

via fax: 011 504 2220 1756

Sr. Arturo Corrales
Minister of Security of Honduras

via FAX: 011 504 2235 8379

Ana Pineda
Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Honduras

December 25, 2013

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are outraged that repeated **death threats have forced the Association for a Better Life (APUVIMEH) to stop its human rights advocacy and to close its offices.** APUVIMEH works with the LGBTI community and those affected by HIV/AIDS. It operates a shelter, Casa Renacer, and runs several projects, including a program for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, as well as a gay youth project.

On December 15 at 2:30pm while APUVIMEH was holding its Christmas party in its offices, a young man carrying a firearm under his brown jacket attacked the offices and threatened to kill everyone there if he was not paid 13,000 lempiras. He was asked to leave, did so, but then returned with another man. They forced Sandra Zambrano, APUVIMEH lawyer, to listen to a cellular phone on which a third man's voice told her that if the requested money was not paid the following day, all members of APUVIMEH would be killed. The assailants left the offices; the threats have not materialized. (It is known that threats sometimes come from police officers who are assigned in Tegucigalpa to the Eden Post and Corp 7.)

This attack, which came one day after Sandra Zambrano returned from a human rights forum in Bogotá, is the latest in a recent series of threats facing LGBTI human rights defenders.

August 9: Arely Victoria Gómez, leader of the transgender movement within APUVIMEH, was assaulted (cf our letter of August 26).

October 16: men dressed in military uniforms who raided the house of the APUVIMEH President, José Zambrano, told him that they were looking for someone and they would shoot him if he moved.

October 17: Iván Gerardo Artola, a founding member of APUVIMEH, was forced to hide in a relative's house when he was followed near the organization's offices by men dressed in black.

November 13: following a memorial service for human rights defender Walter Trochez killed in 2009, Frank Ortiz and Oscar Ortiz were followed by unknown men, stripped of their mobile phones and told that it was in retaliation for their protest actions.

Because of the high risks faced by those who work on LGBTI rights and gender identity, we **strongly urge that you:**

- carry out a thorough, impartial and immediate investigation into the attack against the APUVIMEH members, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the security of all members of APUVIMEH.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
 Lisa Kubiske, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via email RanzinoGr@state.gov
 Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202 458.3992
 Kelsey Cambronne, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax 202.647.2597
 Christopher Johnson, Diplomacy Officer for Central America, US State Dept. ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 12/21/13_Hondurad

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