

via FAX: 011 504 239 3298 Sr. José Maule Zelaya Rosales President of the Republic of Honduras	via FAX: 011 504 221 5667 Lic. Leonidas Rosa Bautista Attorney General of Honduras
via FAX: 011 504 237 9070 Coronel Jorge Alberto Rodas Gamero Minister of Security of Honduras	

February 3, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of a **transgender human rights defender** who was beaten and threatened with death by four police officers in the Palmira district of Tegucigalpa on December 20, 2008. While she was working as a sex worker, four officers in a police car approached her at about 12.40am. They tried to rob her but, when she resisted, they grabbed her by the hair and repeatedly smashed her head against a nearby window, breaking the glass and inflicting numerous cuts to her face and knees. They then said they were arresting her for breaking a window in order to gain forcible entry to private property. They took her to the local police station and then to a local health center to be treated for her wounds. Since she was bleeding, she informed the officers that she was HIV positive. The officers replied, "...people like you should be in a separate place." While on their way, they also told her "if you speak out, we will leave you dead in the countryside." She was taken back to the police station and was released without charge at 11.30am. She has recently filed a formal complaint with the Human Rights section of the Public Prosecutor's Office.

This incident follows the deaths of three transgender women, working in the area of Comayaguela near Palmira, who were killed by unknown individuals in the last three months. **Jazmin Zelaya** was killed on October 30, 2008 and her body was found along a road. Another transgender woman was killed on December 17, 2008. **Cintia Nicole Moreno**, also an activist working for the promotion of the human rights of transgender people, was killed on January 9, 2009 at around 1am. No one has been brought to justice for these killings.

Because of the preceding incidents and the frequent attacks on transgender women, we strongly urge that you

- ensure that immediate, effective and appropriate measures, in strict accordance with her wishes, are taken to guarantee the safety of the human rights worker who was beaten and threatened with death;
- order swift, full and impartial investigations into this and other incidents of harassment, violent attacks and killings of transgender people, make the results of such investigations public and bring those responsible to justice;
- make it clear that violence against transgender people will not be tolerated and that those responsible for these crimes will be brought to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: LGBT organization Red Lésbica Cattrachas ~ via U.S. mail
 Roberto Flores Bermudez, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax
 Hugo Llorens, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax
 Rebecca Valerin, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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