

# US Sponsored NGOs against Nicaragua's Sandinista Government: The Truth About Recent Violence in Bosawas

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*For several years now a common front in the relentless propaganda war by Western media and NGOs against Nicaragua's Sandinista government has involved false accusations that the authorities damage or neglect the rights and well being of the country's Indigenous peoples.*

In fact, the opposite is the case. Nicaragua's indigenous peoples enjoy the most progressive and advanced system of autonomous self-government in the hemisphere. But reporting by the Western human rights industry, in particular by US and European NGOs claiming to defend Indigenous peoples, consistently omits that fact to focus on sporadic incidents of violence, which they systematically misrepresent.

In general, North American and European anti-Sandinista propaganda published by corporate or billionaire funded organizations like Global Witness or the Oakland Institute and international news media advance three main false claims

- Nicaragua's government permits and even encourages invasion by outsiders called "colonos" of Indigenous lands, in particular affecting the Biosphere Reserve of Bosawas
- the government fails to investigate or remedy incidents of violence against the country's Indigenous peoples' communities
- the Indigenous peoples concerned are invariably innocent victims whose interests are genuinely represented and defended by local foreign funded NGOs

First hand reporting over the last year has categorically demonstrated that every one of these propaganda claims is untrue.

Most recently, a team of reporters visited the site of [a violent attack that took place in Kiwakumbai](#) in the nucleus of the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve. Their reporting demonstrated that some members of local Indigenous communities themselves not only promoted illicit

use of their people's lands causing deforestation and contamination of water sources but also participated in murderous violence.

[Download the complete report \(PDF 1.4Mb\)](#)

The incident at Kiwakumbai and a subsequent incident involving a nearby community called Palan cast new light on similar events in the community of Alal in January 2020.

All these events demonstrate:

- land settlement in the area has a long history not infrequently involving members of local Indigenous communities engaged in irregular land transactions with outsiders, leading occasionally to violent disputes in which some members of Indigenous communities themselves have engaged in murderous attacks
- despite the area's remoteness and difficult terrain, violent incidents invariably receive prompt and thorough investigation by the authorities
- government institutions including the police and the army coordinate with the regional autonomous government, the Indigenous territorial governments and the Indigenous community governments as well as the relevant local municipal authority both to remedy loss and damage to the victims, and also to resolve the immediate conflict while seeking to prevent future conflicts

None of this reality is ever reported by local opposition media, who uncritically cite information from local foreign funded NGOs like the Center for Justice and Human Rights of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast (CEJUDHCAN), the Center for Legal Assistance to Indigenous Peoples (CALPI) or the Fundación del Río, all aligned with Nicaragua's political opposition.

These NGOs falsely claim to represent the area's Indigenous peoples, a claim rejected by Indigenous leaders themselves, for example by the leaders of the Mayangna Nation whose lands include the communities of Alal, Kiwakumbai and Palan. In [an extensive interview from November 2020](#), those leaders acknowledge the positive role of the Nicaraguan government in conflict remediation and resolution. They also acknowledge the involvement of some members of their own Indigenous people's communities in irregular land transactions.

This makes available reporting on conflicts affecting Indigenous peoples in Nicaragua very different to reporting on such conflicts in neighboring Honduras, for example. In Honduras, reporting on the situation of Indigenous peoples is often based on information from the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) which is an organization authentically representing the Lenca people in western Honduras.

Likewise, the Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH), genuinely represents the Garífuna people living along the country's Caribbean coast. Both organizations have mass support from their peoples at grass roots resisting corporate depredation abetted by the corrupt Honduran authorities.

So when international NGOs base their reports on information from these or similar organizations in Honduras, they can be regarded as generally trustworthy. This has been borne out, for example, in the cases of Bertha Cáceres or of the four garífuna activists forcibly disappeared in July 2020.

But in the case of Nicaragua, international NGOs posing as defenders of Indigenous rights

base their reports on unrepresentative local foreign funded organizations all of whom are aligned with the country's political opposition. Their version of events in Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast is directly contradicted by [elected representatives of the region's Indigenous people's governments](#).

The material collected here includes a review by independent writer John Perry of reporting on the situation of Nicaragua's Indigenous peoples, as well as interviews and reports about the violent incident at Kiwakumbai and its social and economic context. Practically everything emerging from those interviews and reports confirms the views expressed by the leaders of the Mayangna Nation in the interview they gave in November 2020. All told, this material demonstrates the utter falsity of reporting on Nicaragua by international NGOs and news media.

It is a mistake to dismiss this reality as some kind of unfortunate oversight or misunderstanding on the part of the international organizations concerned. The Western human rights industry depends on corporate and related funding whose objective is to advance the social, economic and political interests of the wealthy elite interests concerned. Self-evidently, a corollary of that objective is to attack any government prepared to defend its country's national sovereignty against corporate and related elite interests.

To that end, Western human rights organizations and international institutions like those of the United Nations have been intensely coopted by sinister corporate and related power brokers like, for example, the influential Clinton network, among others. That is the underlying explanation for the relentless assault on Nicaragua's Sandinista government by the Western human rights industry in general and its subsidiary Indigenous peoples' rights branch in particular. These international organizations and the local NGOs they depend on are financed by Western elites who for centuries have plundered, enslaved and massacred Indigenous peoples around the world. For its part, Nicaragua's revolutionary government has defended the rights of the country's Indigenous peoples by promoting the most advanced model of autonomy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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*This article was originally published on [Tortilla con Sal](#).*

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*Featured image: The mining camp, scene of the attack at Kiwakumbai (Source: [Tortilla con Sal](#))*

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