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SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

MY VIEW

Become educated about happenings in Nicaragua

- By Aurora Martinez
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My name is Aurora Martinez. I'm 17 years old. I'm from Nicaragua and I'm studying at the Armand Hammer United World College of the American West in Montezuma, N.M.

The government of President Daniel Ortega announced reforms to my country's social security laws that will increase what pensioners pay into the system and reduce what they get back. The protests started on April 18. People started peacefully. But in a country where criticism of the government is not allowed, the protesters have been attacked by the national police and youth mobs that the government controls.

Destruction, aggression, looting and deaths were continuing when I wrote this. Also, several media channels that reported the attacks were abruptly removed from the air, international journalists have claimed their equipment has been confiscated, and journalists in the street are being harassed. One journalist, Angel Gahona, was reportedly killed while he was conducting a news segment on Facebook Live.

The government has reported nine fatalities; other sources put the number at 25, and there is fear that the government is intentionally misstating the deaths and downplaying the violence.

President Ortega calls for dialogue, but without taking his mobs and police off the street. The president has announced the withdrawal of the pension reform, but the fight is no longer for social security but for the dead, the injured, the destruction and against censorship.

It seems that our leaders are more interested in maintaining power than in the security of the country and the well-being of its people.

We want free elections. We don't want a war when we still have memories of war.

Being a student here in New Mexico, among the amazing people from Las Vegas, Montezuma and around the world, I see that peace is possible. I know that understanding is within our reach. But understanding comes from being well-informed and being concerned for others. I ask that my fellow residents of New Mexico learn as much as they can about what is happening in Nicaragua and find ways to show their concern for others both here and in Central America.

Aurora Martinez is from Estelí, Nicaragua, and studies at United World College-USA in Montezuma, N.M.