

via fax: 011 505 2266 3102

**Daniel Ortega Saavedra**  
President of the Republic of Nicaragua

via fax: 011 505 2277 1871

**Primera Comisionada Aminta Granera Sacasa**  
Director of the National Police of Nicaragua

December 5, 2009

Dear Sir and Madam:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are gravely concerned for the safety of human rights activist **Leonor Martínez**, who has been repeatedly attacked because of her work with the Coalición de Jóvenes Nicaragüenses, a group which helps young people with alcohol or drug problems. This group belongs to an umbrella organization, the Coordinadora Civil (CC), which is active on many issues, including environmental problems and trade union rights.

On August 8, when Leonor Martínez got off the bus after taking part in a music event at a cathedral in Managua, a man hit her in the eye with a stone. On October 22 she was attacked by three men after a press conference where she had spoken against curbs on fundamental freedoms. The men threatened her with a pistol, beat her face and body, and broke her arm in three places. They threatened that if she went back "with the CC to the activities with the young people" they would "attack or kill" her and her family.

Since then, she has received numerous threatening messages on her cell phone. As she was leaving her house on November 20, Leonor Martínez was approached by the same man who attacked her on August 8 and was present during the October 22 attack. He warned: "Now you know what will happen to you if you go sticking your nose in, we are going to kill you." Leonor Martínez has seen the men involved in these attacks several times and knows they are connected with the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). She has reported the October attack and threatening messages to the police, but they have taken no action.

We therefore **strongly urge** that you:

- take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of Leonor Martínez;
- order a thorough and swift investigation into the attack of October 22 as well as subsequent threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

We are concerned about the climate of intimidation against human rights defenders in Nicaragua, particularly women, and the role of the ruling party, FSLN, in these human rights abuses. (See our December 2008 letters re threats to Patricia Orozco of the Women's Autonomous Movement and Dr. Vilma Nuñez of CENIDH.) We implore the FSLN administration to assure that the rights of human rights defenders are respected and defended, including the right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

cc: Arturo Cruz Sequiera Jr., Nicaraguan Embassy to the US ~ via fax: 202-939-6545  
Harold Rivas Reyes, Nicaraguan General Consul in Washington, DC ~ via fax: 202-939-6574  
Robert Callahan, US Ambassador to Nicaragua ~ via fax: 011-505-266-3861  
Albert Kraimore, Nicaragua Desk at the US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597  
Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: -202-458-3992  
US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email  
US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, 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:**