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Managua, December 23 (RHC)-- Nicaragua's parliament has passed a law that would essentially ban those candidates who would support a coup d'état against President Daniel Ortega or incite foreign interference from running in next year's presidential election.

The ruling party-dominated assembly passed the law on Monday. It had been proposed by the president to prevent those who are believed to be "terrorists" or "traitors to the homeland" from running in the November 2021 election.

The law would ban candidates "who lead or finance a coup... encourage foreign interference, ask for military intervention... propose or plan economic blockades, [and] applaud and champion the imposition of

sanctions against Nicaragua or its citizens.”

Nicaragua accuses the opposition of attempting to launch a coup, and of pressing for sanctions against officials after anti-government protests -- supported by Washington, -- erupted in the country in April 2018.

“Those who ask for international sanctions against Nicaragua or its officials should be candidates in the empire,” said the speaker of the national assembly, Gustavo Porras, referring to the United States.

“Those who betray the homeland must be put on trial.” Porras is one of 27 Nicaraguan officials close to the president who have been targeted with sanctions by the United States in the past three years.

Ortega has come under pressure from Washington, the European Union (EU), and the Organization of American States (OAS) to change the electoral system by May 2021. The OAS said the new law “would deny the Nicaraguan people the right to freely choose their representatives” and would turn the 2021 election into “an imposition.”

On Monday, the US announced sanctions on three more officials in Ortega’s government, including the vice president of the Supreme Court, a Sandinista legislator, and the country’s police chief.

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