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| via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández President of the Republic of Honduras | via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras |
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October 15, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the murders of poet and LGBTI rights defender **Gloria Carolina Hernández Vásquez** (also known as Génesis Hernández) and **Jorge Alberto Castillo** in Tegucigalpa. Both collaborated with the Association for a Better Life (APUVIMEH), which operates Casa Renacer, a shelter for people with HIV/AIDS and those of the LGBTI community. It runs a youth project and a program for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexual infections

Génesis Hernández was a poet of protest whose poetry dealt with the sexual rights of women, including lesbians and bisexual women, as a way of giving visibility to these issues. She had taken part in many marches for LGBTI rights and recently had to flee the city because of threats against her. At midday on September 18 unknown men in two vans kidnapped Génesis Hernández outside her home in Tegucigalpa, took her to the Comayagüela area of the city, forced her out of the vehicle with her hands tied, made her stand against a wall, verbally abused her about her sexual orientation and subsequently shot her twice in the head.

On September 6, Jorge Alberto Castillo, one of the first people to claim LGBTI rights and a founding member of the Casa Renacer, was stoned to death near his home in the El Manchén barrio of Tegucigalpa.

These killings follow the murders this summer of LGBTI rights defenders Angy Ferreira, Juan Carlos Cruz Andara and Violeta Rivas (cf our letter of September 24). They also represent a pattern of intimidation against members of APUVIMEH, which includes the following:

July 31 - Sandra Zambrano, Director of APUVIMEH, together with staff and volunteers Cristian Daniel Cortes Sagastume, Silvio Gerardo Artola and Carlos Alberto Cardona Varela were detained by police without explanation in Comayagua, held for 24 hours, denied a phone call, access to food or water, reading of their rights or information about the reasons for their detention.

March 3 - Efraín Salomón Silva, an APUVIMEH volunteer, was attacked in Lepaterique in Francisco Morazán Department by unidentified men who verbally abused and used discriminatory language against him. He reported the attack, but, to date, no investigator has been assigned to the case.

Because of our continuing concern for the lives of LGBTI rights defenders we **strongly urge** you to

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killings of Génesis Hernández and Jorge Alberto Castillo, as well as into the arbitrary detention and subsequent harassment of Sandra Zambrano, Cristian Daniel Cortes Sagastume, Silvio Gerardo Artola, Carlos Alberto Cardona Varela, and the attack on Efraín Salomón Silva, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the security of all staff and volunteers at APUVIMEH and all LGBTI rights defenders in Honduras, including implementation of all protection measures granted to APUVIMEH by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
 James Nealon, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037
 Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras and for the Rights of LGBTI Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 9/28/15_Honduras

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: