

Opinion

# Guatemala Adrift

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In my beautiful country (but not because its society) everything happens. The horror, the panic, the incredible and inadmissible are part of everyday life. A country in decline. A country that with each passing day is sinking more and more. A society that does not try to rise up out of mediocrity. A college student population whose only aim is to ensure their own benefit disassociating itself from the collective. Amorphous masses pretending to be politically consistent but end up kneeling down offering up their vote to a lackey, rehearsing their prayers for Holly Week.

As a result of indifference, religious fanaticism and chauvinism. Of ignorance and apathy, and the relaxation that while I'm fine, to hell with the rest. Guatemala is adrift because the laziness of not using its own judgment, of reasoning, of avoiding the sunlight. Of Always seeking the shade and the best seat. Of expecting to be fed right up in the mouth. Of turning a blind eye and partaking of corruption in small and large scale. Actively or concealing it with our silence.

Thanks to our negligence exists these flocks of congressmen who turn the laws into toilet paper. Those representatives who as an image of a patriarchal, racist and misogynist system exclude women and indigenous people from electoral reforms. Those who do the best parody out of our rights, worthy of mediocre Huelga de Dolores from the University of San Carlos. Those students good for the practice of hazing rituals, but unable to make use of analytical thinking a sharp weapon, which should shake up from the torpor those who dare to boast about his Alma Mater.

Where is the political consistency of the Sancarlista student? Where is the reflex arc which is responsible for converting thought into action? What impact does this produce within society? When the Sancarlista student with courage will remove the hood from his face and step up and raise his voice for those abused by the system? Where is the deed of those private universities students who proudly carried posters in the days of demonstrations against corruption? With pomposity they would shout before the television cameras that they had messed with the wrong generation. Others went over the board shouting out that they were the generation of change. Where is the change, at least the evidence?

In a country as small as Guatemala you experience the greatest evils: bombs on buses, dismembered bodies thrown into the street in plastics bags, girls who give birth before age 14; as a result of rape or forced marriages to men triple their age. Femicides, wholesale killings. Children dying of starvation. Droughts and fictional tales of miraculous waters that remove the evil spirits of the contaminated lakes. In that country geographically so small, bus drivers get killed as a way to keep the population terrorized.

An educational system in which there is not investment because no government is interested in the comprehensive development of those children abandoned to their fate. A president who think of himself as a cerebral man and use chauvinism as his best weapon to doze off that hypocritical society of double standards, which is in favor of the death penalty, but it is against the right to abortion. Wherever we turn to look, Guatemala is breaking down. And as a society we are the only ones to blame for allowing ourselves to be disrespected, because of us being disrespectful toward our elders and the newborn, we are disrespecting ourselves. For being lazy, conformist, opportunistic, apathetic.

It is now, at this point in time when the plazas in the country should be booming with mass demonstrations, for being disrespected by the President and the congressmen. Because the institutionalized violence. For raped girls, for femicides, for the pilots killed, for the dismembered bodies,

for the scant (or lack of) investment in education and health. Because the constant ecocide. For the oppression of human rights defenders. Reasons to take to the streets and make plazas to rumble exist and are endless. We need not blame any US interference in the country because those who voted for Jimmy Morales (and the oligarchy) they endorsed it. For those who voted for the continuation of the neoliberal system they signed it upon receipt. For those who refused to go for an Integral National Constituent Assembly and stop recent elections they also have responsibility. Will we continue feeding a failed state?

As a result of that vote and that indifference now comes the time to take responsibility for it. Guatemala is a society in constant decline. Is there perhaps some dignity remaining within us?

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Translated by **Marvin Najarro**.