

Jailed for Preaching: Urgent Crisis Facing Persecuted Pastors

Eleven Nicaraguan pastors and ministry leaders are pursuing legal justice from an international court after being held in prison for months and facing \$80 million in fines for holding mass evangelism campaigns spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As CBN News reported, those leaders had partnered with the ministry Mountain Gateway and successfully shared the Gospel with thousands of fellow Nicaraguans.

Britt Hancock, founder of Mountain Gateway Order, Inc., told CBN News how it all started. “In 2023, Mountain Gateway helped to organize a series of mass evangelism campaigns – eight of them throughout the year,” he said. “We began in February and had the last one in November. But 1,000,000 people in total came to those eight meetings.”

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Pastors and ministry leaders affiliated with the Nicaraguan branch of a Christian ministry known as the Puerta de la Montaña were arrested shortly after their last outreach.

According to a Nicaraguan Police press release, the pastors were accused of money laundering and organized crime.

The ministry publicly denied the allegations and argued the charges were fabricated because the authoritarian regime of Nicaragua felt threatened by the success of the outreaches.

Although the government was unable to produce any evidence of the alleged illicit activity or alleged unlawful funds in court, the pastors were imprisoned for over eight months.

They could not contact their families or their own legal counsel but were rather set up with government-appointed lawyers who failed to provide them with any charging documents or files to prepare a defense adequately.

Last March, the 11 individuals were formally sentenced to between 12 and 15 years in prison and ordered to pay over \$80 million in fines per person.

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A month later, the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) International filed a precautionary measures request with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights saying the pastors were “fraudulently convicted.”

“No person should be imprisoned or punished for their faith, but that is exactly what has happened with these religious leaders. It is our prayer that Nicaraguan authorities will uphold the human rights and dignity of these pastors and that they will release them from their wrongful imprisonment,” the legal group declared last year.

To read the full story, please visit our content partners at CBN News.

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