



April 30, 2018

Dear Friends,

On April 18th President Daniel Ortega announced major changes to Nicaragua's social security system, raising the amount that workers must contribute to the system, while cutting back on services. In one of the poorest countries in the Western hemisphere, the majority of Nicaraguans rely on social security, which has provided basic health care for the general population and small pensions for the elderly. Popular response to Ortega's announcement was immediate.

University students in major cities, including Managua, León, and Matagalpa, occupied their campuses and rallied the people to demonstrate against the cuts. Citizens across the country took to the streets and the government responded with blunt force.

In a reaction sadly reminiscent of the Somoza dictatorship, the government closed six local television stations, attacked journalists, fought students on their campuses and in the streets. If you were to search for "Angel Gaona facebook live," you would see journalist Angel Gaona gunned down on camera as he reported from the town of Bluefields.

By Monday April 23rd, only five days after the social security cuts were announced, 27 people were left dead and Nicaragua was shaken to its core.

At PeaceWorks, we fear that this may only be the beginning of a long road towards peace and reconciliation. While President Ortega has rescinded his decision to change social security, many people have lost faith in the President, even among the most ardent supporters of the Sandinista Revolution.

One of our partners wrote:

*With the triumph of the Sandinistas, Nicaragua became a new nation, strengthened by its moral success and determined to create a new direction that benefited the majority of its inhabitants. We achieved a free, more just society with real opportunities for all ... Nicaragüita, how proud we were of our Revolution!*



*One of many protests throughout Nicaragua in mid-April against social security cutbacks*

**PeaceWorks, 1125 Woolley Ave., Union, NJ 07083  
917-301-6967, [peaceworks.org](http://peaceworks.org)**

*But at some point our leaders and their circle of corrupt people forgot their principles, their promises, their ideals, their commitment to the people and gradually transformed themselves into tyrants...into everything they once despised.*

*Today, the people of Nicaragua are demonstrating massively, not only the students but poor people and people in the business sectors. We express not only dissatisfaction with the reforms to social security programs, but outrage over arrogance, corruption, the politics of the strongman and the denial of media information.*

It is now more critical than ever to stand in solidarity with our partners as they head into an time of uncertainty. In spite of the ugly tactics of old school dictatorship revealing itself to the world, we remain hopeful.

We are proud that the youth of Nicaragua have taken up the work of defending the rights of people to live in dignity. We are proud to support the work of our partners who are protecting human rights and tackling Nicaragua's toughest problems. We are proud that our community has worked together for more than 25 years and that our work continues to grow.

Here are concrete ways you can stand with the people of Nicaragua:

\*Donate items and help us pack for our 73rd humanitarian aid shipment to Nicaragua on Saturday May 12th. Flyer included.

\*Join us on June 9th for a dinner forum with Nicaragua expert (and long-time resident of Nicaragua) Aynn Setright.

\*Come to our annual Solidarity Roast on Saturday July 14th.

\*Make a financial contribution to our partners who work to stop domestic violence, provide care and services for street kids, fight the negative effects of climate change on rural farmers and protect the country's natural environment.

We are grateful for your support and energy -- through the years and into uncertainty of the next few weeks and months ahead. We'll continue to stand with you as well, providing opportunities to learn about Nicaragua and our own country's role in the developing world. We're proud to do this work together, *people to people, pueblo a pueblo.*

En paz,  
Denis, Diane, John, Micha, Maggie, Susan, Marilyn and Guy  
The PeaceWorks Board

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I'd like to contribute to the general PeaceWorks Fund for material aid shipments, etc. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to contribute to the FEDICAMP scholarship fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please add me to the PeaceWorks email list for meeting reminders and events announcements.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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# UNDER PRESSURE

## EXTERNAL FORCES, INTERNAL UNREST AND THE QUEST FOR PEACE: A CONVERSATION WITH AYNN SETRIGHT

On April 18th, 2018 Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, under pressure from the IMF, announced changes to Nicaragua's social security system which proposed to raise worker contributions while cutting benefits. Popular response to the change was immediate: university students occupied campuses and lead demonstrations. The government responded with force, shutting down television stations and killing over 30 people.

What exactly happened in Nicaragua? Why did it happen? Can the country return to what was more than 25 years of uninterrupted peace and stability? Join PeaceWorks on June 9th as we examine these questions with expert (and long-time Nicaragua resident) Aynn Setright.

**Saturday June 9th, 2018**

**Dinner at 6:30. Program at 7:30.**

**Summit-Chatham Friends Meeting,  
158 Southern Blvd., Chatham, NJ.**

**\$10 adults. Kids free.**



In the early 1980's Aynn Setright went to Nicaragua as a volunteer for Witness for Peace. By 1985 she was driving an ambulance in Northern Nicaragua where a U.S.-sponsored war was responsible for more than 40,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands wounded. Aynn remained in Nicaragua to support refugees in 16 resettlement communities. She is now the Academic Dean for Latin American and the Caribbean for the Center for International Studies.



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**SOME OF THE THINGS REQUESTED IN NICARAGUA**



**RECENTLY UPGRADED?**



**A CONNECTION TO USED MEDICAL EQUIPMENT?**



**WHERE'S WALDO?**



**KIDS MOVED OUT?**



**PEACEWORKS 73RD HUMANITARIAN AID SHIPMENT TO NICARAGUA**  
**Saturday May 12th, 2017, 10am-4pm**  
United Presbyterian Church. 525 East Front Street  
Plainfield, NJ 07060

**Contact: Austin Haerberle, [cinemaus@gmail.com](mailto:cinemaus@gmail.com)**

**Pre-Shipment**  
**Workdays & Drop-off**  
Saturday March 24th  
Saturday April 28th  
10am-2pm  
Shrine of St. Joseph  
1050 Long Hill Rd, Stirling, NJ



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# MIGRATION, CLIMATE & CHANGE

AN INTERVIEW WITH FEDICAMP'S  
MIGUEL MARÍN

*FEDICAMP youth promoters in  
El Apante, Nicaragua*

If you were up early on Monday April 30th, you might have caught the live reporting from the Mexico-US border. In the darkness of the early morning hours, just behind the journalists, was a patchwork of coats and blankets -- a makeshift camp of Central American migrants.

The migrants trying to enter the U.S. are mostly young, and have many reasons for fleeing their countries -- extreme poverty, gang violence, discrimination. But in recent years, there is another big factor driving the migration of young people in the region: climate change.

"Climate change becomes a social problem when a young person sees that his plot does not produce and yields are low. So the first option they have is to migrate," said Miguel Marín, the director of FEDICAMP, the Federation for the Development of Rural Farmers of Nicaragua. It is part of FEDICAMP's mission to help small farmers find ways to mitigate the effects of climate change and learn to farm successfully, even with unpredictable weather patterns.

PeaceWorks has been working with FEDICAMP for more than a decade, and spoke to Marín in early April.

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He said that there are statistics that show that more than half of the Nicaraguans leaving his country are young women.

"The effect of climate change also becomes a social problem at the community level, so you have to take care of that part. That's why FEDICAMP has been developing a process with young women as well as men, to also see the importance of taking an agro-ecological approach to working the land," Marín said.

With support from PeaceWorks and other international organizations, FEDICAMP has been training young people to be local agricultural "promoters," to learn and pass on techniques in water management, soil enrichment and crop diversification in order to sustainably grow food and adapt to drought and other climate change effects. FEDICAMP has also trained young people to start small businesses, like bee honey production.

For the past three years FEDICAMP has also trained local youth and community members to measure and log rainfall. Working in 16 communities in Northern Nicaragua, the data is shared with a network of organizations monitoring rainfall throughout Central America.

"What is so different about this project is that the young men and women promoters who are managing the records and doing the analysis are not from a government statistics institution," Marín said. "Because climate monitoring is done in the community, it is an important decision making tool for families."

Documenting changes through hard data, FEDICAMP has been able to work with youth promoters and community members to improve water management and diversify crops. Involving the community in a holistic way, Marín says that FEDICAMP is changing the way people think.

"One thing we should never forget is that FEDICAMP works with the young men and women promoters through an entire process to change the way people think about farming. The ideological struggle is the key. If we can have a 'click' in a new way of thinking, we have achieved great things because everything else is complementary. That is the most difficult thing to achieve and must work in parallel with the projects we undertake."

A big part of changing the way people think about farming in rural communities is working through the educational system. FEDICAMP trains primary and secondary school teachers in their agro-ecological approach to farming. But Marín says that there is a particular challenge of getting high school graduates to study at the university level.



*Migrants from the "caravan" in Tijuana on April 29th.*

"There are many young people who are studying in high school, ready to enter the university -- even many young people who participate in the FEDICAMP trainings -- but resources are always quite limited. That makes it hard for them to start university. So, when they get to their fifth year of high school what they do is stay and work in the community or immigrate in search of better opportunities."

PeaceWorks is teaming up with FEDICAMP in a pilot project to provide scholarships for youth promoters to study at the national universities.

"These are young people from Cusmapa (in Northern Nicaragua) who are already volunteering at the local level with their association -- young people who are just naturally attracted to volunteering in their communities. Giving them access to financial support to study at the university is a way to reward and encourage their volunteerism.... encouraging them to also then contribute to their communities when they come home. "

So far, PeaceWorks has raised nearly \$4,000 to support three students for the 2018-19 school year. We are proud to support FEDICAMP, whose work is creating new opportunities for young people to learn, grow and build strong, healthy communities for generations to come.



*FEDICAMP youth promoter showing a variety of "agri-ecological" projects that they're involved with in El Apante, Nicaragua*