

Treasury Targets Nicaraguan Vice President and Key Advisor over Violent Response to Protests

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Designations Represent U.S. Commitment to Address the Ortega Regime's Violence and Corruption

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action pursuant to a new Executive Order (E.O.) targeting the Ortega regime and its supporters, who continue to engage in rampant corruption, dismantling of democratic institutions, serious human rights abuse, and exploitation of the people and public resources of Nicaragua for private gain. Under the newly issued E.O., OFAC imposed sanctions on two of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's closest associates: the Vice President of Nicaragua and First Lady, Rosario Maria Murillo De Ortega (Murillo), and Nestor Moncada Lau (Moncada), who has acted as a national security advisor to the President and Vice President.

"Vice President Murillo and her political operators have systematically sought to dismantle democratic institutions and loot the wealth of Nicaragua to consolidate their grip on power. This Administration is committed to holding the Ortega regime accountable for the violent protests and widespread corruption that have led to the deaths of hundreds of innocent Nicaraguans and destroyed their economy," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. "Treasury is intent on ensuring that Ortega Regime insiders are not able to access the U.S. financial system to profit at the expense of the Nicaraguan people."

Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an E.O. declaring a national emergency with respect to the Government of Nicaragua's violent response to protests that began on April 18, 2018 and the Ortega regime's systematic dismantling and undermining of democratic institutions and the rule of law, its use of indiscriminate violence and repressive tactics against civilians, as well as its corruption leading to the destabilization of Nicaragua's economy. The E.O. provides for the imposition of sanctions on actors engaged in these malign activities.

As a result of today's actions, any property or interests in property of those designated by OFAC, within or transiting U.S. jurisdiction or the possession or control of a U.S. person must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S.

persons within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of the designated persons, including entities 50 percent or more owned by designated persons. Further details on these designations are included below.

Rosario Maria Murillo De Ortega

Murillo is being designated for being an official of the Government of Nicaragua on or after January 10, 2007. Elected as Vice President in 2016 and inaugurated in 2017, Murillo has been the de facto co-president of Nicaragua since 2007, when President Daniel Ortega proclaimed he would share “50 percent of power” with her.

Murillo is also a leader with access and influence over the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)’s youth organization, known as the Sandinista Youth, and the Nicaraguan National Police (NNP). The Sandinista Youth and the NNP are entities that have, or whose members have, engaged in serious human rights abuse in Nicaragua. According to public reports, the NNP have been part of “Death Squads” that have engaged in extrajudicial killings, torture, and kidnapping, while Sandinista Youth paramilitaries, armed and paid by the FSLN, have been implicated in serious human rights abuses related to the ongoing protests against the Nicaraguan government, including attacks on protesters. Further, in June 2018, masked gunmen, accompanied by individuals identified by witnesses as Nicaraguan police, reportedly set fire to a family home in Managua, killing six, including two young children. Finally, Murillo has a long history of engaging in acts of corruption related to Nicaragua.

Nestor Moncada Lau

Moncada is being designated for acting for or on behalf of Vice President Murillo. Moncada has been described as a national security advisor to President Ortega and Vice President Murillo, and has been relied upon to carry out their orders. In addition, Moncada is an experienced former official of the State Security of the Ministry of Interior, with strong ties of loyalty to Ortega and Murillo. Following Ortega’s return to power in 2007, Moncada reportedly assumed a prominent role as Ortega and Murillo’s liaison and FSLN Secretariat power operator over multiple Nicaraguan government entities. Moncada disbursed payments to counter protesters on behalf of Ortega and Murillo and, through his various intelligence roles, worked to bribe and blackmail individuals to obtain their support or prevent them from voicing opposition to Ortega’s government. In addition, Moncada has engaged in acts of corruption on behalf of

Ortega and Murillo. In at least one case, Moncada worked with President Ortega to cover up Ortega's sexual conduct with a minor.

[For identifying information on the entities designated today.](#)

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