**Nicaragua**

**Population**: 6,152,000

**Territorial Extension**: 130,370 km²

**GDP (US$)**: 12,903,000,000

**Armed Forces Personnel**: 12,793

**Defence Budget (US$)**: 72,558,630

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**Defence Budget Breakdown**

- **P**: Salaries and other benefits
- **R**: Retirement and pension funds / RCEF
- **O**: Other expenses

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**Comparative Increase (percentage variation 2008-2016)**

- Personnel Expenditure: 95%
- Defence Budget: 72%
- Government Budget: 68%
- GDP: 98%

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**The Legal Framework**

**National Legislation**

- **Systems and concepts**
  - Law on the legal framework on borders (Nº 749 – 2010/12/22).

- **Military Organization**
  - Military Penal Code (Act Nº 566 - 2006/01/05).

**The Defence System**

- National System of Sovereign Security
- President
- General Command of the Army
- Council of Ministers
- Presidental Staff
- Ministry of Defence

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**The Ministry of Defence was created in 1979 and its incumbent Minister is Dr. Martha Elena Ruiz Sevilla.**

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**Source**: Anuario Estadístico de América Latina y el Caribe, 2015, CEPAL (territory and population: projection 2016), IMF, World Economic Outlook Database, (GDP: projection 2016), and Ley anual de presupuesto general de la República de Nicaragua (Nº 919 – 2015/12/18).
### Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Defence Budget (US$)</th>
<th>Government Budget (US$)</th>
<th>GDP (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>42,191,833</td>
<td>1,492,080,617</td>
<td>6,523,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>37,293,776</td>
<td>1,598,952,131</td>
<td>6,298,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>39,644,293</td>
<td>1,455,689,864</td>
<td>6,246,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>53,774,224</td>
<td>1,596,112,400</td>
<td>7,078,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>65,756,103</td>
<td>1,794,342,438</td>
<td>7,695,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>85,080,114</td>
<td>1,931,049,585</td>
<td>11,272,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>82,888,983</td>
<td>2,148,730,368</td>
<td>11,946,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>71,613,275</td>
<td>2,238,993,587</td>
<td>12,222,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>72,558,630</td>
<td>2,513,867,020</td>
<td>12,903,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Defence Budget (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Defence Budget (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compilation based on the Ley anual de presupuesto general de la República from 2006 to 2016. The Government Budget is considered as that passed by Congress in the aforementioned law. Investment is considered as that presented in “Capital Expenditure/Assets”. GDP: Projection of the World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, for each year considered. This source has been taken for comparative purposes. Each country prepares the budget based on its own GDP estimation. The value of the dollar considered corresponds to the exchange rate determined by the World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, for each year under consideration.
The Army of Nicaragua is the armed institution responsible for defending the country’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Only in exceptional cases, when stability of the Republic is threatened by severe internal disorders, calamity or natural disasters, shall the President, acting within a session of the Council of Ministers, be entitled to order the intervention of the Army of Nicaragua in support of the National Police. (Constitution, Sec. 92)

Its mission is to prepare, organize and lead the armed defence of the homeland, and to defend the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the Nation. Its missions, composition and structure are defined according to the scenarios, threats and risks identified by the Nicaraguan State, which will provide the necessary public means and resources to provide the Army of Nicaragua with the ability required to comply with its missions and tasks in times of peace, with the purpose of preventing and deterring any type of international armed conflict.

The Army of Nicaragua shall plan, organize, prepare, manage and execute the national armed defence of the homeland and defend the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the nation, as well as in the fight against drug trafficking, arms trafficking and human trafficking and transnational organized crime. It shall contribute to strengthening the risk management policy, based on preventing, mitigating and managing natural disasters, safeguarding the life and property of the population. It shall participate in international peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance missions, in accordance to the UN Charter, approved by Resolution No. 84 of Nicaragua’s Congress, international treaties or agreements signed and ratified by the State of Nicaragua based on regulations and principles of International Law. (Ley de la defensa nacional, Nº 748, Sec. 16 and 17).

The Land Force is the Army’s main instrument to perform missions in defence of the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, acting in coordination with the Air Force, the Navy and common bodies.

The Navy carries out missions to support the Army, and independent missions directed by the High Command of the Army. Ground force units that carry out security and safeguarding missions of units and facilities form part of the Navy.

The Air Force carries out missions to support the Army and Navy as well as independent missions directed by the High Command of the Army. The land force units, which carry out missions of air, defence, security and maintenance of the units and facilities form part of the Air Force.

**Armed Forces Personnel:**
- Officers: 1,802
- NCOs: 1,665
- Classes: 8,739

**Total Armed Forces Personnel:** 12,793

**Defence sector personnel**

**Source:** Ley de la defensa nacional (Nº 748 – 2010/12/22) and Código de organización, jurisdicción y presión social militar (Nº 181 - 1994/08/23. Last amendment: Act Nº 855 - 2014/02/11 (missions) and Ley anual de presupuesto general de la República 2015 and 2016 (personnel).
It falls under the so-called “Containment wall” strategy. It includes smuggling and illegal immigration detection.

In the last few years, cooperation with Honduras has intensified, also within the framework of the CFAC. Combined operations between these countries, called “Morazan-Sandino”, have the operational aim of combating drug-trafficking (including crop growing, transfer and sale of marihuana), illegal arms trafficking and livestock smuggling in border areas.

**Women in the Armed Forces**

Maximum rank achieved by women in the Command Corps (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Maximum Rank Achieved by Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonel</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadier General</td>
<td>Brigadier General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major General</td>
<td>Major General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General of the Army</td>
<td>General of the Army</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These ranks correspond to the Army as an example. The highest rank achieved since the creation of the National Army as the only armed force of the Republic, in 1979, is considered. The command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their careers, different to those who develop a career in the civilian sphere and are then incorporated to the military.

**Military Service**

Men and women are equally allowed to enter the military service, which has a one-year duration and the possibility of further extension. The Political Constitution forbids any type of compulsory recruitment and thus military service is optional.

Since 1998, the new soldiers of the Nicaraguan Army have received a 3-month training course at the National School of Basic Infantry Training “Soldado Ramón Montoya” (ENA-BI). Graduates from this School become temporary military members and can be hired for a 3 to 5-year period, after which they can continue with their active service for 5 additional years or access military courses that allow them to become career military personnel.

**Army Units**

The Nicaraguan Army serves as the Executive Secretary of the National Sovereign Security System. The Defense Information Directorate is the entity in charge of performing such role.

**Border Protection**

Source: Ley anual de presupuesto general de la República 2016, Ley de seguridad soberana de la república de Nicaragua (Nº 919 – 2015/12/18), Memoria Anual 2015 del Ejército de Nicaragua, Libro de la Defensa Nacional de Nicaragua and the website of the Nicaraguan Army.
### Education and the Military Career

#### Career Path for Officers in Command Bodies\(^1\)

**General of the Army**
- Major General
- Brigadier General

**Higher School of the General Command (ESEM): National Security and Defence Course**
- Colonel

**Higher School of the General Command (ESEM): Certified Staff Course**
- Lieutenant Colonel
- Captain

**Higher School of the General Command (ESEM): Postgraduate Arms and Services Course**
- Captain
- Lieutenant

**Superior Center of Military Studies**
- Captain
- Lieutenant

**Candidates (Aged 18/20)\(^2\)**

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1. Command corps includes officers who have been educated at military academies from the beginning of their professional careers. The graph makes a theoretical reconstruction of officer promotion through the completion of mandatory courses. Further requirements for promotion have not been considered.

2. Ages 18-20 years have been considered for comparative purposes. The minimum age for promotion shall depend on the age of graduation from the military institution.

3. Senior Officers of the Naval Force who hold a position in the General Command of the Nicaraguan Army shall receive the rank corresponding to the military hierarchy of the Army.

**Source:** Compilation based on the Libro de la Defensa Nacional de Nicaragua, 2005, and the website of the aforementioned institutions and the Nicaraguan Army.
Defence and National and International Community

The Nicaraguan Army carries out a variety of plans linked to community support:

2015 Operational Plans

- A few results:
  - 487 criminal arrests.
  - 15,488 undocumented individuals stopped.
  - 201 drug traffickers arrested (nationals and foreigners).
  - 142 firearms restricted.
  - 262 firearms of civilian use.
  - 4,457 ammunitions.
  - 2,958 kg cocaine seized.
  - 714 kg marihuana seized.

Protection and Security of the Coffee Harvest:

Protection and security for coffee harvest: In the 2015 production cycle, they secured the collection of 2,130,222 quintals (100 lbs equivalent) of coffee, totaling around US$290,000,000. Protection and security was provided to the transfer of money for the sale of coffee, remunerations of coffee growing workers, benefits and storage centers.

Aims to neutralize the criminal activity of groups, permit the free and safe circulation of citizens and of transport, facilitate commercial agricultural, livestock and coffee-production activities.

Disaster Support

The Army’s General Command of Civil Defence has 6 contingency plans for providing humanitarian assistance to civilian populations affected by natural or man-made disasters.

1. Earthquake Plan - Pacific Region
2. Winter Plan (heavy rains and hurricanes)
3. Volcanic Eruption Plan
4. Plan for the prevention and control of forest fires
5. Plan for tsunamis on the coastal zone of the greater pacific region
6. Security plan in case of massive concentrations of persons

These plans are implemented in coordination with the different structures of the National System for the Prevention, Mitigation and Response to Disasters (SNAPRED) and local volunteers organized in committees and brigades.

Earthquake Contingency Plan

Seismic hazards in Nicaragua are common. The high seismic zone corresponds to the strip that runs parallel to the coast of the Pacific Ocean, where they occur at depths greater than 40 km, in the friction zone between the Cocos and Caribbean Lithospheric plates. The Earthquake Plan has a fundamental strategic objective of establishing guidelines and courses of action to be implemented from the moment of impact, clarification of the situation by relevant authorities, the disposition of forces and means by state institutions, municipal governments, relief agencies and local volunteers for the management and development of humanitarian assistance operations to assist the affected population in an effective and timely manner, facilitating the following actions:

- Search, locate and rescue.
- First aid and medical assistance.
- Firefighting.
- Evacuation and protection of evacuees.

Plan for the prevention and control of forest fires

Oriented towards the prevention and control of forest fires and the need for correct operation planning that involves the variety of authorities from central government to community leaders in the municipalities located in the departments of Estelí, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, Chinandega, León, Masaya, Granada, Carazo, Rivas and RANAM.

For the implementation of this plan, coordination is established between troops of the Nicaraguan Army, the National Police, the fire Department, Fire Brigades and the structures of the Committees for Prevention, Mitigation, and Response to Disasters, and departmental, municipal and local authorities.

Plan for tsunamis on the pacific coastal zone

The Plan is implemented by the General Command of Civil Defence in close coordination with the Executive Secretariat of SNAPRED, and with the participation of structures that form part of the Commission of Special Operations: Air Force, Navy, and Regional Military Commands 2 and 4, contingents of troops from the Military Unit of the Capital, and of the Humanitarian and Rescue Unit (UIH) of the Nicaraguan Army. They would act on the basis of the plan for the deployment of forces, vehicles and equipment, radio communication and transportation infrastructure, and the environment.

The plan’s main objective is to articulate courses of action to be developed in order to provide the forces, vehicles and equipment and state institutions in humanitarian assistance to the civilian population.

Winter Plan

The causes of these weather-related events, such as heavy rainfall, are associated with the flooding of rivers, creeks, streams, increases in the level of lakes and landslides lead to heavy damages to persons and property, transport and production infrastructure, and the environment.

The plan’s main objective is to articulate courses of action to be developed in order to provide the forces, vehicles and equipment and state institutions in humanitarian assistance to the civilian population.

Security plan in case of massive concentrations of persons

Its main objective is to articulate courses of action and operational measures to implement together with the members of the Committee for Special Operations to ensure the evacuation, rescue and provision of first aid assistance to participants in different activities involving the mass concentration of persons, in case of sudden large-scale events that may cause damage to the concentrated population.

Source: Memoria del Ejército de Nicaragua (2015) and the website of the Nicaraguan Army.