

**Artistic Freedom Initiative and Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina release Nicaragua report, “Echoes of Freedom: Art as a Voice of Resistance in Nicaragua”**

*New 50-Page Report Exposes Ortega-Murillo Regime’s Campaign Against Artists and Cultural Workers*

**New York, New York** – November 13, 2024 –Today, [Artistic Freedom Initiative](#) (AFI), a leading organization focused on artists' rights worldwide, and [Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina](#) (CADAL), a Latin American organization dedicated to the defense of human rights and the promotion of democratic values, proudly announce the release of their joint report, *Echoes of Freedom: Art as a Voice of Resistance in Nicaragua*, shedding light on the Nicaraguan government's sustained attacks on artists and cultural workers under the Ortega-Murillo administration.

The report is the result of extensive research and interviews with 13 Nicaraguan artists and cultural workers, whose testimonies provide a chilling account of state-led violence, repression, and forced exile following the mass anti-government protests that erupted across Nicaragua in April 2018, including award-winning cartoonist and illustrator Pedro X. Molina, the former head of programs at PEN Nicaragua Andrea del Carmen, and the lyricist and composer Maestro Mario Rocha. The testimonies reveal the government's systematic use of coercive tactics—including surveillance, harassment, arbitrary arrest and prosecution, and enforced denaturalization—against artists who protested the regime's authoritarian measures or supported the movement for democracy through their creative expressions.

“These artists have used their voices to create spaces of free expression and resistance in a time of fear,” said Cecilia Noce, an independent researcher for CADAL. “This report not only exposes the government's attempts to silence them, but it also highlights their extraordinary resilience and vision for a future where freedom of expression is a reality for all Nicaraguans.”

AFI and CADAL outline the regime's efforts to suppress free expression through draconian laws and policies, including laws aimed at dismantling civil society organizations, controlling speech and expression, and facilitating forced exile and the denaturalization of dissidents. *Echoes of Freedom* offers a detailed analysis of how these legal frameworks have been used to target artists and cultural workers, making clear their incompatibility with international human rights obligations. The report also includes a section where the featured artists in their own words, express their hopes for a future Nicaraguan society that safeguards the fundamental rights of its citizens and fosters a thriving arts and cultural scene.

As the situation in Nicaragua continues to deteriorate, the authors of *Echoes of Freedom* call on the international community to act. The report concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at the Nicaraguan government, international human rights bodies, and migrant host countries, including:

- Providing safe haven and pathways to humanitarian immigration relief for those facing imminent threats;
- Governments and international bodies to urge the government of Nicaragua to repeal or modify any legislation that criminalizes or limits artistic freedom or any creative act.

- Calling for an end to the use of denaturalization as a punitive measure against activists and dissidents

"The stories shared in *Echoes of Freedom* are not just accounts of repression, but powerful calls for justice and transformation," said [Johanna Bankston](#), Senior Officer of Human Rights Research & Policy at AFI. "By amplifying the voices of these brave artists, we hope to inspire the international community to take decisive action and support Nicaraguan civil society in its pursuit of freedom."

**About [Artistic Freedom Initiative \(AFI\)](#) :**

Led by immigration and human rights attorneys, Artistic Freedom Initiative (AFI) provides pro bono immigration representation and resettlement assistance for international artists at risk. Dedicated to safeguarding the right to artistic freedom, AFI was founded on the notion that artists are uniquely situated to positively and powerfully effect change, provided their voices can be heard. As artists are increasingly censored, imprisoned, restricted from moving freely across borders, tortured, or even killed, it is more critical than ever that we safeguard the right to artistic freedom and zealously champion the courageous artists who exercise it. To this end, AFI directly assists artists who have experienced persecution, censorship, or other restrictions on their freedom of expression, and supports artists who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing progressive social change and fundamental human rights. Since 2017, AFI has taken on over 1670 legal cases involving artists at risk. For more information please visit: [www.artisticfreedominitiative.org](http://www.artisticfreedominitiative.org)

**About [Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina \(CADAL\)](#) :**

CADAL (Centro para la Apertura y el Desarrollo de América Latina) is a private, non-profit, and non-partisan foundation, established on February 26, 2003, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Its mission is to promote human rights and international democratic solidarity, especially in authoritarian contexts that repress freedom of association, expression, assembly, and political participation, as well as in democracies that face threats to their institutions, civil and political liberties, and the rule of law. As part of its task of promoting human rights, CADAL is a part of a series of coalitions, forums, and organizations that share the same values: the World Movement for Democracy (WMfD), the International Coalition to Stop Crimes against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), the International Tibet Network, the Coalition for Freedom of Association, the Network of Think Tanks KAS in Latin America, is a member of TrustLaw (the global pro bono program of the Thomson Reuters Foundation), and is registered as an Organization of Civil Society before the Organization of American States (OAS).

**Contact:**

Artistic Freedom Initiative

Email: [media@artisticfreedominitiative.org](mailto:media@artisticfreedominitiative.org)

**Staff and featured artists available by request for interviews/ quotes**

- In Spain, **Cecilia Noce**, report author and independent researcher for CADAL (Spanish, English)
- In Argentina, **Diana Arévalo**, report author and Advisory Board Member of CADAL (Spanish, English)
- In Switzerland, **Sanjay Sethi**, Report author and Co-Executive Director of AFI (English)
- In USA, **Johanna Bankston**, Report author and Senior officer of human rights research and policy at AFI (English)
- In USA, **Pedro X. Molina**, featured artist and independent cartoonist (Spanish, English)
- In USA, **Andrea del Carmen**, head of programs at PEN Nicaragua in exile (Spanish, English)
- In Mexico, **Cristina Arévalo**, featured artist and activist working with the Nicaraguan CSO La Corriente, (Spanish, English)