

# INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK of Academies & Scholarly Societies



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Zohra ben Lakhdar  
*Tunisia*

Édouard Brézin  
*France*

Martin Chalfie\*  
*United States of America*

Carol Corillon  
*United States of America*

Abdallah S. Daar  
*Oman/Canada*

RoseEmma Entsua-Mensah  
*Ghana*

Edward Kirumira  
*Uganda*

Belita Koiller  
*Brazil*

Pedro León Azofeifa  
*Costa Rica*

Satyajit Mayor  
*India*

Ida Nicolaisen  
*Denmark*

John Polanyi\*  
*Canada*

Ovid Tzeng  
*Taiwan*

August 23, 2023

The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) is an alliance of more than 90 national honorary scientific societies that defends the fundamental rights of academics and researchers worldwide and supports scholarly institutions under threat. We, the members of the IHRN's Executive Committee, condemn the Nicaraguan government's recent seizure of the University of Central America (UCA) as an egregious assault on academic freedom in the country.

Last week the Ortega-Murillo government in Nicaragua moved to confiscate the University's property, buildings, equipment, and financial accounts, transferring these assets to the state on the grounds that UCA has been functioning as a "center of terrorism". Nicaraguan authorities have also accused the University's directors of being traitors to the country, placing them at serious personal risk. These actions are based on unsubstantiated allegations, and those targeted have been denied due process of law.

The government's takeover of UCA, one of the region's leading academic institutions, is the latest in a series of actions targeting research and scholarship in the country. Since late 2021, the government has closed more than two dozen universities and has cancelled the legal status of the Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua. UCA itself was subjected to governmental harassment when it supported students targeted by state and paramilitary forces following the outbreak of country-wide protests in 2018. Its campus has been at times surrounded by police, and government funding for the University was drastically reduced and eventually withdrawn altogether.

Numerous human rights bodies, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, have denounced attacks on institutions of research and higher education in Nicaragua as part of their documentation of widespread human rights violations in the country. We urge members of the global scientific and scholarly community to join us in calling for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the country and for the end of such abuses.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rebecca Everly

## SECRETARIAT

500 Fifth St. NW Washington,  
D.C. 20001  
United States of America  
Email: [hrnetwork@nas.edu](mailto:hrnetwork@nas.edu)  
[Internationalhrnetwork.org](http://Internationalhrnetwork.org)

## FOUNDING MEMBERS

François Jacob\* – *France*  
Max Perutz\* – *United Kingdom*  
Pieter van Dijk – *Netherlands*  
Torsten Wiesel\* – *USA*

## Executive Committee

## International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies

(\*Nobel Laureate)