

Nicaragua and the Corruption, Co-optation of Human Rights

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Global Research, January 05, 2019

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#),
[US NATO War Agenda](#)

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, almost 30 years ago, abuse and debasement of human rights concerns have served increasingly to create pretexts promoting Western dominance around the world. From former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to Iraq and Sudan, to Ivory Coast, Libya and Syria, to Myanmar and Ukraine, Western governments have used non governmental human rights organizations and abuse of the United Nations system to attack countries resisting the demands of US and allied elites and the governments they control. In Latin America, that dynamic has long targeted Cuba, more recently Venezuela, now Nicaragua and will soon attack Bolivia and probably Mexico too, if the new progressive government there shows too much independence. The US and European elites have stepped up their efforts at regime change in Latin America and the Caribbean so as to guarantee access to and control of the region's abundant natural resources, because Chinese and Russian influence is blocking their accustomed control of the majority world in Eurasia and Africa.

Like Venezuela previously, Nicaragua has been targeted by the US dominated Organization of American States using local US and European funded non-profit proxies inside Nicaragua and Western corporate dominated non-governmental organizations. They have manipulated international and regional human rights institutions so as to violate fundamental precepts of international law like self-determination and non-intervention. Just as in the 1980s in Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere, and now both Venezuela and Nicaragua again, violent armed non-governmental actors have been used to destabilize the country and create a context allowing false reporting of human rights concerns so as to discredit revolutionary governments.

As independent US writer Max Blumenthal pointed out in an [interview in July](#) last year,

“... how I know that there was a regime change operation afoot – and when I say “regime change operation,” I mean an attack not just on a government but on the nation-state, a plan to reduce a country to a failed state like Libya – is that Ken Roth surfaced after the Nicaraguan government had essentially won and removed the roadblocks, allowing the economy which had bled \$500 million to start functioning again, allowing citizens to start moving around. Ken Roth, the dictator of Human Rights Watch, who has been in the same position for 25 years, catering to a small cadre of billionaires and elite foundations with almost no constituency base, blamed the government for every single death. Meaning that zero Sandinistas died according to Ken Roth.”

Blumenthal's insight into the inextricable relationship between human rights NGOs and

Western corporate elites suggests a series of points which categorically undermine glib acceptance of false human rights accusations against Nicaragua. The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are all guilty of extreme bad faith, non-compliance with basic norms and adherence to long discredited theoretical nostrums. In effect they are themselves all accomplices to very serious human rights violations by Nicaragua's US supported armed opposition. Four main considerations apply.

Firstly, on technical grounds none of these organizations have adhered even to the [Huridocs guidelines](#), a tool created by and for Western government and corporate funded human rights organizations. The guidelines propose concepts and good practice in relation to fact-finding, documentation and monitoring of human rights violations. The IACHR, the UNOHCHR, Amnesty International and other human rights organizations have categorically failed to comply with the HURIDOCs guidelines. In terms of fact finding they systematically [omit sources and facts](#) that contradict or exclude their preferred finding. In terms of documentation they systematically exclude abundant documentation from Nicaraguan government ministries, from the public prosecutor's office, from the legislature's Truth and Justice Commission, from the Institute of Legal Medicine and from the Office of the Procurator for Human Rights.

All that information to a greater or lesser extent contradicts the bogus fact finding of the OAS, the UN and foreign NGOs. In terms of monitoring the situation in Nicaragua, all those institutions and organizations depend exclusively on virulently politically biased local media, NGOs and opposition activists. So even on their own terms, their methodology does not comply with basic concepts and standards and, thus, the kinds of cases they have built to justify their findings would never stand up to impartial legal scrutiny. One farcical aspect of their approach has been to accuse the Nicaraguan government of repressing local media when their main sources by far are abundant citations of false reports from those same local media relayed via dishonest local human rights NGOs.

Secondly, in theoretical terms, the approach of the IACHR, the UNOHCHR and foreign NGOs like Amnesty International has been to exclude violations by non-State actors, exactly the same faithless alibi they all used during the Cold War. But that theoretical framework has been outdated since 1993 when the UN Human Rights Convention in Vienna explicitly recognized the role of non-State actors in human rights abuses (thus recognizing how the US government and its allies used irregular forces, like the Contra in Nicaragua, RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola, to apply systematic terrorism against civilian populations). As Carlos Emilio Lopez a leading Nicaraguan human rights activist and legislator [has pointed out](#):

"In 1993, with the approval of the Vienna Declaration of Human Rights, the subject of respect for human rights was re-conceptualized. For many years it was considered that only States should respect human rights but that understanding is already out of date. The reconceptualization of human rights is that States must respect human rights but companies, churches, organizations must also do so, social organizations, oligopolies, the media, people as individuals. In other words, we are all obliged to respect human rights, not only State institutions."

Thus, every time Amnesty International or the IACHR claim their remit excludes non-State

actors they are appealing to a theoretical framework 30 years out of date deliberately so as to wash their hands of abuses by political actors with whom they sympathize.

Thirdly, specifically with regard to Amnesty International, their organization has been corrupted and co-opted over many years now by corporate influence via links through their senior personnel with corporate globalization advocates whose explicit aim is to undermine and diminish the role of sovereign national states. Amnesty International's [Secretary General](#) and senior directors, their [International Board](#) and its [Secretary General's Global Council](#) freely advertise their background working either directly with multinational corporations, or with corporate funders or with other heavily corporate funded non profits. In this Amnesty International, like Human Rights Watch, is very similar to the [Purpose/AVAAZ](#) corporate human rights conglomerate. Their human rights activities are guided by emphatic neoliberal hostility to nation-State governments, such that their reporting deliberately sets out to exclude or discredit information from government or other official sources.

More broadly in Latin American and Caribbean, accompanying the [encroaching cooptation](#) of NGOs by corporate predators like Purpose, the overtly political [Atlas network](#) supports NGOs promoting extreme right wing policies across the region, thus facilitating the ascent to power of fascists like Jair Bolsonaro.

Fourthly, that corporate corruption and cooptation of [Sean MacBride](#)'s original vision of the role and work of Amnesty International and similar organizations, is clearly manifest in their demonstrable bias in favor of US and allied countries foreign policy priorities. In that regard, [Professor Francis Boyle](#), among many others, has been an authoritative and trenchant critic of Amnesty International's role in Palestine and elsewhere, whereby it downplays or minimizes violations by States allied to NATO countries. On the other hand, institutions like the IACHR and the UNOCHR and organizations like Amnesty international systematically exaggerate and even invent violations in countries targeted by NATO member country governments. Thus in Latin America, the current horrific record of human rights violations in Colombia and, until AMLO, in Mexico was played down and minimized, while events in Cuba, Venezuela and now Nicaragua have been systematically misrepresented.

All these concerns about the practical bad faith, theoretical dishonesty, corporate co-optation and outright political bias of human rights institutions and organizations should give any intellectually honest person of progressive views pause. People genuinely concerned about human rights should reassess what they think they know about Nicaragua and about Venezuela too. The US and allied elites are determined to use the governments, institutions and NGOs they have bought to destroy resistance to their domination in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the 60th anniversary this year of Cuba's revolution, together with the 40th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua and the 20th anniversary of Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution suggest they will not have things all their own way.

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