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## American Baptists Express Concern About Turmoil in Nicaragua



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[\*AFP PHOTO / Inti OCON\*](#)

On June 7, 2018, the Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer, general secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), in consultation with leaders and global servants from International Ministries (IM), wrote a letter to the Consulate General of Nicaragua in Washington DC to express American Baptist concern over recent events in Nicaragua.

Political unrest has led to protests throughout the country. At least 97 protestors have been killed by forces loyal to the government. According to reliable sources, 868 additional people have been wounded and 438 others detained. In the face of this violence, the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD) asked ABCUSA to reach out to the consulate.

In his letter, Spitzer shared ABCUSA's deep concern over the series of incidents that have resulted in the loss of life of innocent citizens. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, on May 30 alone, 15 people were killed and 199 were injured in Managua, Estelí and Masaya. Spitzer wrote:

American Baptists wish to express our sincere hope for a peaceful resolution to the current situation facing your country. In solidarity with our Baptist sisters and brothers in Nicaragua, we sincerely request that the full range of civil and political rights of protesters be respected by the government and its surrogates, and that violence against demonstrators cease. Furthermore, American Baptists, based on our historic conviction that freedom is a fundamental human right and essential for a just society, strongly urge that all segments of the Nicaraguan society work towards the restoration of democratic institutions in Nicaragua.

IM and ABCUSA have a long and distinguished record of service in Nicaragua alongside the Convención Bautista de Nicaragua (CBN), founded in 1917, and other Christian groups. ABCUSA-related mission work has been done in partnership with the Baptist Hospital of Managua, UPOLI, CEPAD and PROVADENIC (Nicaragua Vaccination and Community Development Program). Dr. Gustavo Parajón, an American Baptist missionary who founded PROVADENIC and helped found CEPAD, also played an important role in the signing of the peace accords following the civil war.

IM and ABCUSA's collaboration with Nicaragua continues with AMOS, a rural primary health care program founded ten years ago by IM missionaries Drs. David and Laura Parajón to extend the valuable work that PROVADENIC began.