

# The Role of the Church and Faith-Based Activism in Repressive Countries

## Cuba – Nicaragua – Venezuela

A Webinar Presented by



Date: Thursday, August 20 - Time: 11:00 AM Eastern Time

Where: Zoom ([Click here to register now](#))

Join Outreach Aid to the Americas (OAA) for a conversation about the role of the church and faith-based activism in repressive contexts, focusing on **Cuba**, **Nicaragua**, and **Venezuela**. The authoritarian regimes in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela recognize the large presence and powerful influence of religious groups in their societies; as such, these regimes frequently attempt to impede faith-based organizations and communities from carrying out social action to help the poor and vulnerable, and violate their religious freedom, frequently in systematic and violent ways.

Addressing these issues will be our panelists:

- **John Barsa** - USAID Acting administrator | **Keynote Speaker**
- **Mara Tekach** - Chargé d'Affaires at U.S. Embassy Havana (Cuba)
- **Camilo Loret de Mola** - Legal and Political Analyst
- **Rev. Saturnino Cerrato** - President of Partido de Restauración Democrática (Nicaragua)
- **Pastor Carlos Vilema** - Vicepresident of Unión de Iglesias Cristianas de Venezuela (Venezuela)

Moderated by:

- **Dr. Teo Babun** - President and CEO, Outreach Aid to the Americas

Panelists will consider the differing political and social challenges facing religious actors in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. These range from situations where the church is a small but growing and vocal advocate for human rights and social improvements, to contexts where religious actors call for peace and seek to mediate between democratic civil society and abusive governments determined to hold on to power. As Nicaragua faces important elections next year, Cuba struggles with the economic and political fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, and Venezuela seeks an exit from a deep political and humanitarian crisis, communities of faith have a critical role to play. What will this be, and how can the U.S. and the international community support positive change?

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Keynote Speaker



**John Barsa**  
Acting Administrator  
 USAID  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Pastor Carlos Vielma**  
Vicepresident of Unión de Iglesias Cristianas de Venezuela  
(Venezuela)



**Rev. Saturnino Cerrato**  
President of Partido de Restauración Democrática  
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**Camilo Loret de Mola**  
Legal and Political Analyst



Speakers

**Mara Tekach**  
Chargé d'Affaires at U.S. Embassy Havana  
(Cuba)



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in English and  
Spanish**

