

# URGENT ACTION



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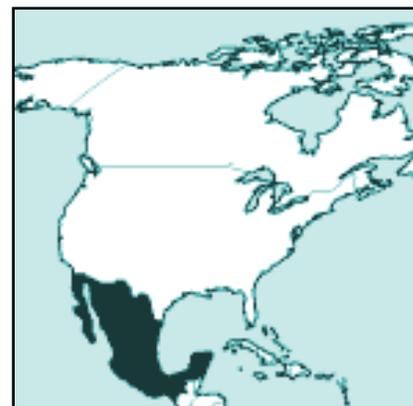
12 May 2011

UA 137/11 Unlawful killing/ Legal concern/ Fear for Safety

**MEXICO** **Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera (m), deceased**  
**Members of CEPRODEHI**  
**LGBT rights activists in Chilpancingo, Guerrero**

Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera, leading LGBT activist in Guerrero has been killed in what appears to have been a homophobic attack. Other members of the gay pride organization he worked with and other LGBT activists may be at risk of attack.

On 4 May, Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera, Director of the Center for Study and Projects on Integrated Human Development (*Centro de Estudios y Proyectos para el Desarrollo Humano Integral*, CEPRODEHI), was attacked and killed in Chilpancingo, the capital of Guerrero State, southern Mexico by unknown assailants. Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera was apparently walking home after spending the evening socializing.



Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera was an outspoken advocate of LGBT rights. He and his colleagues organized an annual Gay Pride and diversity march in Chilpancingo every June. He and other CEPRODEHI staff had received death threats via the telephone in previous years warning them not to hold the march. CEPRODEHI had filed complaints with the authorities and police had provided protection to them during the marches. The circumstances of his killing remain to be clarified but Amnesty International is concerned that it may be related to his work at CEPRODEHI and as an outspoken advocate of gay rights.

Guerrero state police are investigating the killing and have reportedly held a friend from the LGBT community, who was the last person to see Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera alive, in custody for two days. He has since been released. Other members of the LGBT community have also been sought for questioning, including previous partners of Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera. While it is vital for the authorities to follow all leads, similar cases which have occurred in other parts of Mexico have sometimes resulted in police and prosecutors focusing solely on the personal relations of the victim rather than investigating possible homophobic motives for the attack.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LGBT people and activists continue to be the target of attacks and intimidation in Mexico, particularly outside Mexico City. Impunity for these crimes remains common and steps taken by many authorities, particularly outside major urban areas, is extremely limited to protect against homophobia and make anti-discrimination legislation effective.

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***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:**

- Condemn the killing of Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera on 4 May and call for other members of CEPRODEHI and LGBT rights activists in Chilpancingo, Guerrero state to receive protection in accordance with their wishes;
- Call for a full, impartial and prompt investigation of Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera's killing and for all leads suggesting a homophobic motive to the attack to be fully investigated;
- Call for the authorities to support and provide protection to the organizers of the Gay Pride march due to take place in memory of Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera in June 2011.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Guerrero state Governor**

Lic. Ángel Heladio Aguirre Rivero  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Edificio Centro 2do. Piso  
Col. Ciudad de los Servicios  
C.P. 39074 Chilpancingo, Guerrero  
MEXICO

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**Guerrero State Attorney General**

Lcdo. Alberto Lopez Rosas  
Guerrero State Attorney General  
René Juárez Cisneros 62 El Potrerito  
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Guerrero,  
MEXICO

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**Salutation: Dear Attorney General**

**COPIES TO:**

Center for Study and Projects on Integrated Human  
Development (CEPRODEHI)

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Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana  
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Washington DC 20006

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**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**

**Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 26 June 2011.**