



Luz Emerita Ortiz
23 years old

Luz Emerita Ortiz was born in a small town in the State of Antioquia, northwestern Colombia. When she was only 11 years old, the FARC guerilla group recruited her to be responsible for cooking and servicing the commanders. Several years later, when she was 14 years old, Luz Emerita was sent on a routine trip to get water from a nearby river. On her way to the river, she tripped and fell over a landmine, due to the impact she lost her right leg below the knee.

Stationed in one of the most remote parts of Colombia's jungle, Luz Emerita's medical condition only worsened. She had no medical help in the camp, and due to her disability, she was declared low priority to the guerrillas. Thankfully, however, Luz Emerita was brave enough – with the help of another child soldier – to flee the guerrillas. And with luck, they both escaped successfully and she was under government protection until she turned 18 years old.

With the support of generous donors, United for Colombia has taken care of Luz Emerita's orthopedic rehabilitation and medical costs since the time of her accident. In October 2008 and through her growing years, Luz Emerita has received 4 highly-advanced prostheses to help her walk with ease and confidence. This new beginning in life has brought so much happiness to Luz Emerita and as the photos demonstrate, she clearly shines with a buoyant and radiant personality. Even though she has experienced a grave accident at such a young age, today, she is full of smiles and has an optimistic outlook on life.

Luz Emerita just turned 23 and is now living in Medellín, Antioquia. On July of 2014, she graduated from High School. Nowadays, she is studying at a Beauty School and is eager to become a Full Salon Specialist.

