necessary.
- 31. As regards the requirement of irreparable harm, the Commission considers that it has been met, since the possible impact on the rights to life and personal integrity, due to their own nature, constitutes the maximum situation of irreparability.

IV. BENEFICIARIES

32. The Commission declares that the beneficiaries of this precautionary measure are Mr. Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval, Ms. Karina Alejandra Navarrete Sánchez, their daughter J.M.L.N. and their nephew Ángel Gabriel Umaña Navarrete, who are duly identified in this proceeding.

V. DECISION

- 33. The Commission considers that this matter meets *prima facie* the requirements of seriousness, urgency and irreparable harm contained in Article 25 of its Rules of Procedure. Consequently, the Commission requests that the State of Nicaragua:
 - a) adopt the necessary measures to protect Nelson Gabriel Lorío Sandoval's and his nuclear family's rights to life and personal integrity. In particular, the State must ensure that state actors respect the beneficiaries' rights in accordance with the standards established by international human rights law, and in relation to acts of risk attributable to third parties;
 - b) consult and agree upon the measures to be adopted with the beneficiaries and their representation; and
 - c) report on the actions taken to investigate the alleged events that led to the adoption of the precautionary measures at hand, so as to prevent them from reoccurring.
- 34. The Commission also requests that the Government of Nicaragua kindly inform the Commission, within a period of 10 days, as from the date of this communication, regarding the adoption of the precautionary measures that have been agreed upon and to periodically update this information.
- 35. The Commission stresses that, pursuant to Article 25(8) of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the granting of precautionary measures and their adoption by the State do not constitute a prejudgment regarding the possible violation of the rights protected in the American Convention and other applicable instruments.
- 36. The Commission instructs the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR to notify this resolution to the State of Nicaragua and the representatives.





37. Approved on March 19, 2021 by: Antonia Urrejola, President; Julissa Mantilla, First Vice-President; Flávia Piovesan, Second Vice-President; Margarette May Macaulay, Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Joel Hernández García and Stuardo Ralón.

María Claudia Pulido Acting Executive Secretary