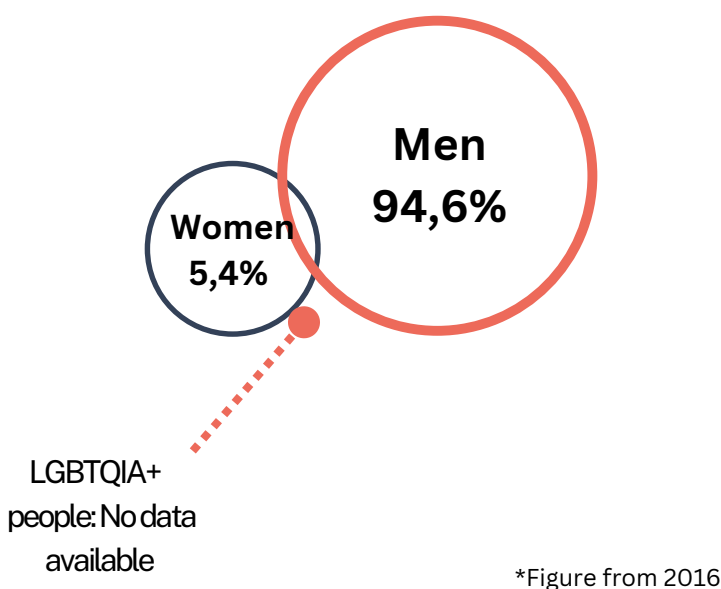


5 things you should know about criminal detention in NICARAGUA

1 Prison system

- Organised by:** Sistema Penitenciario Nacional
- **Headed by:** Dirección General del Sistema Penitenciario Nacional (in accordance with Ley No. 473 adopted in 2003)
 - **Responsible for:** The implementation of prison policies, the management and control of prison activities, the enforcement of criminal sanctions and precautionary measures of deprivations of liberty issued by the competent judicial authorities



2 Prison population * (data from 2018)

- Total prison population including pre-trial detention: 20 918
- Rate of overcrowding: 177, 6%

3 Worrying Trends

- Since 2018, national and international human rights organisations have condemned the use of institutions to intimidate, punish, eradicate and form political opposition or defence of human rights
- In March 2023, a UN Group of Experts on Nicaragua issued its report finding a consistent pattern of incommunicado arrests and detentions
- The report also found the use of penal law by the government to persecute opposition voices, with arbitrary detention processes being used to detain many critics of the government



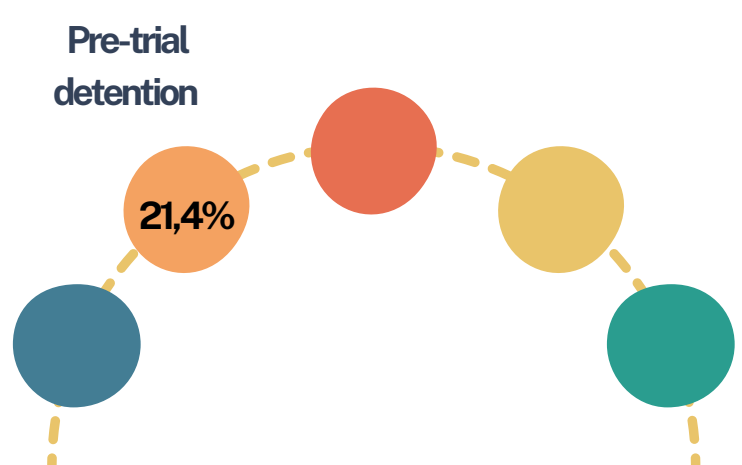
4 The Conditions

- Many assumed political opposition forces were detained in "La Esperanza" or "La Modelo" prisons
- UN reports they were subjected to ill-treatment and discrimination
- The prisoners were allegedly subjected to beatings and threats, prohibited from communicating with other detainees, with inadequate food, limited water and sunlight and limited access to medical attention
- Various detainees were also reported to be held in solitary confinement, with cells of 3x2 square meters



5 Pre-trial detention

- From the latest available figures - 2016 - World Prison Brief reports 21,4% of those detained were in pre-trial detention
- This year, a UN expert working group on Nicaragua reported the "excessive and arbitrary use of pre-trial detention" by tribunals



PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Rolando José Álvarez Lagos, bishop of Matagalpa, held at the Jorge Navarro National Penitentiary System



FACTS

- On the 9th of February 2023, officers from the Directorate of Special Police operations took Mr. Rolando José Álvarez Lagos, bishop of Matagalpa, to the Jorge Navarro National Penitentiary System ("La Modelo")
- The OAS considers Mr. Álvarez Lagos as one of the most critical voices against the circumstances and serious human rights violations in Nicaragua
- Since his arrest, Mr. Álvarez Lagos has reportedly been held in isolation without access to a lawyer nor his family
- State authorities continuously refused to disclose his whereabouts
- His family allegedly denied the delivery of their parcels containing food that Mr. Álvarez Lagos requires due to his medical condition

Commission

- The IACHR refers to information it collected on detention conditions in Nicaragua including its 2021 annual report which indicated "overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, dispossession of belongings, mistreatment, application of maximum security regimes (...) and a lack of adequate and timely medical attention" persisted in "La Modelo"
- On the 13th of April 2023, the Commission considered that the facts, the lack of challenge to them by Nicaragua and the overall context, were likely to seriously affect the rights to life and personal integrity of Mr. Álvarez Lagos and his family, requiring the adoption of urgent measures
- The Commission granted precautionary measures for the protection of Mr. Álvarez Lagos and requested Nicaragua to follow up on any action taken within 15 days

What Now?

- Since the granting of the precautionary measures there has yet to be follow up by the Commission
- Mr. Rolando José Álvarez Lagos is currently still being detained in Nicaragua



Interested in more? Click [here](#) for references