

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST THREATENED, ATTACKED

Human rights activist Leonor Martínez is being threatened and attacked because of her work in a civil society association in the Nicaraguan capital, Managua.

Leonor Martínez, 25, is a member of a group which promotes human rights and works with young people with alcohol or drug problems, the *Coalición de Jóvenes Nicaragüenses*. The group belongs to an umbrella organization of civil society groups, the *Coordinadora Civil* (CC), which works on a variety of concerns, from environmental issues to trade union rights.

She was attacked by three men on 22 October, on her way home from a press conference, where she had talked about restrictions on protests and curbs on fundamental freedoms. The men threatened her with a pistol, beat her about the face and body, and broke her arm in three places. She told Amnesty International that they threatened her that if she went back "with the CC to the activities with the young people" they would "attack or kill" her and her family (*con la CC hacía actividades con los jóvenes [iban] agredir o matar*).

Since then, Leonor Martínez has received numerous threatening messages on her cell phone, which increased in the last week of November. These have included: *Si andas con esta estupidez de la CC te vamos a hacer algo* (If you continue with this stupidity with the CC we will do something to you); and *Chavala loca déjate de andar en la CC* (Crazy girl, stop working with the CC). On 20 November, as she was leaving her house, a man approached her and asked her if she recognised him. He told her, *Ya sabes que te va a pasar si te andas metiendo te vamos a matar* (Now you know what will happen to you if you go sticking your nose in, we are going to kill you.) She recognised him as someone who had been present when she was attacked on the 22 October.

Leonor Martínez says she knows the men involved in these attacks and has seen them several times. She says they have connections to the ruling party, the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN), Sandinista National Liberation Front. She has reported the October attack and the threatening messages to the police, but they have taken no action.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern that civil society activist Leonor Martínez has been attacked and threatened, and urging the authorities to ensure that she receives appropriate protection immediately;
- calling on them to order a thorough and swift investigation into the death threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging 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 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 JANUARY 2010 TO:

President

Daniel Ortega Saavedra
 Presidente de la República
 Reparto El Carmen
 Costado oeste del Parque El Carmen
 Managua, NICARAGUA

Fax: +505 2266 3102

**Salutation: Dear President Ortega/
 Estimado Sr. Presidente**

Head of National Police

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

Fax: +505 2277 1871

**Salutation: Dear Commissioner/
 Estimada Comisionada**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 8 August 2009 Leonor Martinez took part in a music event in one of the two cathedrals in Managua. When she got off the bus, near the cathedral, she saw the man who had threatened her on 20 November: he threw a stone, which hit her in the eye. Others were also attacked, including CC press officer Mario Sanchez and other CC members.

In the past few years there have been a number of attacks against human rights defenders in Nicaragua. In November 2008, threats were sent to Patricia Orozco, one of the leaders of the Women's Autonomous Movement (*Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres*) and 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*). That month, Amnesty International issued a UA on behalf of Dr Vilma Nuñez, the President of a prominent Nicaraguan human rights organization, the *Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos* (CENIDH), who had been threatened in the street and subjected to a campaign to discredit and disrupt her work (see UA 320/08, AMR 43/004/2008, 21 November 2008). Women's rights activists have also been threatened for their work defending the right to abortion.

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