Oral statement

49th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2: Interactive Dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua

Right Livelihood and CEJUDHCAN thank the High Commissioner for her report and share the concerns she raised. In particular, we remain deeply alarmed at the situation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, where land-grabs and violent attacks by illegal armed settlers have reached alarming levels.

From 2015 to date, 62 indigenous people have been killed due to land conflicts, 56 injured, 49 kidnapped, and 4 disappeared. Entire communities were forcibly displaced due to deliberate attacks on their means of subsistence. Impunity for these crimes is structural.

Despite granting land rights through Law 445/2003, as well as the ruling of the Inter-American Court demanding the removal of irregular settlers, the Nicaraguan authorities have been colluding with business interests and actively promoted illegal land grabs.

Those daring to defend the rights of indigenous peoples are subject to systematic and widespread violence. The few organizations left to document abuses in the territories are facing serious threats of being shut down under the Law on Foreign Agents.

Resolution 46/2 urges Nicaragua, among others, to prevent and address increasing violence against indigenous peoples. However, no action has been taken so far to protect the life and land of the communities.

We, therefore, call on the Council to respond robustly to this crisis and to ensure that the Nicaraguan government: guarantees indigenous peoples’ territorial rights in accordance with its national and international obligations; immediately removes non-indigenous settlers from the demarcated territories; and promptly carries out independent and impartial investigations into the violations committed.

Thank you.