

# PARTIDARIA NICA

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In May 2018, I returned home to Nicaragua from college. On the drive home from the airport, we drove past paving stone barricades and were stopped twice by paramilitaries questioning our whereabouts. Weeks earlier, the Nicaraguan administration began to violently repress protests in opposition to years of unconstitutional governance. Hundreds were hurt or killed.

The following day, I joined thousands at a peaceful march in solidarity with mothers who had lost their sons to the Sandinista regime. As we advanced, police forces waited with firearms at an intersection, at which point I ran along with the crowds in the opposite direction. That day is now known as the Mother's Day Massacre.

Weeks later, more violence erupted. With a curfew at 5 pm, I tried to fall asleep to the sound of gunshot, knowing that students barricading at a nearby university campus were under attack. The next morning, I volunteered to clean up the church adjacent to the university campus where students found refuge from the police shooting. As we picked up glass and bullets from the floor, government soldiers patrolled us from outside the church window.

Growing up in a country plagued by poverty and instability is ample call to a career in pursuit of justice. My work in Nicaragua initially focused on prioritizing global sustainable advancement. But seeing my government break up peaceful protests with bullets just so a familial dictatorship could remain in power indefinitely cemented my conviction to uphold the rule of law. As I saw students, political advocates, professionals, and investors flee my country, I also saw the flight of progress, opportunity, and innovation. Experiencing the fall of democracy and thus progress cemented my desire for a career in a space with the resources, structure, and expertise to harness sustainable development.

My willingness to get down into the muck of life and apply my experiences to conversations of analysis and action is the diversity that I bring to the legal profession. Experiencing the repression of civil society has widened my perspective, deepened my questioning, and thus the scrutiny with which I seek answers to critical matters.

As I navigate my first year at Berkeley, my eyes remain on the presidential candidates and other political heroes unjustly imprisoned in Nicaragua, on the demise of civic organizations, on the real impacts of economic and social instabilities experienced by my friends and family, and on my duty owed to my country. Given the persecution and repression in Nicaragua, I can best fulfill that duty from the outside by representing it as the best Nica lawyer I can be; by entering the legal field with the determined work ethic and enthusiasm of a leader and advocate, and a personal commitment to creating opportunities for those who lack one.

Today, I share Nicaragua's story and find community at Berkeley Law with all those who pride themselves on representing and advancing their communities in the legal field.