

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 37/001/2009

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 sidosa, 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- 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: +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: +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: +504 221 5667

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Sr. Fiscal General

COPIES TO:

Local LGBT organization

Red Lésbica Catrachas

Colonia Miramontes, 5ª calle, casa No. 2502

Calle Andalucía contiguo a Mercadito Miramontes

Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 March 2009.