Venezuela was once one of the most important countries of Latin America and the world for its oil reserves, great riches and beautiful landscapes. It attracted tourists from all over. There were so many options that you didn’t know whether to go to Peak Bolivar, one of the highest mountains in the world, or to go to Los Roques, an archipelago of islands in the Caribbean where you can go to relax for a while, or to simply go for a hike in the Gran Sabana.

The culture of this country is full of love and liberty that many know or have at least heard of is falling to pieces bit by bit. So called democracy should be called dictatorship; a regime that began 18 years ago has left a black stain on many Venezuelans.

 Hungry families have been forced to wait in lines to buy crumbs, and these crumbs are not enough for them. Supermarkets are empty, and hospitals have great shortages of medicines, doctors and nurses. Experts have already classified the situation as a humanitarian crisis. A lot of innocent children, adults and elderly people die every day; nobody gets saved. The inflation gets worse daily, and the working wage is not sufficient to buy food or to sustain a whole family. VENEZUELA DIES. The light at the end of the tunnel is not visible; everything is darkness and sadness, and the only sounds are the cries for help of those who want a new sunrise.

Since 2014 the protests in Venezuela along with repression on the part of the government have been increasing, and young people go out to the streets every day to peacefully express themselves and to demand their rights with posters and flags. Protesters only want their voices heard. But the government has weapons and fights against the protesters.

Many of the young people return to their houses with their families; other ones lose their lives in the streets, and they become heroes that many Venezuelans will remember. People are hurt by rubber bullets, actual bullets and tear gas. Around 157 adults and young people have died in protests only for asking for justice, freedom and democracy.

As Simon Bolivar once said, “Damn the soldier who points his gun against his own people.”

 There are young people and politicians imprisoned unjustly and tortured only because they think differently. But nobody can find out any information, and why? The government has taken control of the media and other communication platforms.

For the year 2017, statistics establish that around 4 million Venezuelans leave in search of new opportunities for a better future, leaving all behind: their homes, their cars—that is to say, their comfort zones by going away without looking back. Venezuelans are carrying their whole lives in two suitcases, millions of goals and stolen dreams. It was a year when families were separated and countless tears were shed, when we became accustomed to saying good bye or I hope to see you again soon.

The topics of conversation were always about who else would be brave enough to begin a new path in their life.  A lot of professionals with college degrees, the people who were going to be the future of Venezuela, left in search of jobs in other countries where they could only work as waiters and in other jobs considered lesser. Some young people leave in the middle of their courses of study, whether high school or college, leaving classrooms empty and millions of memories.

Currently the means of transportation are not the same. Some of the most fortunate can afford to pay for air travel, but the majority can’t pay for a ticket; the wages are not enough. Most people cross the borders by walking. Tragic stories are told about rafters that hoped to arrive on the coast of Curacao wanted to live free but they lost their lives in the middle of the ocean.

But I’m sure that in each word of this land described in the Venezuelan song masterfully written by Pablo Herrero Ibarz and Jose Luis Armenteros Sanchez lies this profound sentiment: every Venezuelan that immigrates carries the light and scent on their skin and the cuatro in their hearts, the sea foam in their blood and the horizon in their eyes and if one day they wreck and the typhoon breaks the sails, bury their bodies near the sea in Venezuela.