

via fax: 011 504 2239 3298 Sr. Juan Orlando Hernández President of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 2221 5667 Sr. Óscar Fernando Chinchilla Banegas Attorney General of Honduras
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April 26, 2017

Dear Sirs:

We condemn the killing of **Sherlyn Montoya**, who went missing April 2. On April 4, her body was found near a gas station in the surrounding area of Tegucigalpa where she was last seen alive. Her body showed signs of torture.

Sherlyn was a member of LGBT Rainbow Association, an organization which works for equality and justice for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. She was also a member of Rainbow's Dolls (*Muñecas de Arcoíris*), a group dedicated to promoting dialogue and advocacy for issues concerning transgender women.

This is not the first targeting of LGBTI human rights defenders. In 2015, several LGTBI rights defenders were killed: Juan Carlos Cruz Andara, Angie Ferreira, Violeta Rivas, Gloria Carolina Hernández Vásquez (also known as Génesis Hernández), Jorge Alberto Castillo and Paola Barraza (cf our letters of Sep 24 2015 and Oct 15 2015). In November 2016, two LGBTI rights defenders, Dayanara Castillo and Jlo Córdoba, were victims of attempted murder (cf our letters of Apr 23 2016 and Nov 23 2016).

According to *Muñecas de Arcoíris*, there have been 269 targeted killings of LGBTI people in Honduras since 1994. The precise number is impossible to determine because of the social stigma. Families and public institutions often refrain from acknowledging or informing that these killings were motivated by the sexual orientation or gender identity of the victims. These individuals must be protected.

We strongly condemn these incidents against human rights defenders because they reveal a pattern of retaliatory violence against the peaceful work to defend human rights of LGBTI individuals. In light of such persecution of LGBTI individuals like Sherlyn Montoya and the Honduran government's failure to protect her and other Honduran human rights defenders, we **strongly urge** you to

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the murder of Sherlyn Montoya, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures, in consultation with LGBTI rights defenders or their representatives, to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of all members of LGTB Rainbow Association and other LGBTI organizations in Honduras;
- take decisive action to guarantee, in all circumstances, that human rights defenders are free to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without threat of harm or death.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators

and

Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Jorge Alberto Milla Reyes, Honduran Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 202 966 9751
 James Nealon, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 2236 9037
 Olivia Franken, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for the Rights of LGBTI Person, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline 4/8/2017_Honduras

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