

17 September 2018

## Nicaragua: Human rights defender Ricardo Baltodano in incommunicado detention

**Ricardo Baltodano** was arbitrarily detained in the afternoon of 15 September by the Nicaraguan police in Managua. According to the information available, no arrest warrant was issued by the judicial authority and he is currently held incommunicado.

[Ricardo Baltodano](#) is a Nicaraguan human rights defender, academic and trade union activist. He is currently the General Secretary of the **Trade Union of Teachers from UPOLI University** (*Sindicato de Docentes de la Universidad Politécnica de Nicaragua*). He has been actively involved in the Social Movements and Civil Society Articulation (*Articulación de Movimientos Sociales y Sociedad Civil*), a group consisting of activists and civil society organisations, which emerged in response to the political crisis that erupted in April this year. Ricardo Baltodano and members of his family have a pending request for precautionary measures before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights due to recent threats and harassment. In June of this year, shots were fired at his house.

The human rights defender had just returned from a protest against the Nicaraguan government, when approximately 30 national police officers arrived at his house in the neighbourhood of San Antonio to arrest him. He first managed to escape but was later detained at a neighbour's house.

His detention comes in a context of criminalisation of human rights defenders in the country, particularly those active in protests since the crisis began. In the afternoon of 10 September, woman human rights defender, [Amaya Eva Coppens](#), was arbitrarily detained by government paramilitary forces in the city of Leon. She is currently being held in incommunicado detention along with other Nicaraguan student leaders and activists: Edwin Carcache Dávila, Yubrank Suazo, Byron Estrada, Luis Quiroz, Nahiroby Olivas, Juan Pablo Alvarado, Levis Rugama, Yaritza Mairena and Victoria Obando. Several of them have been subject to harassment and threats prior to their arrest.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the arbitrary detention of Ricardo Baltodano and other student leaders and activists. It furthermore condemns the pattern of harassment and threats followed by arbitrary detention, targeting those who are outspoken and active about the context of human rights violations and repression in Nicaragua.

### Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Nicaragua to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ricardo Baltodano and other human rights defenders and student leaders that remain in detention and drop all charges against them;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee Ricardo Baltodano's physical and psychological security and integrity, as well as that of his family and other human rights defenders and student leaders that remain in detention;
3. Take measures to ensure that public officials refrain from making statements or declarations stigmatising the legitimate work of human rights defenders;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Nicaragua are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including

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