



# COI Research Methods: Nicaragua



**National Training Curriculum Working  
Group - FY22 Q1**

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# Road Map



- Country overview
- Current government and recent events
- People of Nicaraguan descent in the US
- APSO and affirmative receipt numbers
- Common claims and helpful sources
- RAIO Research- harm to returnees
- Internal relocation
- Practical exercise

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# Country Overview



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- Capital: Managua
- Language: Spanish (official); smaller populations speak indigenous or other languages
- Ethnic groups: Mestizo 69%; White 17%; Black 9%; Amerindian 5%
- Religious groups: Roman Catholic 50%, Evangelical 33.2%, other 2.9% [1] (b)(6)

# Current Government



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- President Daniel Ortega since January 10, 2007
- Vice-President Rosario Murillo (since 2016)
- Power increasingly centralized in the executive branch [2] (b)(6)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag\\_of\\_the\\_FSLN.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_the_FSLN.png)



# Recent Events

- Leading up to the November 2021 elections, repression of dissent and reforms to the electoral process
- Increased repression of government opponents
- Increased attacks on freedom of expression [3]
- November 2021 election results: Ortega won and remains in power [4]

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# People of Nicaraguan Descent in the United States



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- 464,000 as of 2017
- Between 2000 to 2017 the number of individuals of Nicaraguan descent in the US has more than doubled
- Common states of residency: Florida, California, and Texas [5]  
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# Affirmative and APSO Receipts



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- Highest affirmative receipts: Miami, Chicago, Arlington, San Francisco
- From 1/1/2021-11/16/2021:
  - CF: 18,605
  - RF: 625
  - Affirmative: 631

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# Common Claim: Political Opinion

- 2018 protests: many took place at universities due to student support for the protests
  - People from different groups participated in protests (students, youth, human rights defenders, etc.)
  - Current and former FSLN supporters also took part in the protests
- Many applicants may have experienced harm during the 2018 protests, or as a result of having participated in them
- Harm can also result from anti-Ortega social media posts, speaking against the government, carrying the Nicaraguan flag, or any actions or activities perceived to be against the government [6]



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# Common Claim: Political Opinion



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[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicaragua\\_Flag.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicaragua_Flag.svg)

# Common Claim: Political Opinion



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***Reminder:***

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

# Common Claim: Political Opinion

**“To include the state of Nicaragua in the present chapter for the third consecutive year, the IACHR has taken into account the failure to follow the recommendations that were made both in the preliminary observations and in the report on its visit to the country. Two years after its working visit to Nicaragua on May 17 to 21, 2018, the Inter-American Commission observes that most of the recommendations have not been implemented and continue to be entirely relevant today, including the following: immediate cessation of repression against protesters and the arbitrary detention of those who participated in the protests; respect and guarantee the exercise of the right to protest, the right to freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly, and the right of the population to political participation, among others.” Annual Report 2020 - Chapter IV.B - Nicaragua, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)**



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# Political Opinion: Helpful Sources



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## Political Opinion

- Department of State's Human Rights Report
- Freedom House Annual Report on Political Rights and Civil Liberties
- Human Rights Watch Annual Report on the Human Rights Situation
- RAIO RU Nicaragua page:

+ Elections & Political Participation

+ Sandinista National Liberation Front (*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional - FSLN*)

+ Sandinista Youth (*Juventud Sandinista*)

+ Sandinista Leadership Committees (*Comités de Liderazgo Sandinista*)

+ Political Repression

+ Protests & Protesters

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# Political Opinion:

[Redacted]

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- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

# Common Claim: Religion

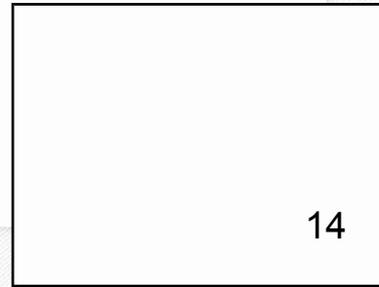


- Ongoing tension between the Catholic Church and Ortega government
- Government and government supporters have targeted Catholics (both members of the clergy and worshippers) [8]

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# Common Claim and Helpful Sources: Religion



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## Religion

- Department of State Annual Report on Religious Freedom
- US Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report on Religious Freedom
- RAIO RU Nicaragua page

### Religion

- 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nicaragua, U.S. Department of State, May 12, 2021.
- Freedom in the World 2021 - Nicaragua, Freedom House, Mar. 3, 2021.
- 2021 Annual Report - Nicaragua Chapter, USCIRF, 2021.
- Spies, harassment, death threats: The Catholic Church in Nicaragua says it's being targeted by the government, The Washington Post, Jul. 23, 2019.
- Nicaraguan clergy face threats after providing refuge for protesters fleeing gunfire: 'The church became a type of morgue', Los Angeles Times, Mar. 26, 2019.
- Country of Origin Report - Nicaragua, Tribunal Administrativo Migratorio (Costa Rica), Dec. 2018 (see "Members of the Catholic church").
- Cathedral protests highlight Ortega's broken alliance with Nicaraguan church, The Guardian, November 8, 2018.
- Nicaragua Clergy, Siding With Protesters, Becomes 'Terrible Enemy' of Ortega, The New York Times, July 22, 2018.

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Screenshot  
taken  
12/6/2021

# Common Claim: PSG: Women Viewed as Property/DV



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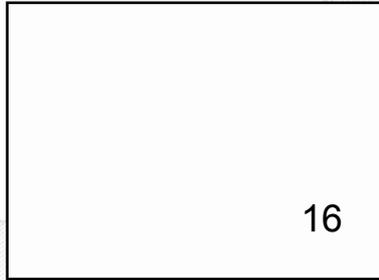
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- An applicant's experience may differ from COI for any number of reasons

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# Common Claim and Helpful Sources: PSG: Women Viewed as Property/DV



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## PSG: women viewed as property/domestic violence

- “Criminality is also reflected in an increase in domestic violence and femicides, which are not effectively investigated or resolved by the police, since they are focused on the persecution of opponents.”

Accountability now! Extrajudicial executions and repression in Nicaragua 2018-2020, FIDH/CENIDH

- Freedom House Annual Report on Political Rights and Civil Liberties
- Department of State Human Rights Report

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# RAIO Research Unit- Harm to Returnees



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- Nicaragua Resource Guide
- Nicaragua: Harm to Returnees (August 13, 2021)
- Nicaragua: Law to Incarcerate Returnees; “Traitor to the Homeland” Law; Harm to Returnees (October 18, 2021)

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# Resources for Internal Relocation



- One good source for conducting COI research is <https://www.ecoi.net/>
- *“The 2018 collapse of institutions, that year’s bloody crackdown on dissenters, and continuing government repression since have created a climate of fear and mistrust that discourages free movement. Poor infrastructure limits movement in some majority-indigenous areas.”*
- The Nicaraguan government uses various sources to gather information on citizens, including their location
- [RAIO RU Nicaragua page](#)

A screenshot of the RAIO RU search interface. At the top, there is a search bar with "Nicaragua" entered and a dropdown menu set to "Any". Below this are several filter sections: "Sources" with a "Select to filter" dropdown set to "Any"; "Document type" with a "Select to filter" dropdown set to "Any"; "Languages" with a "Select to filter" dropdown set to "Any"; "Published on or after" with a date input field showing "mm/dd/yyyy" and a calendar icon; "Published on or before" with a date input field showing "mm/dd/yyyy" and a calendar icon; "Sort by" with a dropdown menu set to "Publication date"; and "Sort order" with a dropdown menu set to "Descending". At the bottom, there are "Search" and "Help" buttons.

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# Practical Exercise 1



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**Find and save 3 quotes/citations for the scenario below**

*Advanced questions:*

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# Practical Exercise 2 (time allowing)



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**Time permitting: find and save 2 quotes/citations for the scenario below**

*Advanced question:*

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# Sample Answers to Practical Exercise



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## 1. Possible Answers

1.

2.

3.

# Sample Answers to Practical Exercise



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## 2. Possible Answers

1.

2.

# Sources



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- <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nicaragua>
- [https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/fact-sheet/u-s-hispanics-facts-on-nicaraguan-origin-  
latinos/](https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/fact-sheet/u-s-hispanics-facts-on-nicaraguan-origin-latinos/)
- [Nicaragua Country Conditions](#), RAI0 Research Unit
- [https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/nicaraguas-ortega-coasting-victory-after-  
contentious-election-2021-11-08/](https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/nicaraguas-ortega-coasting-victory-after-contentious-election-2021-11-08/)
- [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NI/HumanRightsViolationsNicaraguaApr Aug2  
018 EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NI/HumanRightsViolationsNicaraguaApr Aug2018 EN.pdf)

# About this presentation



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## NICARAGUA ONE-PAGE REFERENCE GUIDE

### Historical context snapshot:

- Slightly larger than Pennsylvania; slightly smaller than New York state. The overwhelming majority of the population resides in the western half of the country. Nicaragua can be conceptionally divided into three distinct regions: Caribbean lowlands, central highlands, and western lowlands. Bordered by Costa Rica and Honduras.
- 15 departments (departamentos, singular - departamento) and 2 autonomous regions\* (regiones autónomas, singular - región autónoma); Boaco, Carazo, Chinandega, Chontales, Región Autónoma Costa Caribe Norte (RACCN)\*, Región Autónoma Costa Caribe Sur (RACCS)\*, Estelí, Granada, Jinotega, León, Madriz, Managua, Masaya, Matagalpa, Nueva Segovia, Rio San Juan, Rivas
- Concentration of power is highly centralized, authoritarian political system dominated by Daniel Ortega & his wife, Rosario Murillo. Power concentrated in the executive with no real separation of powers. Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional - FSLN) has total control over all branches of government. Local elected politicians include prefects of departments, mayors of cantons/canton seats, members of the canton council, and parish councilors. Local politicians may be affiliated with a national party/movement, an entirely local party, or a coalition of these.
- Since independence in 1838, Nicaragua has had a history of civil strife. The Somoza family dictatorship ran Nicaragua from 1934 to 1979. The FSLN led a national uprising to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship and seize power in 1979. 1990 election, FSLN incumbent (Daniel Ortega) loses. 2006, Ortega is elected president and re-elected in 2011, 2016, & 2021
- FSLN party membership = reportedly required to obtain or retain public sector employment. FSLN party membership = reportedly required to access public social programs
- The Nicaragua National Police is the sole law enforcement agency in the country. It is responsible for public safety and security; maintaining internal order; preventing, combating, and investigating crime; and traffic control. The commander-in-chief is the president of the nation. Police officers known as the jefe de sector are community police officers who live in-instead of just patrolling-local neighborhoods and communities.

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### Common claims and issues to probe:

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### Additional common issues to consider:

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## **National Training Curriculum – Working Group FY22 Q1 – COI**

**Training Structure:** Training will be implemented by facilitators nationwide. It is recommended that one to two facilitators be available for each training. Pairs should include Training AOs and Senior AOs, SAOs, or MPAs that can assist with technology.

The training materials package includes three COI presentations: one general overview of COI resources followed by two presentations focused on countries that are specific to an adjudication or screening type:

- (1) COI Road Map
- (2) Nicaragua (APSO)
- (3) India (Affirmative)

Each country has a Facilitator Guide, PowerPoint presentation, and an informational one-pager, and the overall training design is such that an office would start with the COI Road Map and then select and present one or both of the country units based on their local needs and caseloads. The Facilitator Guides for each country include practical exercises and fact patterns specific to that country.

Please review the materials linked below and in this folder: [FY22 Q1 NTC - Selected APSO and Affirmative COI Trainings](#)

### **COI Road Map**

- [Recorded PowerPoint \(for live streaming\)](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)

### **Nicaragua**

- [Recorded PowerPoint \(for live streaming\)](#)
- [PowerPoint \(slides with instructor notes\)](#)
- [PowerPoint \(student version\)](#)
- [Facilitator Guide](#)
- [One-Pager](#)

### **India**

- [Recorded PowerPoint \(for live streaming\)](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Facilitator Guide](#)
- [One-Pager](#)

### **Additional Resources**

- [COI Quick Resources Guide](#)

## COI Quick Resource Guide

Where to look	<p><b>Example Sources (*non-exhaustive list):</b>  <u>RU ECN page</u>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 200px; height: 20px; display: inline-block;"></div> (b)(7)(E)  <u>DOS Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</u>  <u>DOS Report on International Religious Freedom</u>  <u>Human Rights Watch Publications</u>  <u>ECOI – European Country of Origin Information Network</u>  <u>Freedom House</u>  <u>Pangea</u></p>
How to properly cite in assessment	<p><b>Citing Standards for Electronic Source:</b></p> <p><b>Citation Format:</b>  Name of Organization/Group, Title of Page, Date of Publication, Visible URL (last visited date).</p> <p><b>Example Citations:</b>  United States Department of State, <i>2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Zimbabwe</i>, 3 March 2017, available at: <a href="http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&amp;dclid=265318">http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&amp;dclid=265318</a> (accessed April 18, 2017)  Human Rights Watch, <i>World Report 2015: Belarus</i>, January 29, 2015, available at: <a href="http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/belarus">http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/belarus</a> (accessed June 24, 2016)</p> <p>*Citations provided from ECOI or Refworld may be used directly in assessments.</p>
Is it a Religious Claim?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite the <u>DOS International Religious Freedom Report</u> in assessment</li> <li>• Sample citation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ United States Department of State, <i>2020 Report on International Religious Freedom: Afghanistan</i>, 12 May 2021, available at: <a href="https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/afghanistan/">https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-report-on-international-religious-freedom/afghanistan/</a> (accessed November 9, 2021)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
COI Helpful Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Pangea Tool Quick Reference Guide</u></li> <li>• <u>COI LP</u></li> <li>• <u>RAIO RU COI BANK</u></li> <li>• <u>Training COI Analysis (Newark)</u></li> </ul>