

via fax: 011 505 266 3102 Daniel Ortega Saavedra President of the Republic of Nicaragua	via fax: 011 505 255 6832 Dr. Julio Centeno Gómez Attorney General of the Republic of Nicaragua
via fax: 011 505 277 1871 Primera Comisionada Aminta Granera Sacasa Director of the National Police	

December 3, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of **Patricia Orozco**, coordinator of the 28 September Campaign for the Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean, which promotes sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls. She is also one of the leaders of the Women's Autonomous Movement, a Nicaraguan nongovernmental organization (NGO).

On October 22, she received threatening calls from a male voice on her mobile phone. In other calls in late September and early October she had received threatening calls from another male voice; in other calls the caller remained silent. On November 3, she received a death threatening text message.

Since the criminalization of all forms of abortion in October 2006, including therapeutic abortion to protect women's lives, individuals and human rights organizations that promote access to sexual and reproductive health services have been the subject of threats and attacks. Written attacks in the Nicaraguan government's own weekly newspaper *El 19*, have sought to portray Patricia Orozco and other women human rights defenders as "man-haters" and black magic practitioners. Articles in *El 19* have also stated that they are motivated only by financial gain.

In light of these facts, **we strongly urge you to:**

- ensure that immediate measures are taken and maintained to guarantee the safety of Patricia Orozco, in strict accordance with her wishes;
- order an immediate, thorough and swift investigation into these death threats, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- stop using language in official publications that stigmatizes human rights defenders and their work and puts them at risk of attack;

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

Cc: Campaña 28 de Septiembre ~ via US mail
 Arturo Jose Cruz Sequeira, Nicaraguan Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202-939-6545
 Robert Callahan, US Ambassador to Nicaragua; fax: 011-505-266-3861
 Albert Kraaimoore, Nicaragua Desk at the US State Dept ~ via fax: 202-647-2597
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202-458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich~ via email
 US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge that you take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: