

PUBLIC

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UA 316/08 Fear for safety/Death threats

NICARAGUA **Patricia Orozco (f), coordinator of the 28 September Campaign for the Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean (*Campaña 28 de Septiembre por la Despenalización del Aborto en América Latina y el Caribe*) and one of the leaders of the Women's Autonomous Movement (*Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres*)**

Women's human rights defender Patricia Orozco has received death threats and threats of sexual violence by phone and text (SMS) message, in an apparent attempt to stop her from campaigning on the right of women and girls to access safe and effective sexual and reproductive health services. She is at risk of attack.

On 3 November Patricia Orozco received a text message on her mobile phone which read: "damn bitch, we're going to finish you off, we're going to shut your mouth, we're going to hit you where it's most painful. Carlos" (*maldita perra, te vamos a acabar, te vamos a callar la boca, te vamos a dar en lo que más te duele. Carlos*).

Around 22 October Patricia Orozco received several calls on her mobile phone in which a male voice said to her: "I'm going to fuck you, we're going to screw you, bitch" (*te voy a culiar, te vamos a joder, maldita*). In other instances, the caller remained silent. In late September and early October, Patricia Orozco had also received calls in which another male voice told her "we're going to screw you" (*te vamos a joder*).

Patricia Orozco is a well-known Nicaraguan women's rights defender. She is the coordinator of the 28 September Campaign for the Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean (*Campaña 28 de Septiembre por la Despenalización del Aborto en América Latina y el Caribe*) which promotes access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls. She is also one of the leaders of the Nicaraguan NGO, the Women's Autonomous Movement (*Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In October 2006 all forms of abortion were criminalized in Nicaragua. Up to then, Nicaraguan law permitted therapeutic abortion in cases where women's lives or health was in danger if the pregnancy continued, or whose pregnancies were a result of rape or incest. The ruling party and the two main opposition parties continue to support the ban.

Nine other women human rights defenders, who work for a variety of non-governmental organizations, are facing legal proceedings for their involvement in the case of a nine-year-old Nicaraguan rape survivor known as "Rosita", who obtained a legal abortion in Nicaragua in 2003.

Patricia Orozco and other women human rights defenders have been the subjects of written attacks in the Nicaraguan government's own weekly newspaper *El 19*, which have sought to portray women human rights defenders as "man-haters" and black magic practitioners. Articles in *El 19* have also stated that those working to defend sexual and reproductive rights are motivated only by financial gain.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Patricia Orozco, coordinator of the 28 September Campaign (*Campaña 28 de Septiembre*) and one of the leaders of the Women's Autonomous Movement (*Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres*);
- urging the President and the Head of the National Police to ensure that immediate measures are taken and maintained to guarantee the safety of Patricia Orozco in strict accordance with her wishes;
- calling on the Attorney General to order an immediate, thorough and swift investigation into these death threats, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to stop using language in official publications which stigmatizes human rights defenders and their work and which could therefore put them at risk of attack;
- asking the authorities to respect the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Daniel Ortega Saavedra
Presidente de la República
Reparto El Carmen

Costado oeste del Parque El Carmen
Managua, NICARAGUA

Fax: +505 266 3102

Salutation: Dear President/Estimado Sr. Presidente

Head of the National Police

Primera Comisionada Aminta Granera Sacasa
Directora de la Policía Nacional
Edificio Faustino Ruiz
Managua, NICARAGUA

Fax: +505 277 1871

Salutation: Dear Commissioner/Estimada Comisionada

Attorney General

Dr. Julio Centeno Gómez
Fiscal General de la República
Ministerio Público
Km 4½, carretera a Masaya, contiguo a Bancentro
Managua, NICARAGUA

Fax: +505 255 6832

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Fiscal General

COPIES TO:

Women's rights organization

Campaña 28 de Septiembre
Colonial Los Robles
Del Hotel Colón, 1½ cuadra al este
Casa No. 55
Managua, NICARAGUA

and to diplomatic representatives of Nicaragua accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 December 2008.