

PUBLIC

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Possible extrajudicial executions / Fear

for safety

**GUATEMALA** Sex workers in Guatemala City

**Killed: Astrid la Fontaine (real name Roberto Martínez Castillo)  
Beverly Lineth**

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Two sex workers have been killed, with the apparent acquiescence of the police, in the capital, Guatemala City. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of other sex workers in the city, who are reportedly also at constant risk of harassment, threats and killings.

Transvestite sex worker Astrid la Fontaine (real name Roberto Martínez Castillo) was killed in Zone 1, the downtown area of the city, by a man who stepped out of a car and shot her. Astrid was doing AIDS prevention work with the *Organización de Apoyo a una Sexualidad Integral frente al SIDA*, (OASIS) Organization for an Integral Sexuality AIDS Support Organization.

Six weeks later, another transvestite sex worker, a Nicaraguan known as Beverly Lineth, died in hospital, apparently beaten to death. Early in the morning of 5 July, a colleague of Beverly's had told the police that three men in a car had been harassing and attacking transvestites. A police patrol, from the *Departamento de Operaciones Anti Narcóticas* (DOAN), Department of Anti-Narcotic Operations, stopped the men and asked them for their identification. Immediately afterwards, the Police let the men go.

Minutes later the three men returned and pulled Beverly into their car. At about 6am, a friend of Beverly found her in the General Hospital, still alive. Her face was completely disfigured, as if she had been beaten with a heavy stick. She died shortly afterwards. Her family does not want her real name to be made public.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

These are the latest in a series of murders of transvestites in Guatemala City, which apparently began in October 1997, when Luis Palencia (known as María Conchita), an active member of OASIS, was shot dead. The murder has never been solved. According to OASIS, four others have been murdered so far this year, and another has been forced to leave the country by harassment and persecution, after one of the country's major newspapers carried an interview with her.

OASIS believe that there is an orchestrated program of "social cleansing". It is well known that the police have subjected transvestites to systematic abuse, including threats, harassment and rape, and OASIS fears that they may also be responsible for, or complicit in, this "social cleansing", including these latest killings. At the very least, it is clear that the police are not taking adequate steps to investigate abuses against Guatemala's sexual minorities, including transvestites.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern at the killing of Astrid la Fontaine (Roberto Martínez Castillo) and Beverly Lineth, in circumstances which suggest they may have been killed with the complicity or acquiescence of the police;

- calling on the authorities to carry out a full and prompt investigation into these killings and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice;
- expressing concern at the continuing harassment of transvestites who work in the streets of Guatemala city;
- stressing that everyone is entitled to the protection of the law, and therefore urging the authorities to take the necessary steps to guarantee the safety of all, including transvestite sex workers.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Guillermo Ruiz Wong  
6a Avenida 4-64, Zona 4  
Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA  
**Fax: + 502 362 0239/ 362 0237**  
**Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister**

Director General National Civil Police

Mario René Cifuentes Echeverría  
Director General de la Policía Nacional Civil  
6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Fax: + 502 251 9382**  
**Salutation: Señor Director /Dear Director**

Attorney General

Lic. Adolfo González Rodas  
Fiscal General de la República  
Ministerio Público  
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Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Fax: + 502 221 27 18**  
**Salutation: Señor Fiscal General/ Dear Attorney General**

**COPIES TO:**

OASIS

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Newspapers

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and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 August 2000.