

URGENT ACTION



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21 January 2009

UA 16/09 Fear for safety/Death threats

HONDURAS Transgender human rights defender (name known to Amnesty International) (f)

Killed: **Cintia Nicole Moreno (f), transgender human rights defender**
Jazmín Zelaya (f), transgender woman

Police officers are alleged to have beaten up a transgender woman, who is an HIV/AIDS campaigner and sex worker, after she refused to give them her money. They subsequently threatened her with death if she reported the incident. Her life is at risk. Three other transgender women, most recently Cintia Nicole Moreno on 9 January, have been killed in a nearby area in the last three months.

Four police officers in a police car approached the transgender woman, who has asked Amnesty International to withhold her name, at about 12.40am on 20 December 2008 in the Palmira district of the capital, Tegucigalpa. She was working as a sex worker at the time. The police officers tried to rob her but, when she resisted, they grabbed her by the hair and repeatedly smashed her head against a nearby window, breaking the glass. She received numerous cuts to her face and knees.



The officers then said that they were arresting the woman for breaking a window in order to gain forcible entry to private property. The officers took her to the local police station, and then to a local health centre to be treated for her wounds. Since she was bleeding, she informed the officers that she was HIV positive and the officers replied by saying “AIDS bitch, people like you should be in a separate place” (*perra sidoso, gente como Ustedes tiene que estar en un lugar aparte*) While on their way, the officers also told her “if you speak out, we will leave you dead in the countryside” (*si hablas, te dejaremos muerta en el monte*). She was taken back to the police station and was released without charge at around 11.30am. She has recently filed a formal complaint with the Human Rights section of the Public Prosecutor’s Office about this incident.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Transgender women who work as sex workers are frequently attacked by clients or police officers. Three transgender women were killed in the last three months while working in the area of Comayagüela, near Palmira, by unknown individuals. Jazmín Zelaya was killed on 30 October 2008 and her body was found along a road. Another transgender woman was killed on 17 December 2008. Cintia Nicole Moreno, who was also an activist working for the promotion of the human rights of transgender people, was killed on 9 January 2009 at around 1am. No-one has yet been brought to justice for these killings.

Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- expressing concern for the safety of the transgender human rights defender beaten up and threatened with death, allegedly by four police officers, in the Palmira district of Tegucigalpa on 20 December;
- urging the authorities to ensure that immediate, effective and appropriate measures are taken to guarantee her safety in strict accordance with her wishes;
- calling on the Attorney General to order swift, full and impartial investigations into this and other incidents of harassment, violent attacks and killings of transgender people, to make the results of such investigations public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the President and the Minister of Security to make it clear that violence against transgender people will not be tolerated and that those responsible for these crimes will be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Sr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales
Presidente de la República
Casa Presidencial, Boulevard Juan Pablo II
Tegucigalpa
HONDURAS

Fax: 011 504 239 3298

**Salutation: Dear President/
Estimado Sr. Presidente**

Minister of Security

Coronel Jorge Alberto Rodas Gamero
Ministro
Ministerio de Seguridad Pública
Cuartel Casa Mata
Tegucigalpa
HONDURAS

Fax: 011 504 237 9070

**Salutation: Dear Minister/
Estimado Sr. Ministro**

Attorney General

Licdo. Leonidas Rosa Bautista
Fiscal General del Estado
Ministerio Público, Lomas del Guijarro
Tegucigalpa
HONDURAS

Fax: 011 504 221 5667

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
Estimado Sr. Fiscal General**

COPIES TO:

Local LGBT organization

Red Lésbica Cattrachas
Colonia Miramontes, 5a calle, casa No. 2502
Calle Andalucía contiguo a Mercadito Miramontes
Tegucigalpa
HONDURAS

Ambassador Roberto Flores Bermudez
Embassy of Honduras
3007 Tilden St. NW Suite 4M
Washington DC 20008

Fax: 1 202 966 9751

Email: embassy@hondurasemb.org

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 4 March 2009.