

Sign the petition (Nicaragua): Open letter demanding the release of Dora María Téllez, political prisoner of the Ortega-Murillo dictatorship

Sunday 2 October 2022, by [CCFD](#), [CNO](#), [CSPN](#), [FAL](#), [FIDH](#), [SOS Nicaragua France](#), [Union syndicale Solidaires](#) (Date first published: 30 September 2022).

At the initiative of French Collective of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua (CSPN) and supported by CCFD-Terre solidaire, Comité Nicaragua Occitanie (CNO), France Amérique Latine (FAL), Fédération internationale des droits de l'Homme (FIDH), SOS Nicaragua France, and Union syndicale Solidaires.

Dora María Téllez - an emblematic figure of the Sandinista-revolution and political leader of the Nicaraguan opposition to the Ortega-Murillo dictatorship - has been imprisoned since June 2021. She is held in inhumane conditions and tortured in the infamous prison of 'El Chipote', along with more than 30 other political prisoners. In total, there are more than 200 political prisoners in different prisons throughout Nicaragua.

A political activist and public intellectual with a master's degree in Nicaraguan history, Dora María Téllez has been recognized nationally and internationally for her publications and her political and civic activism in favour of democracy. The Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris will award her an honorary doctorate degree (honoris causa) on November 28, 2022. This is in recognition of her "exceptional political and scientific career, and for her contributions to international social progress," - according to the university's letter, which was presented to her family in May 2022.

Hence for this occasion, we, academics; political, union, and civil society leaders, members, activists, and committed citizens, demand that she be released and be allowed to travel to Paris, France to receive her honorary doctorate degree in person. Equally, we demand the release of all other Nicaraguan political prisoners.

Dora María Téllez has been a leading figure in the struggle for democracy and social justice in Nicaragua for more than 40 years. At the age of 20, she joined the National Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) in the guerrilla war against the Somoza-dictatorship and co-led the victorious operation to take over the National Palace of Nicaragua, which resulted in the release of 60 political prisoners of the time. At the age of 23, she led the offensive to free León, the first liberated city in the country. After the Somoza dictatorship was overthrown, she was vice-president of the Council of State (legislative branch), Member of Parliament, and minister of health, in which she was well-known for her transparent and efficient management. In 1995, due to the authoritarian drift of the FSLN, she left the party. At the end of her term as Member of Parliament, she and Sergio Ramírez Mercado, former vice-president of Nicaragua and current writer in exile, founded the Sandinista Renovation Movement party (MRS), now called UNAMOS.

Dora María Téllez is widely recognized for her opposition to the Ortega-Murillo dictatorship, and she has denounced the authoritarian and anti-democratic nature of the government and its use of repression. Since the civil protests broke out in April 2018, the government has used the armed forces to destroy the protest movement. In 2018 alone, an estimated 355 people were killed by the armed forces and allied paramilitaries. These human rights violations have been well documented by human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (IACHR), the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

On June 13, 2021, at a time when political forces of the opposition were civically preparing to participate in the November 7, 2021 elections, Dora Maria Tellez was violently arrested at her home.

In February 2022, following the approval of ad hoc laws designed by the dictatorship, she was accused and tried under the alleged crime of “attempt against the national integrity and conspiracy”. This law was used to try, without due process, more than 90 political prisoners, including presidential pre-candidates, peasants, students, businessmen, activists, journalists, and political, civic, religious, and social movement leaders, among others.

The conditions in which 66-year-old Dora María Téllez is imprisoned not only violate her human rights, but also put her life at risk. She has been in solitary confinement for more than 470 days, with family visits every 45 days, during which her drastic weight loss has been observed. Dora María Téllez is kept in prison in constant darkness day and night, without medical attention and with insufficient food. In mid-September, she began a hunger strike, as an extreme gesture of protest, to demand an end the solitary confinement regime against her and her fellow prisoners. Dora María Téllez demands that her right and that of all prisoners to have access to reading material be respected, and she also demands that she be allowed to sign a power of attorney so that her family can receive her Social Security pension.

These conditions are shared by the more than 200 political prisoners held in various prisons in Nicaragua. For these reasons, and due to the risk to Dora Maria’s life, we demand that the minimum standards established by the United Nations for the treatment of political prisoners, also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, be applied immediately to her and to all political prisoners. We demand that human rights organizations, the International Red Cross, and the independent expert commission elected by the UN Human Rights Council, have access to ‘El Chipote’ prison and all other prisons and police stations in the country.

We demand the immediate release of Dora María Téllez and that of all other Nicaraguan political prisoners, and the annulment of their spurious and illegal trials.

September 30, 2022

To sign the petition:

<https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/liberez-free-liberen-dora-maria-tellez>

View online : [To sign](#)