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Press Release

IACHR Condemns Murder of Trans Honduran Woman in Guatemala

July 11, 2012

Washington, D.C. – The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) condemns the murder of a trans Honduran woman in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

According to the information received, on June 28, 2012, the body of a 19-year-old trans woman, registered at birth as José Guevara, was found. According to civil society organizations, this murder is the latest in several killings that took place in Guatemala City, in a serious context of violence against trans persons in the country.

The IACHR reminds the State of its obligation to investigate such acts on its own initiative and to punish those responsible. The Inter-American Commission urges the State to conduct an investigation that takes into account whether this murder was committed because of the gender expression, gender identity or sexual orientation of the victim.

The Commission continues to receive information on killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, and other forms of violence and exclusion against lesbians, gays, and trans, bisexual, and intersex persons. In addition, the Commission notes that very frequently, problems exist in the investigation of those crimes, which involve, in part, failures to open lines of investigation into whether the crime was committed by reason of the victim's gender identity or sexual orientation. The ineffectiveness of the state response fosters high rates of impunity, which in turn lead to the chronic repetition of such crimes, leaving the victims and their families defenseless.

The IACHR urges the State to take action to prevent and respond to these human rights abuses and to ensure that LGBTBI people can effectively enjoy their right to a life free from discrimination and violence, including the adoption of policies and public campaigns and the amendments necessary to bring laws into line with the inter-American instruments on human rights.

A principal, autonomous body of the Organization of American States (OAS), the IACHR derives its mandate from the OAS Charter and the American Convention on Human Rights. The Inter-American Commission has a mandate to promote respect for human rights in the region and acts as a consultative body to the OAS in this area. The Commission is composed of seven independent members who are elected in an individual capacity by the OAS General Assembly and who do not represent their countries of origin or residence.

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