Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Nicaragua

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 218th session (Arusha, 9 October 2026)



© Wikimedia - Brooklyn Rivera Bryan

NIC-32 – Brooklyn Rivera Bryan
NIC-33 – Nancy Elizabeth Henríquez James

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Enforced disappearance
- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Inhumane conditions of detention
- ✓ Lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity

Case NIC-COLL-02

Nicaragua: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim(s): Two opposition members of parliament (one man and one woman)

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(b) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint(s): April 2024

Recent IPU decision: April 2026

IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): - - -

Recent follow-up:
- Communication(s) from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of Parliament (September 2026)
- Communication from the complainant: April 2026
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of Parliament (August 2026)
- Communication to the complainant: April 2026

A. Summary of the case

In April 2023, Mr. Brooklyn Rivera Bryan, a Miskitu indigenous leader, prominent member of the YATAMA organization (*Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Aslatakanka,* "Children of Mother Earth United") and elected member of Nicaragua's National Assembly, participated in the 22nd session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. According to the complainant, during this event Mr. Rivera Bryan denounced the treatment of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in Nicaragua. Upon attempting to return to his country on 24 April 2023, the Nicaraguan Government allegedly blocked his entry. After a few days abroad, Mr. Rivera Bryan returned to Nicaragua, where he was reportedly persecuted by the national police. According to the information received, on

29 September 2023, State agents forcibly entered his home, assaulted him and arrested him without a warrant. His whereabouts remained unknown until May 2026. According to the complainant, his family was denied any information, leading to growing concerns about his health and safety, especially given his pre-existing health conditions, which required specialized medical attention. The complainant also states that Mr. Rivera Bryan's family faces continued threats and intimidation, and that some family members have been forced into exile.

According to official information from the Nicaraguan authorities released on 31 May 2026, Mr. Rivera Bryan died from complications related to COVID-19 while in State custody. According to other information received, his health had deteriorated during his prolonged incommunicado detention and the authorities had failed to provide proof of life or transparent information regarding his condition.

According to public reports, the authorities allegedly refused to release Mr. Rivera Bryan's body to his family and community, who had come to claim it. Several reports cite statements from family members and sources close to his community to the effect that Mr. Rivera Bryan wished to be buried in Sandy Bay on the Caribbean coast in accordance with Miskitu tradition. However, the same reports suggest that those wishes were not respected. Instead, the authorities allegedly organized a funeral service in Managua and did not allow his family to attend the burial, despite their wishes and traditions.

Ms. Nancy Elizabeth Henríquez James, also a Miskitu indigenous leader and member of the YATAMA organization, took over Mr. Rivera Bryan's parliamentary seat in April 2023 as his alternate. The complainant alleges that she was arrested by undercover police officers on 1 October 2023. Her whereabouts remained unknown for approximately two months. On 13 December 2023, Ms. Henríquez James was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment during a trial held at La Esperanza women's prison, where she was allegedly denied legal representation, an interpreter and due process. It appears that the conviction was in response to charges brought against Ms. Henríquez James for "undermining national integrity" and "spreading false information to the detriment of the Nicaraguan State and society". Her family had expressed concern for Ms. Henríquez James' health, considering that she suffers from several chronic health conditions requiring specialized medical attention, which she was reportedly unable to receive while in detention. In March 2026, the complainant reported that Ms. Henríquez James had been released on 21 March 2026. No further information has been provided by the complainant since then.

The complainant claims that what happened to both parliamentarians is a direct consequence of their actions as indigenous leaders in opposition to the current government and of their parliamentary activities in opposition, and that there is no basis for any criminal charges against them. The complainant also reported that, Mr. Rivera Bryan and Ms. Henríquez James were removed from the list of members of the National Assembly immediately after being detained and that their parliamentary mandates were not subject to any official termination procedure.

The IPU has formally requested information and official comments from the National Assembly regarding this case on several occasions since receipt of the complaint. To date, parliament has not submitted any information, and repeated requests for support in facilitating an IPU delegation visit to Nicaragua have gone unanswered. On 5 September 2026, the National Assembly stated in a formal letter that the IPU's requests for information regarding these cases constituted interference in internal affairs.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Condemns* in the strongest terms the death in State custody of Mr. Rivera Bryan after more than two and a half years of his whereabouts being concealed from his family, legal representatives, colleagues and the international community; *recalls* that persons deprived of their liberty remain under the full responsibility of the State, which has a heightened duty to protect their life, physical integrity and dignity at all times;

2. *Deeply regrets* the lack of response from the Nicaraguan parliamentary authorities to repeated requests from the Committee to provide information and official observations regarding the situation of Mr. Rivera Bryan and Ms. Henríquez James; *recalls* in this regard that, in accordance with its Rules and Practices, the Committee does everything possible to promote dialogue with national authorities, and primarily with parliaments, with a view to reaching a

satisfactory settlement in the cases before it; and *reiterates its call* to the National Assembly of Nicaragua to engage in constructive and continuous dialogue with the Committee in order to ensure a resolution of this case;

3. *Reaffirms* that all allegations of enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and deaths occurring in custody must be subject to a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigation capable of establishing the full truth and ensuring accountability; *urges* in this regard the competent Nicaraguan authorities to carry out such an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Mr. Rivera Bryan's enforced disappearance and death, to make its findings public and to ensure that all those responsible are held accountable in accordance with Nicaraguan law and the applicable international human rights standards; *invites* the National Assembly of Nicaragua, in accordance with its constitutional mandate regarding international treaties, to consider promoting accession by Nicaragua to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, thereby strengthening the legal and institutional framework for preventing and addressing enforced disappearances;

4. *Expresses grave concern* at reports that Mr. Rivera Bryan's remains were not returned to his family and community and that burial arrangements were carried out without the participation of his family and contrary to their wishes and cultural traditions; *solemnly recalls* that indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise and maintain their spiritual and cultural traditions, customs and ceremonies and to repatriate human remains via fair, transparent and effective mechanisms; in this regard, *calls* on the Nicaraguan authorities to provide full information regarding the handling of Mr. Rivera Bryan's remains and all decisions taken in that regard;

5. *Remains concerned* about the allegation that both Mr. Rivera Bryan and Ms. Henríquez James were removed from the list of members of the National Assembly without being subject to any procedure; *reiterates* its wish to receive official information on the steps taken by the National Assembly, if any, to terminate the parliamentary mandates of Mr. Rivera Bryan and Ms. Henríquez James and the legal basis for doing so;

6. *Remains concerned* also at the allegations of serious violations of the right to a fair trial in the legal proceedings against Ms. Henríquez James; *calls* on the competent authorities to provide official and detailed information on the facts justifying each of the charges brought against Ms. Henríquez James and the current status of her case;

7. *Calls* on all IPU Member Parliaments to take concrete action in support of the resolution of this case in a manner consistent with democratic and human rights values; and *hopes* to be able to rely on the assistance of all relevant regional and international organizations to that effect;

8. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the National Assembly of Nicaragua, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information or contribute to the settlement of the case;

9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining the case and to report back to it in due course.