

via fax: 011 504 2553 6314

Sra. Diana Elvir

Regional Prosecutor of Honduras

via fax: 011 504 2220 1711

Sr. Ramón Antonio Sabillón Pineda

Director of the National Police of Honduras

January 21, 2014

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are outraged at the death of **Marco Noé López Castillo**, a transgender sex worker in San Pedro Sula in Cortés Department. On the evening of January 7, on a street in the Barandillas neighborhood of San Pedro Sula where she usually worked, she was forced into a grey vehicle by a group of armed men carrying weapons and wearing bulletproof vests and balaclavas. At about 5:00am her body was found in a plastic bag on the road in the El Playon area of San Pedro Sula. She had been strangled to death with her arms and legs tied behind her back. Several cars had run over her dead body.

This is the ninth murder of sex workers since early December. Early on December 13 several men got out of a minivan in the Medina area of central San Pedro Sula and argued with four sex workers while pointing guns at them. The men killed **Ana María Sánchez Zaldívar** (age 37), **Doris Malene García** (age 30), and **Milagro Rosario Bonilla** (age 52). They kidnapped **Zoila Yamileth Sánchez Zaldívar** (age 30). She was later found dead with firearm wounds in the El Polvorin area.

On December 30, a minivan with at least four passengers opened fire on five sex workers outside a bar in the San Pedro Sula city center where they worked. **Irina Marisela García Maradiaga** (age 23), **Irma Melisa Benítez Lewis** (age 21) and **Sandra Liseth Aldana Perez** died immediately. **Gabriela Alejandra Osorto** (age 21) died a day later, while another woman who was injured survived the attack.

Because of our deep concern about the increasing violence against women in Honduras, especially transgender women and other members of the LGBTI community, we **strongly urge** you to

- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the killings of sex workers and women in San Pedro Sula and Cortés and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all the necessary measures to prevent further attacks and protect those sex workers who may be at risk of similar attacks;
- strengthen and enforce all the mechanisms to prevent hate crimes against LGBTI people and violence against women and girls, in line with international and national legal norms;
- Promote and respect Article 321 of the Honduran Criminal Code, which recognizes and sanctions hate crimes

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

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

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