

Fax: 011 504 2290 5129 Ana Pineda Minister for Justice and Human Rights of Honduras	Fax: 011 504 221 5667 Sr. Luis Alberto Rubi Attorney General of Honduras
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May 16, 2012

Dear Madam and Sir:

We are saddened and outraged at the death of LGBT activist and journalist **Erick Alexander Martinez Ávila**, age 32, a member of the National Front of People's Resistance (FNRP), who was found dead on May 7 in Guasculilein in a sewer on the road between Tegucigalpa and Olancho. He was a spokesperson for the Kukulcan Association, which advocates for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights. He was the founder of the Diversity Movement in Resistance and had recently been proposed as a candidate for legislative representative from Francisco Morazan Department by the Popular Refoundation Force (RPF), which is part of the Libre Party that emerged from the FNRP.

His body, without identification and registered as an unknown in Tegucigalpa's morgue, was identified by his family. Police sources told local media that the cause of death was not determined, but later information from morgue officials revealed strangulation in a heavily beaten body.

On May 15, UNESCO, the UN agency charged with defending freedom of the press and of expression, condemned Erick Alexander Martinez Ávila's murder and called for an investigation. In November 2010, during the United Nations (UN) Universal Periodic Review of Honduras, the government made a commitment to fulfill its obligation to protect journalists, but has done little to ensure that they can carry out their work free from threats and attacks. According to the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR), Ávila's murder brings to 21 the number of journalists killed since the coup d'état in 2009. He is the 15th member of the LGBT community killed this year. More than 70 LBGTQ people have been murdered in Honduras since the coup; many, like Erick Martínez, were leaders in their communities.

In light of these facts, we **strongly urge** you to

- carry out an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the death of Erick Alexander Martinez Ávila, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- fulfill your obligation to allow journalists to carry out their activities without restrictions or fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

Copies: Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
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Benjamin Gedan, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax 202.647.2597
Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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