



April 23, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Since the evening of Thursday, the 19th, our country has suffered from violence.

The President authorized some reforms to the Social Security law, without consulting any of the sectors, that affected the retired people and increasing the amount that is paid by the employers and employees. This generated some protests, especially from the University students and the Police reacted in an outrageous manner, clashing with the protesters.

These protests led to people being killed—students, one policeman, one journalist, innocent bystanders, other protesters. We still don't know how many have died, how many are wounded, detained, hurt. After three days of protests, President Ortega appeared on national TV, surrounded by members of the National Army, the National Police and Vice-President Murillo, his wife. He said that a dialogue would start between the private sector, the government and representatives from the unions. He didn't once apologized for the undue force from the Police, neither he offered a word of sympathy to the families of those killed. That led to more protests and then, riots exploded on several locations of the capital city and in some of the municipal seats. Government offices were damaged, markets, supermarkets and other stores were pillaged.

President Ortega again spoke yesterday on national TV, this time surrounded by the owners of the Free Zone factories, with a much conciliatory tone saying that everybody has the right to protest, speaking against violence and reiterating that the dialogue will start—without any conditions—with the mediation of Cardinal Brenes, from the Catholic Church. However, during the evening the Police again fired against the students who are inside of the Polytechnical University (UPOLI). Some say that students were killed and many wounded.

Today, the Private Enterprise owners (COSEP) are calling for a march at 3 pm. We hope that it is pacific. News are very confusing. We don't know the exact truth and maybe never will. We're glad to report that all our staff and communities are safe. We're still hoping to receiving groups and doing our work. We ask for your prayers in this time of grief, uncertainty and disbelief.

Sincerely,

Damaris Albuquerque E.  
Executive Director