



Stop Femicide in Guatemala!

At 9:30 pm on 27 July 2005, in front of several witnesses, four men forced 20-year-old university student Cristina Hernández into a car outside her home. Police said because “many young girls run off with boyfriends,” no search would begin for 24 hours. The next morning Cristina was found dead, shot four times and bitten all over her body. The authorities dismissed reports of Cristina’s disappearance. Nearly one year later, despite witnesses, other critical leads and a potential suspect, they have dismissed her abduction, torture and death. Cristina’s family lives in hiding after receiving threats due to their efforts to press for justice.

Cristina’s case is typical of nearly 2,200 other women and girls killed in Guatemala since 2001. Guatemalan women encounter discrimination and violence in every aspect of life, and even after death, as confirmed by the authorities’ lack of response to the current wave of brutal killings. Amnesty International calls on the Guatemalan Government to take women’s human rights seriously, and to investigate these crimes, prosecute the offenders, and stop the killing!

Amnesty International (AI) is deeply concerned about the continued increase in brutal, sexually violent murders of women and girls in Guatemala. A two-year AI study concluded that the brutality, mutilation and sexual violence in many of these killings amounts to torture, a conclusion also reached by the UN Committee Against Torture in May 2006. AI is also concerned about the alarming lack of investigations and prosecutions of these serious crimes, despite several recent government initiatives to improve police and justice system response. Of the 665 killings of women during 2005, 99% have never gone to court.

We, the undersigned, ask you to:

- Publicly condemn the abduction and murder of women and girls; and call for immediate, effective and genuine investigations and prosecutions of these serious crimes;
- Ensure that the recently created National Commission to Address Femicide and National Forensic Institute have the resources and the authority to ensure thorough investigations of all crimes of violence against women;
- Ensure full political support as well as the necessary resources for the National Board for the Prevention of Violence and Eradication of Interfamily Violence and Violence against Women (CONAPREVI) and the National Plan for the Eradication of Violence against Women (PLANOVI).
- Urge Congress to approve pending legislation to criminalize sexual harassment, and draft law No. 2630, which criminalizes acts of violence against women.

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SEND TO: Presidente de la República de Guatemala, Lic. Oscar Berger Perdomo, Casa Presidencial, 6a Avenida 4-18 zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA.