
Nicaragua: COMECE, Card. Hollerich calls for the release of Bishop Rolando and the other detainees. “Systematic persecution of the Church”

The President of COMECE, Card. Jean-Claude Hollerich, expresses the solidarity of the EU Bishops to the Catholic Church in Nicaragua which is facing deep distress due to State persecution. In a letter addressed to Mgr Carlos Enrique Herrera Gutiérrez, President of the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua (dated 6 February but released only today), Mgr Hollerich points to the “systematic persecution carried out by public authorities”. Particularly, since August 2022, Mgr Rolando Álvarez and some clerics and faithful in Nicaragua are detained and currently subject to criminal proceedings. Card. Hollerich calls on the Nicaraguan national authorities to immediately release Mgr Rolando Álvarez and the other detainees, falsely accused of conspiracy against national integrity and of disseminating fake news. “We are closely following the development of the situation in Nicaragua, marked by the persecution of the Catholic Church and its faithful. As Bishops of COMECE – the Cardinal said in his letter –, we are committed to promoting freedom, democracy and justice in Nicaragua through our regular dialogue with the representatives of the EU institutions”. In 2022, the national government expelled the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag, and 18 nuns of the Missionaries of Charity order. It also imprisoned seven priests and two collaborators in the Diocese of Matagalpa, closed nine Catholic radio stations, withdrew three Catholic channels from subscription television programming, and prevented processions and pilgrimages.

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