

# *Nicaraguan government's team calls on opposition for serious negotiations*

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Managua, April 24 (RHC)-- The Nicaraguan government's delegates to the national dialogue meetings have pointed to advances in the negotiation process with the political opposition and affirmed that the people want peace, security, work and stability.

"Our delegation will sit today at the Negotiation table as it has been doing all this time, namely, to talk, dialogue and seek peaceful solutions that benefit the people," stated Foreign Minister Denis Moncada. He emphasized that his government's objective is "looking for negotiated solutions."

The Central American country has been going through a political impasse since April 2018, when President Daniel Ortega's opponents resorted to the use of violence in their public protests against a controversial social security reform, leaving some 200 fatalities and over one billion dollars in economic losses.

On March 27, 2019, both the Nicaraguan government and the opposition Civil Alliance approved an agreement for releasing those who were arrested in those protests. The negotiating parties also agreed to designate Pope Francis's representative Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag and the Organization of

American States (OAS) Special Envoy Luis Angel Rosadilla as international guarantors.

Then negotiators established April 3 as a deadline for the parties to reach common solutions to all their disagreements. Since then, the Nicaraguan government delegation reiterated its willingness to work on pending issues and to comply with the agreements reached by consensus.

Through an official statement, the Nicaraguan government said progress was made in agreements related to the strengthening of citizen rights and guarantees as well as the release of detainees with the Red Cross' support.

Among the points that still need to be negotiated are the call to suspend international sanctions which affect Nicaragua's right to human, economic and social development.

Neither was the implementation mechanism defined. Nevertheless, the parties agreed to review the final protocol which will compile all the agreements signed since March 5. Work will also continue to strengthen reforms to the country's electoral processes, a topic on which there was already a 2017 MoU with OAS, recalled the Minister, who added that changes to electoral institutions were precisely interrupted by the violent acts of April 2018.

Government representatives reiterated the call to avoid incitements to violence and disrespect of constitutional norms. They also thanked Pope Francis for his blessings to the peace process.

On April 21, during his traditional Sunday message, the Catholic Church leader asked God to "enlighten the efforts that are being made in Nicaragua to find as soon as possible a peaceful and negotiated solution for the benefit of all Nicaraguans."

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