

Río Negro Memorial Textile

Weaver Profile

Martina Osorio, 34

As a seven year-old, Martina experienced unimaginable trauma during the Río Negro massacres. She was one of thirteen children in her family before the 1982 massacres. Three died of disease and six were killed between 1981 and 1982. Only four children survived.

On the morning of March 13, 1982, Martina's mother was in Pueblo Viejo buying corn and sugar for the house. Her older brother, Siriaco was collecting wood in the mountains and she was at home with two older sisters, two brothers and her youngest sister of eight months. When the PAC patrols arrived at her house, the soldiers told her older sisters there was a meeting in the village, while the three younger children were told to go to their grandmother's to eat.



Knowing their fate, Martina's oldest sisters showed her where the family hid their most valuable jewelry and documents and left with her eight month-old sister for Pak'oxom. Soon after Siriaco returned with wood and was outside when the PAC soldiers, from a distance mistook him for one of their own and motioned to him to get moving toward the mountain. He quickly took the three children left behind to the school and ran to Pueblo Viejo to find his mother. Martina's father and two siblings had died violently in February at Xococ, so Siriaco was the head of the family.

Martina was taken to the mountains with the other school children and found by her brother that same day. They lived hidden in mountains for two years and were then tricked into moving to a military refugee camp in San Cristóbal, where Martina was forced to run army drills as a child, taught to speak Spanish, salute the flag and sing the national anthem. The family lived there surrounded by soldiers for a year before moving to Pacux on May 10, 1984, Mother's Day. "We suffered so much. We did not eat tortillas or have a change of clothes for two years. We lived under constant watch, because they thought we were revolutionaries. I was eight."

Today, Martina works as 'madre guía' and treasurer of a local NGO called Flor de Naranjo. She visits local communities to give classes on hygiene and education and works directly with mothers to ensure the health of their children. She wove a textile for her father, Lorenzo Osorio, who died on February 6, 1982 in Xococ. He was tortured, nearly drowned and shot in a case of mistaken identity.