

HONDURAS Y AYOTZINAPA VIVE

by Gordis



*Soad Nicole
Ham Bustillos*

VIOLENCE FROM THE STATE TOWARDS CITIZENS HAS LONG BEEN USED AS A WAY TO CONTROL AND ELIMINATE DISSIDENCE.

It dates back way before the recent massacre of the 43 Normalista students of Ayotzinapa in the state of Guerrero, MX. We know about this despite the media's lack of mention of the thousands of disappearances in Mexico and beyond. For many Latino Americanos, we witness that—as opposition to authoritarian government intensifies—state actions and violence become more brutal and lethal. The San Antonio community remembered the realities of opposing the government when it hosted one of the survivors of the Ayotzinapa attack, recently. While the media and public focus on the Caravana 43—a caravan of parents, students, and relatives of the 43 disappeared students—more students, parents, journalists, and organizers around the world continue to disappear or are currently being murdered.

Shortly after the Caravana 43 left the state of Texas, four students in Honduras suffered at the hands of state violence with the youngest victim being a mere 13 years old. Remember these names because the media has already forgotten about them:

#SOADNICOLEHAMBUSTILLOS
#DARWINJOSUEMARTINEZHERNANDEZ
#ELVINANTONIOGARCIALOPEZ
#DIANAYARELIMONTOYA

In Honduras, like many other countries, anyone who opposes the ruling class or institution is punished economically, mentally, physically, and ultimately, with their lives. Four innocent adolescents were killed when only a month before, they had gathered to protest the unjust conditions of being a student in Honduras where the state would rather send in police than provide

them with basic necessities like desks and chairs. The police and, oftentimes, mercenaries disguised as cartels or gang members, do not discriminate. It doesn't matter if you are a political party leader, a lawyer, a student, a child, a journalist, a mother or father, young, old, gay, straight, transgendered or lesbian. Many in Honduras still remember Soad's ghastly screams "¡Put a Hey... Put a! ¡Ni Sillas Tenemos Hombre, Compren Sillas!" [Fuck, hey, we don't even have chairs, man! Buy us chairs!] as she pushed herself against the iron railings screaming at the SWAT officers. Soad, Darwin, Elvin, and Diana had all participated in demonstrations as the student movement in Honduras picked up steam, but the more pressure the government felt, the stronger the need to rid themselves of their problems. On March 25th, authorities found 13-years-old Soad's dead body in a sack near the bus terminal with clear signs of torture and strangulation. The day before Darwin, Elvin, and Diana had gathered near their High School as an automobile nearby began firing bullets as the students attempted to run away. Darwin and Elvin died immediately with Diana managing to make it to a nearby hospital, passing away shortly after.

For Ayotzinapa, the attacks date back to September 26, 2014 when 43 students from the teachers' school in Ayotzinapa disappeared. Up to this date, the government of Mexico has not been able to adequately explain the true whereabouts of the students despite countless attempts to appease the parents and relatives. Even with the support of Mexican and International organizations, the government continues to provide inadequate explanations. These government officials [including Vicente Fox, an ex-president of Mexico] urge the Ayotzinapa 43 parents and relatives to drop this issue and move on—as if losing a child or a brother does not constitute a significant loss.

Many of us refuse to forget. These students risked their lives in opposition to the cruel injustices and lack of resources for the students and people of Honduras and Mexico. The students of Ayotzinapa demonstrated for an increase in funds for their rural school that caters primarily to indigenous youth. At an historic demonstration in Tegucigalpa, Honduras the students protested against an educational reform forcing students to attend courses for an hour instead of the 45 minute increments already established. The students felt these reforms would force them to remain on campus until late causing many who rely on public transportation to face the dangers of kidnappings, robberies, or murders. Honduras is one of the countries with the highest murder rates in the world.

Political repression towards students with recent confrontations between state police and the discriminating nature of media coverage echoes that of other parts of Mexico and countries such as Panama. Students in Latin America face threats to their lives as they pack the streets protesting while students in the U.S. can pack legislative halls to protect House Bill 1403 or to demand the resignation of Alamo Colleges Chancellor Bruce Leslie without clear threats to their bodies or beings—what a privilege, indeed.

Just as the 43 Normalista students squared off against the government calling for better conditions, Soad, Darwin, Elvin, and Diana, too, called for accountability from the Department of Education and the government of Honduras. Unlike the students of Ayotzinapa, the bodies of the students of Honduras have been laid to rest, but their struggle will not be in vain. Just as the disappeared bodies of Ayotzinapa symbolize seeds of hope for the continued struggle of student movements, so do the lives of Soad, Darwin, Elvin, and Diana. ♦