

A documentary film by  
DANIEL RODRÍGUEZ MOYA

[www.nicaraguapatrialibreparavivir.com](http://www.nicaraguapatrialibreparavivir.com)

# Dossier

## NICARAGUA FREE HOMELAND TO LIVE

The insurrection of the grandchildren of the sandinista revolution





## Index

Synopsis.....	3
Context: The insurrection april 2018.....	4
Treatment.....	5
Some of the main characters.....	6
The author.....	10
Technical data.....	11





## Synopsis

August 2018. Four months have passed since an unprecedented popular insurrection in Nicaragua, the biggest since 1979, has put the de facto dictatorship of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo in check. The dead are counted by the hundreds, as are the disappeared and the political prisoners. Police forces and paramilitaries have unleashed a house-to-house searches to hunt down and imprison the main leaders of the revolts as well as peasants, journalists, environmentalists and former Sandinista guerrilla fighters.

In this context of terror, a Spanish journalist and university doctor specializing in the Sandinista Revolution, connects with the resistance movement against the Ortega regime to learn first-hand the nature of these protests that go well beyond a mere revolt. With a direct style and narrative range that goes from the purely literary to the strictly journalistic, we will hear invaluable witness accounts of the protagonists that shortly after these interviews had to go into exile or were imprisoned by the Ortega regime.

Throughout the film we will see the role played by the Catholic Church, the feminists, the LGTB collective, the esoteric nature of the Ortega regime, the plight of the poorest such as the peasants, the prominence of the students, who only months before were accused of lacking social and political sensibilities or the ability to construct a new leadership, and who are under permanent threat of being arrested by the repressive forces of the regime. These witness accounts enables the viewer to understand the many faces of a popular insurrection that has opted for the peaceful route and that has transformed the old slogan of the Sandinista revolution "Free country or death" into the more hopeful "Free homeland to live".



A person wearing a balaclava and tactical gear is running through a field of tall, patterned grass. The person is holding a rifle and is in motion, with their body angled towards the right. The background is a dense field of tall grass with a repeating pattern of small, dark, diamond-shaped shapes. The overall tone is blue and somewhat somber.

# Context

## The insurrection of april 2018

On April 18, 2018 a peaceful demonstration in Nicaragua, demanding that the government reverse its pension policies, flares and turns into an unprecedented social revolt similar to that of 1979, when the Sandinista National Liberation Front overthrew the Somoza dictatorship.

Almost forty years have passed since the triumph of the revolution. During this time the Berlin wall has collapsed, the Soviet Union has disintegrated, international terrorism is on the rise and drug trafficking and violence are wracking many Latin American countries

In 2007 the Sandinistas returned to power in Nicaragua after 17 years of neoliberal governments. But the Sandinistas are no longer the same. How did the liberators become the oppressors? This film delves into the heart of the "April Insurrection" through the voices of those who forty years ago led the revolution and those who today defy repression in the streets, the grandchildren of the revolution and, above all, of the children and grandchildren of that revolution that now repudiate commander Daniel Ortega, whom they consider a new dictator who has gone beyond the excesses of the Somoza dynasty.

Since the outbreak of the first pro-

tests in April 2018, more than 500 people --according to trustworthy international organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International or Human Right Watch-- have been killed in Nicaragua by the police and government sponsored paramilitary forces. There are also more than two thousand wounded, hundreds of political prisoners, including some of the most prominent journalists in the country, and tens of thousands of refugees who have had to flee for their lives for the mere fact of having participated in protests against the government.





## Treatment

The thematic treatment revolves around the personal testimonies of the main protagonists of this popular insurrection. Peasant, student, ecclesiastical and civil society leaders weave a story that is intertwined with the vision of some of the protagonists of the 1979 revolution to explain why Nicaragua has risen again against a new dictatorship.

The documentary establishes some historical parallels between these two struggles, highlighting the important similarities between both historical events but also pointing out the important differences, especially the determination of this new insurrection not to go down the well-known route of the armed struggle and the staunch commitment to the peaceful route and the civic struggle.

Many of the testimonies were given at a time when Nicaragua was under a de-facto curfew, with paramilitary and police forces searching houses looking for the main leaders of the insurrection. Many interviews took place in safe houses under siege, others were filmed in countries such as Costa Rica or Spain where the protagonists have had to seek exile, but where they continue to be active against the Ortega-Murillo government.

Every-day stories of the repression in Nicaragua are also documented, such as that of the thousands of wounded who are banned from medical care in public hospitals and are cared for in secret by doctors who risk their professional careers and their freedom. The film also focuses on the dramatic situation of the more than 50,000 exiles who have had to flee to Costa Rica and have stressed the capacity of government to receive them and now have to live in crowded makeshift shelters.





Sergio Ramírez Mercado



Ernesto Cardenal

## Some of the main characters



Francisca "Chica" Ramírez



Lester Alemán





### ERNESTO CARDENAL

Poet and Catholic priest, he was suspended by Pope John Paul II after he joined the Ministry of Culture in the revolutionary government of the FSLN in 1979. Rehabilitated by Pope Francis, he is one of the leading figures in Liberation Theology. He left the FSLN after splitting from Ortega and today, at 94, lucid and true to his principles, he is one of the most critical voices against Daniel Ortega and his wife Rosario Murillo.

### FRANCISCA 'CHICA' RAMÍREZ

The role of Mrs. "Chica" Ramírez, as she is known, has been essential to keep the protests against the Ortega regime alive. She started a 'campesino' movement five years ago, when Ortega signed a law that allowed a Chinese businessman to build an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua that would not only destroy the environment but also take away the land of thousands of farmers. At the time of this interview she was in a safe house and went into exile shortly afterwards.

### LESTER ALEMÁN

Student leader during the initial protests against the Ortega government. Has a natural charisma and with only 20 years of age he has become one of the most respected figures of the riots after he faced Daniel Ortega at the beginning of the negotiations. His images have gone around the world. The police and paramilitary forces have put a price on his head and is a wanted man. Shortly after the interview in Nicaragua he had to go into exile.

### SOFÍA MONTENEGRO

Prominent journalist and sociologist, she is undoubtedly one of the main voices of feminism to confront the Ortega regime. Montenegro was a prominent Sandinista militant during the eighties and worked in the official FSLN newspaper Barricada. In recent years she stands out as a feminist militant who opposes the regime, especially in matters such as abortion, which was outlawed by Ortega when he returned to power in 2006.

### MONSEÑOR SILVIO BÁEZ

The Auxiliary Bishop of Managua, has been the most critical and belligerent voice against the Ortega government, which has earned him threats and even attacks. Standing in stark opposition to the late Monsignor Obando y Bravo, who was very condescending to the Ortega regime, his homilies are darts against the dictatorship. Months after the interview, he was removed from his post by Pope Francis and transferred to Rome to the astonishment and indignation of many Nicaraguans.

### SERGIO RAMÍREZ MERCADO

Before and after the triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution of July 19, 1979, he was part of the Junta of National Reconstruction. From 1984 to 1990 he was Daniel Ortega's Vice President. However, due to irreconcilable differences, he left the FSLN party in 1995 and founded the Sandinista Renewal Movement. Shortly after he left politics and has dedicated himself to writing. He was recently awarded the 2017 Cervantes Literary Prize.





Sofía Montenegro



Mónica López Baltodano

## Some of the main characters



Monseñor Silvio Báez



Lucía Pineda y Luis Mora





### **MÓNICA LÓPEZ BALTODANO**

One of the most charismatic young leaders of the protests against the Ortega regime, she is the daughter of the legendary Sandinista Commander Mónica Baltodano, she has cut her teeth in the fight against Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo during the protests against the interoceanic canal as well as in the April 2018 revolt. She is a lawyer and a large part of her legal work has been in the defense of defense of farmers against state abuses and forced expropriation of land because of the canal project.

### **MIGUEL MORA**

Together with the journalist Lucía Pineda, they are the most representative journalists of the 100% Noticias news Channel, which from the beginning of the protests of April 2018 until they were forced off the air in December 2018, reported on the most relevant events without bowing to the government dictates. Miguel Mora and Lucía Pineda were arrested after paramilitary forces stormed their offices in Managua. Both describe the systematic attack on the media in this documentary.

### **CARLOS MEJÍA GODOY**

Nicaraguan singer-songwriter, author of the most emblematic revolutionary songs and hymns, he also distanced himself from the official Sandinismo after Ortega usurped power and he has maintained a very public confrontations with the presidential couple. He continues his militancy against the dictatorship from his exile in Costa Rica.

### **ERIK NICOYA**

If the Sandinista revolution had its own soundtrack with the voices of Carlos and Luis Enrique Mejía Godoy, the April insurrection also has its own music represented mainly by Erik Nicoya. Erik's rap transmits the messages with songs such as Lead. Shortly after the interview in Nicaragua, he had to go into exile.

### **GIOCONDA BELLÍ**

Novelist and poet, she is probably the best-known Nicaraguan writer abroad. From a very young age she participated in the revo-

lutionary movement that overthrew Anastasio Somoza in 1979. She held important positions in the Sandinista government during the 80's, but since 1993 she has broken with the official FSLN.

### **DOCTOR ALEJANDRO LAGOS**

One of the cruelest orders the government issued during the protests is that the hospitals closed their doors to people wounded by firearms. This order caused numerous deaths of people who could have been saved with medical attention. Dr. Alejandro Lagos, risks his life every day by going clandestinely to safe houses to treat the injured and save lives.

### **YADER VÁSQUEZ**

The father of Gerald Vásquez, a young man who was shot in the head while protesting at the UNAN Managua, on July 14, 2018. After the crime, the family began to receive threats from Sandinista paramilitaries and militants, which forced Yader to leave the country and go into exile in Costa Rica, where the interview for this documentary took place.





# The author

**Daniel Rodríguez Moya**

Spanish writer and journalist specializing in Nicaraguan history of the twentieth century. His doctoral thesis, with which he obtained the qualification of Outstanding Cum laude, is dedicated to the cultural and educational implications of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua.

As a filmmaker, he is the author of works such as the documentary *I like poems and I like life*, about poetry workshops in Nicaragua in a hospital for children with cancer, with which he was a finalist at the Al Jazeera International Documentary Film Festival of 2015. He is also the author of the documentary *Brigadistas* (2016), about the Spanish volunteers who took part in the literacy campaign in Nicaragua in 1980.

He was chosen by about 100 universities (Harvard, Oxford, Princeton, Columbia, La Sorbonne ...) as one of the most relevant authors of his generation for the volume *The open canon: latest poetry in Spanish*. His literary work has been published in several countries and translated into many languages.





## Technical data

**Duration:**

113 minutes.

**Format:**

All formats (Full HD)

**Language**

Spanish.

**Subtitles:**

English, french, german and italian.

**Trailer:**

<https://vimeo.com/371238130>

**Official website**

[www.nicaraguapatrialibreparavivir.com](http://www.nicaraguapatrialibreparavivir.com)

**Contact**

[info@nicaraguapatrialibreparavivir.com](mailto:info@nicaraguapatrialibreparavivir.com)

 +34 617237065