

FÉLIX MARADIAGA (Bio)

Félix Maradiaga is a Nicaraguan academic, former presidential candidate and president of Fundación para la Libertad de Nicaragua. In the late 1980s, as an unaccompanied minor, Mr. Maradiaga was forced to flee to the United States to escape the violence of the ongoing civil war. Based on the experiences of his childhood, Mr. Maradiaga has dedicated his professional life to public service and civil society work in the service of human rights, nonviolence, and disarmament. In the late 1990s he served as Director of the Office for Reintegration of Ex-Combatants, which focused on disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating 2,300 Nicaraguan guerrillas. He later went on to serve as the Secretary General of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Defense – where he worked to strengthen peace, democracy, and the rule of law in Nicaragua – and was the youngest person to ever hold that position. Due to his outspoken activism, the Ortega regime accused Maradiaga of “financing terrorism” related to the demonstrations that erupted in April 2018. Following physical attacks and repeated death threats against him, Mr. Maradiaga fled the country in July 2018 and lived in exile in the United States for one year. On February 28, 2021, he announced his candidacy for the Presidency of Nicaragua as the candidate of the Blue and White National Unity Movement. The Ortega regime arrested Maradiaga for 611 days and banished him to the United States in February 2023.

Mr. Maradiaga holds a Master in Public Administration (MPA), from Harvard Kennedy School of Government and a Master in Renewable Energy Engineering (ME) from University of Barcelona. He is also a Yale World Fellow (class of 2008), from Yale University. He lives in Florida with his wife Berta Valle and his daughter Alejandra.