

Misrepresenting the Truth in Nicaragua

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& [Civil Rights](#)

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The Guardian has been one of the most inaccurate outlets for reporting what is occurring in Nicaragua. A group of advocates on Nicaragua has written the publication to correct the record, but the Guardian has refused to publish their letter to the editor. The letter is printed below after briefly providing context for the situation.

President Daniel [Ortega declared the right-wing coup to have been defeated](#) yesterday. In an interview he showed he understands the alignment of forces against Nicaragua's independence, pointing to more than \$30 million spent by the United States to create an opposition. Some of that spending has been used to attack Ortega personally with all sorts of false rumors of stealing from the treasury, creating personal wealth for himself and his family and calling him a dictator. Long-time Nicaragua activist, Chuck Kaufman of Alliance for Global Justice, in [the Case Against Daniel Ortega](#) reviews and explodes those myths, a character assassination that have undermined him, even on the left.

What is happening is a US regime change operation, working with oligarchs and big business interests in Nicaragua and supported by the Catholic Church, a long-time ally of Nicaraguan oligarchs. The US operates by spending tens of millions annually over many years to create an NGO complex that dominates Nicaraguan human rights groups, environmental, women's groups, media and others. They have also given aid to a small minority of right-wing youth with tens of thousands of dollars and training. Some of these youth also made a trip to Washington, DC sponsored by Freedom House, long noted for its ties to the CIA, where they met with extremist, Republican Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Rubio recently threatened war in Nicaragua claiming it was in the national security interests of the United States because the conflict would result in mass migration and drug trafficking into the US. He seems willing to make anything up to achieve regime change.

Here are three articles with lots of links that provide information on what is really occurring in Nicaragua. They analyze the political context, the alliances working with the US for regime change and the economic realities in Nicaragua:

[NICARAGUAN LABOR GROUP URGES PEACE HIGHLIGHTS RIGHT-WING VIOLENCE & US REGIME CHANGE](#)

This article by a Nicaraguan-UK labor group provides excellent analysis of the violence of the right-wing coup and the peace efforts of the Ortega government. (The Guardian gets this upside down, ignoring the violence of the opposition.) It also provides analysis of the US funding and long-term regime change efforts. It provides an excellent summary of the economy under Ortega and how it is a bottom-up economy lifting up the impoverished and

economically insecure. Also included are Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen calling for regime change in Nicaragua, Bolivia, Cuba, and Venezuela on the House Floor and Sen. Rubio's comments warning of war in Nicaragua.

[VIOLENT COUP FAILS IN NICARAGUA, US CONTINUES REGIME CHANGE EFFORTS](#)

This article, written by me, examines the failure of the coup, the massive celebration on the 39th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution that showed the unity of the people of Nicaragua. It also discusses how the US is escalating funding for regime change operations in Nicaragua as well the introduction of the Nica Act in the Senate, introduced on the anniversary of the revolution, which would escalate the economic war against Nicaragua.

[CORRECTING THE RECORD: WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING IN NICARAGUA?](#)

This article which I co-authored with Nils McCune, describes the strategy of the right-wing coup in using violence to try to force the government to respond with violence to restore order. It also describes the widespread false media coverage by western media as well as how the opposition, trained by the United States, used social media to put out a false narrative. We examine the alliances in Nicaragua, who is behind the coup and supportive of it, and who opposes the coup. Finally, we examine the Nicaraguan economy and how it has reduced poverty, made health care and education available, provided microloans to small businesses and shrunk the gender gap. Further, how the Ortega government has used property law to provide land titles to Indigenous Peoples, who now own one-third of the land in Nicaragua, women, and peasants. This is why Ortega won re-election by more than 70% for a third term in office.

Letter To The Editor Of The Guardian Criticizing Inaccurate Reporting On Nicaragua

[This version of the letter was sent to the editor in chief but not published; The Guardian received a shorter version for publication, which has also not been published.]

For the past three months, there has been a political crisis in Nicaragua, with opposing forces not only confronting each other in the streets but fighting a media war. The Guardian should be at the forefront of balanced and well-informed reporting of these events. Instead, despite plentiful evidence of opposition violence, almost all your 17 reports since mid-April blame Daniel Ortega's government for the majority of deaths that have occurred. One of your most recent articles ("The Nicaraguan students who became reluctant rebels", July 10) leaves unchallenged an opposition claim that theirs is "a totally peaceful struggle." Only one article (July 4) gives significant space to the government version of events.

While most of the recent violence is associated with opposition barricades erected across the country, you still refer to a "wave of violence and repression by the government" (June 24). Not once do you refer to the numerous deaths of government supporters or the 21 deaths and hundreds of injuries suffered by the police, including the killing of four policemen observing a "peace" demonstration on July 12. Nor did you report the only attack on a member of the "national dialogue" set up to try resolve the crisis, when student leader Leonel Morales was shot and left for dead on June 12; he is a government supporter. Your report from Masaya (June 12) failed to mention that the protestors had burnt down public buildings, ransacked shops and destroyed the homes of government officials. Nor did you

record the kidnapping of hundreds of long-distance lorries and drivers, who spent a month in effective captivity despite efforts by their ambassadors and international mediators to secure their release (eventually achieved by the government on July 8). Your report of the shooting of a one year-old boy in “the latest round of government repression” (June 25) does not mention video evidence that he was killed by opposition youths.

The author of several articles, Carl David Goette-Luciak, openly associates with opposition figures. On July 5 he blamed the police for the terrible house fire in Managua three weeks earlier, relying largely on assertions from government opponents. Yet videos appearing to show police presence were actually taken on April 21, before barricades were erected to prevent police entering the area.

Several times you cite “human rights activists” who are often long-standing government opponents (such as Vilma Núñez, April 28, who told the BBC on July 10 that Ortega now has an “extermination plan”). You unquestioningly quote Amnesty International (May 31) even though their reports turn a blind eye to violence by protesters. You do not refer to detailed evidence that opposition groups benefit from millions of dollars in US funding aimed at “nurturing” the Nicaraguan uprising (theglobalamericans.org, May 1).

On June 6 you said that “Ortega has lost control of the streets” and on June 11 that Nicaragua is “a country of barricades.” Since then the government has successfully worked with local people to restore order and remove the vast majority of barricades. Armed bands have been arrested in the process, including members of notorious gangs from El Salvador. This goes unreported.

Most of the articles refer to protestors’ demands that Ortega should simply renounce the presidency, but not that international bodies mediating the crisis (the UN, Organisation of American States and the Central American Integration System) have all rejected this as being unconstitutional and likely to produce chaos. You have given sparse coverage to the many marches by government supporters calling for a peaceful, negotiated outcome.

Recently, Simon Jenkins wrote in a different context (July 5) of “the rush to judgment at the bidding of the news agenda” in which “social media and false news are weaponised.” In our view this is precisely what is happening in mainstream reporting of Nicaragua. We call on the Guardian to take a more responsible stand, to challenge the abundant misinformation and in future to provide a much more balanced analysis of the crisis.

Ellen Barfield, Baltimore, MD Chapter Veterans for Peace

Brian Becker, Radio Show Host, Loud & Clear

Carol Berman, Nicaraguan Cultural Alliance

Max Blumenthal, journalist

Al Burke, Editor, Nordic News Network

Lee Camp, head writer/host of Redacted Tonight

Maritza Castillo, Nicaraguan activist

Courtney Childs, Chair, Peace and Solidarity Committee of the Committees of

Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism

Sofía Clark, political analyst

Mitchel Cohen, former Chair, WBAI radio Local Board

Nicolas J S Davies, Journalist and author of “Blood On Our Hands: the American Invasion and Destruction of Iraq”

Don DeBar, writer and radio journalist

Pat Fry, peace and solidarity activist, NYC

Warwick Fry, writer and radio journalist

Greg Grandin, journalist

Peter Grimes, sociologist and author

Roger Harris, Task Force on the Americas

Paul Baker Hernández, singer, song-writer

Robert Jereski, co-coordinator, Friends of Brad Will

Chuck Kaufman, Alliance for Global Justice

Dan Kovalik, human rights lawyer

Barbara Larcom, Baltimore Coordinator, Casa Baltimore/Limay

Abby Martin, journalist and presenter, The Empire Files

Arnold Matlin M.D, Rochester (NY) Committee on Latin America

Camilo Mejia, former Amnesty International prisoner of conscience

Nils McCune, IALA Mesoamerica

Nan McCurdy, Methodist missionary

Martin Mowforth, Environmental Network for Central America

Ben Norton, journalist

John Perry, writer

Sukla Sen, Peace Activist, India

Carolina Cositore Sitrin, former Prensa Latina journalist

Stephen Sefton, writer

Patricia Villegas, President, Telesur

S. Brian Willson, Lawyer activist

Kevin Zeese, co-director, Popular Resistance

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