

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández President of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Oscar Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
--	---

June 23, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are angered and deeply saddened at the murder of LGBTI rights defender **René Martínez**. He had been missing since June 1 when assailants seized him and forced him into a car just as he arrived home from work. Family members immediately alerted police, but it was 48 hours before they found his body on June 3 in another neighborhood in San Pedro Sula. His body bore signs of a brutal murder.

René was a city employee working in anti-violence outreach programs. He was President of Comunidad Gay Sampredrana for Integral Health (CGSSI), a San Pedro Sula-based LGBTI advocacy group. He also directed an outreach center in Chamelecón in Cortés Department through Youth Alliance Honduras, an organization that is part of an anti-violence program.

René Martinez is not the first LGBTI human rights defender to be murdered in Honduras. Between June 2015 and January 2016, six members of Arcoiris were killed, with several more subjected to physical assault, intimidation and threats. Arcoiris is a LGBTI organization that empowers and informs the LGBTI community on issues related to comprehensive healthcare, the defense and promotion of human rights and sexual diversity.

In a March 2016 statement, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) “condemned the killings of human rights defenders of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans persons (LGBT) which had taken place in recent months. The IACHR urged Honduras to adopt specific measures to effectively address the patterns of violence that exist against human rights defenders of LGBT persons.” In April, the European Parliament “expressed its deep concern at the climate of extreme violence against LGBTI people and activists and called for measures to address the situation.” More than 200 LGBTI persons, particularly LGBTI rights defenders, have been killed in Honduras since the June 2009 coup. In 2015, 37 LGBTI people were killed.

We are in complete agreement with their statements, and because we are deeply concerned for the safety of LGBTI human rights defenders, we **strongly urge** that you

- fully investigate the killing of René Martínez, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take all necessary measures to stem the tide of violence against LGBTI human rights defenders
- bring the perpetrators of such violence to justice
- take meaningful action to protect the lives of human rights defenders in Honduras

We sincerely hope that you will bring the full power of your office to bear on the crimes and injustices detailed above.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 525 4004
James Nealon, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037
Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Rapporteur for Honduras and for the Rights of LGBTI Persons ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 6/8/2016_Honduras

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