



Stop battered women at the wall?

It has been decades since I thought about Choloma, Honduras. But several weeks ago, I spotted a large picture in the New York Times of a woman in a muddy Choloma street, with a horrifying quote: "Someone is always trying to kill you." The opinion piece detailed the plight of many Honduran women who are being assaulted, tortured and murdered in a lawless country run by vicious thugs and criminals.

The violence is happening throughout the country, but Choloma is seen as the most dangerous town for women. According to the Violence Observatory at the National Autonomous University of Honduras, 41 percent of the women and girls killed in Honduras in 2017 "showed signs of mutilation, disfigurement and cruelty beyond what was needed to kill them."

The individual stories of the women who have been murdered are absolutely shocking, the worst I've ever read. They include Dunia Xiomara Murillo Reyes, 34, who was literally "skinned like a pig" in Choloma by a gang member. Another

woman was stabbed to death in front of her 4-year-old daughter after she complained of domestic violence by her husband, a police officer. Glenis Vanessa Ramirez Hercules was strangled to death in front of her three young sons and had both legs broken by her assailant so he could fit her in a bag of corn to dispose of her as burned trash. The vast majority of attacks and murders are unsolved, and it's rare that anyone is ever held accountable. And unlike other countries where most murdered women are killed by romantic partners and family members, over half of Honduran women are the victims of drug cartels and gangs.

These desperate women are seeking asylum at our southern border, joining caravans with their children despite the attendant risks of the 2,000-mile journey, knowing they may be turned away. These are the women vilified by President Trump who recently called asylum-seekers "Some of the roughest people you've ever seen, people that look like they should be fighting for the

UFC." Trump has ordered foreign aid to be eliminated in the "Northern Triangle" countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, saying, "We were paying them tremendous amounts of money. And we're not paying them anymore. Because they haven't done a thing for us. They set up these caravans."

The article's author, reporter Sonia Nazario, eloquently sums up the situation by pointing out "The United States cannot erect a wall and expect women to resign themselves to stay put in Honduras and be slaughtered." She suggests that instead of cutting foreign aid, the United States could insist that a portion be used to "hold abusers and killers accountable" and for programs in schools to break the cycle of abuse. We should also stop supporting Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernandez, whose brother was just arrested for large-scale drug trafficking and whose election is questioned by the Organization of American States. What we absolutely must not do is close the

border to these women who are literally fleeing for their lives.

When I traveled to Choloma on a college field study in 1976, the violence was not nearly as bad, but the poverty was deep and widespread. Our group studied why residents continually rebuilt their homes—shacks really—in the flood plain, knowing the annual monsoon rains would cause the river to rise and destroy them year after year. The geography students mapped the town's flood zones, documenting the flimsy building materials used to reconstruct the homes while we Spanish students interviewed residents about their lives. The key question at the end of each interview was, "Why do you keep rebuilding your home in a known disaster zone?"

The answer was always the same. "Where else can we go?" □



Nugget EVENT CENTER

**NUGGET EVENT CENTER
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The Nugget Casino Resort is opening the Nugget Event Center, June 15 with Toby Keith performing and we're looking for on-call and part-time ushers, security staff, bartenders, bar backs, ticket scanners and more. If you're looking for great part-time or on-call work where you can hear a top level performer while getting paid, we have a job for you!

Join us from 1 to 6 pm in the second floor Cascade Rooms at the Nugget, Wednesday, May 1 to apply. Bring your resumé and be prepared to interview for one of our exciting positions. Human Resources will also be hiring and interviewing for full time open positions available property-wide at the Nugget.

For information go to nuggetcareers.com or call 888-868-4438 and ask for Human Resources.