

San José, Costa Rica
June 3, 2018

Ambassador Nobushige Takamizawa
President of the IVth Conference of State Parties

Your Excellency:

It is with great sadness and concern that I write to you today regarding the ongoing violence in Nicaragua, my country's northern neighbor and Central American brother.

The eyes of five million people in Costa Rica, including our citizens of Nicaraguan descent and Nicaraguan migrant populations, have joined hundreds of millions of others around the world in watching in grief and consternation as Nicaraguan mothers have lost their children, young people have lost their friends and leaders, and journalists have lost any sense of personal safety as they go about their work.

The substance of the repression in Nicaragua lies in the history and context that are specific to that country. However, the violent form that the conflict has taken is the product of a global phenomenon: the irresponsible and unchecked flow of small arms and light weapons across borders. This phenomenon has a disproportionate effect on the developing world, and Nicaragua is the latest casualty.

Many voices around the world have rightly condemned the government of Nicaragua for exerting indiscriminate violence against its population and using firearms and ammunition to control protests. What some of these voices have not mentioned is that governments that sell arms can take concrete steps to avoid conventional weapons transfers that undermine peace and security, or to avoid the transit of such weapons through their territories.

I write to you with sadness, but also with hope: hope that the international community will learn from one more lesson about the consequences of the arms trade. Hope that the signatories of the Arms Trade Treaty will honor their

commitment. Hope, most of all, that the world's leading arms manufacturers, whether they have signed the Treaty or not, will take this opportunity to reconsider the debt they owe the world's children, not because of any signature or binding regulations, but because of their membership in the human race. We all have an obligation to do everything in their power to make sure the mothers of Nicaragua, the mothers of every country affected by armed violence, will suffer no longer.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Oscar Arias", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Oscar Arias

Former President of Costa Rica

(1986-1990, 2006-2010)

Nobel Peace Laureate 1987