

# IRTF

InterReligious Task Force on Central America

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Licda. María Consuelo Porras Argueta  
Attorney General / Fiscal General de la República  
Ministerio Público  
15 Avenida 15-16 zona 1, Edificio Gerona 8º Nivel  
Ciudad de Guatemala, 01001. Guatemala

July 26, 2022

Dear Attorney General Porras Argueta:

We are deeply saddened and distressed over the assassination of Q'eqchi' transwoman **Nancy Sacul Tut**, age 34, and the death threat against **Ilse Janeth Contreras**, president of the Transwomen Sex Workers Collective of Trébol. According to National Observatory of LGBTQ+ Human Rights, this is the 16<sup>th</sup> assassination of an LGBTQ+ leader in Guatemala in 2022.

On July 2, 2022 at 9:30pm in Guatemala City, Nancy Sacul Tut was shot in the face. A few days prior, Nancy and her companions filed a complaint with the Public Ministry for death threats and violent attacks against her. According to her friends, the complaint was not given credence, continuing a perceived pattern of alleged disinterest and inaction on behalf of the state to defend and prevent violence against transwomen. Ilse Janeth Contreras went into hiding because of threats against her life after she was interviewed by Prensa Comunitaria about Nancy's assassination and the vulnerability of transwomen (especially those who work in the sex industry) to violence and harassment from both civilians and authorities.

Nancy grew up in Chisec, Alta Verapaz Department, before moving to the capital city at age 17. She was rejected by her family and suffered discrimination in her hometown. Proud of her heritage, she continued to wear traditional Indigenous clothing representative of her region. Ilse Janeth Contreras, who knew Nancy through her involvement with the Transwomen Collective, described Nancy as a quiet woman who worked in the sex trade, in addition to selling clothes and vegetables in the market. As of July 5, the day Nancy was buried, authorities had not started an investigation into her assassination.

The Transwomen Collective has been outspoken about abuse, assault, extortion, and physical violence—even killings—of transwomen. Currently, the organization is lobbying for a gender identity law to protect transwomen from discrimination and stigmatization. Transwomen are marginalized from the mainstream economy and often have their identity rights abused within the criminal justice system. Furthermore, they lack access to healthcare, education, housing, and jobs.

Because we are deeply concerned by the lack of investigation into the assassination of Nancy Sacul Tut and the lack of response to threats leading up to her murder and the current threats against Ilse Janeth Contreras and other members of the Transwomen Sex Workers Collective of Trébol, we urge that authorities in Guatemala:

- carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Nancy Sacul Tut and the threats against Ilse Janeth Contreras and other companions in the movement for transwomen's rights, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice, in accordance with international standards
- implement measures to guarantee the safety of Ilse Janeth Contreras and other members of the Transwomen Collective, in strict accordance with their wishes
- guarantee that all human rights defenders, in particular indigenous and sexual minority rights defenders, are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of restrictions or reprisals in Guatemala.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Guillermo Castillo Reyes, Vice-President of Guatemala  
Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ email, US mail  
Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights of Guatemala (PDH) ~ via email  
IACHR: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala and for Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
IACHR: Roberta Clarke, Rapporteur on the Rights of LGBTI Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email and US mail  
OACNUDH: Mika Kanervavuori, Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
US State Department: Guatemala Desk Officers in Washington, DC: Doug Choi, Moises Mendoza ~ via email  
US State Department: William Popp, US Ambassador to Guatemala, in care of human rights officer Sarahann Yeh ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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