



22 June 2023

Joint Statement: Concern about the lack of protection for defenders of LGTBI+ rights in Honduras

In the framework of LGTBI+ Pride Month, the international organisations Front Line Defenders and Peace Brigades International (PBI) want to express their concern about the risks faced by human rights defenders of the LGTBI+ community in Honduras. Both organisations have observed a tendency towards an increase in attacks at times of greater visibility for the LGTBI+ community, such as LGTBI+ Pride Day. Therefore, Front Line Defenders and PBI call for national and international solidarity and support for the protection of those who defend the rights of sexual diversity.

Since the 2009 coup d'état, violence against the LGTBI+ community, including human rights defenders, has been on the rise. The year 2022 was particularly violent, specifically in regards to hate crimes targeted against LGTBI+ community members with a number of 42 violent deaths recorded: twenty seven gay men, six trans women, five lesbian women, three bisexual men and one man of an undetermined sexual orientation. Seven of these people were considered human rights defenders.¹ Violence and discrimination against LGTBI+ people has not only resulted in murders, but also in discriminatory treatment in health centres, in workplaces and in media outlets. LGTBI+ organisations continue to point to state actors, particularly the military, as the main perpetrators of attacks.

On 26 March 2021, in the context of the ruling in the case of Vicky Hernández and others vs Honduras,² the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR Court) asked the State of Honduras to create a state system to collect data on violence against the LGTBI+ community. Likewise, the IACHR Court requested that the State adopt a permanent training plan on LGTBI+ issues for agents of state security forces and a protocol for investigation and administration of justice during criminal proceedings in cases of LGTBI+ victims of violence. However, despite having complied with several other reparations measures as per the sentence, implementation of these three measures is still pending.

Given the lack of progress on issues such as marriage equality, legal recognition of gender identity and the right to family and adoption, LGTBI+ organisations will take advantage of the celebrations in June to demand guarantees for the full enjoyment of the rights of LGTBI+ people. In the current context, marked by strong social polarisation and a lack of effective protection, Front Line Defenders and PBI call attention to the potential escalation of violence against human rights defenders working for the rights of sexually diverse groups in the coming months.

1 Unidad de Vigilancia KAI (Asociación Kukulcán, Grupo Generación Trans Awilix y Asociación Lésbico Bisexual Trans Feminista Ixchel). Situación de Derechos Humanos y Discriminación hacia la Población LGTBIQ+ en Honduras de enero a diciembre de 2022. Informe en papel. 2023.

2 https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_422_esp.pdf

Faced with this imminent risk, both organisations recommend to the international community to:

- Continue to support the State of Honduras in guaranteeing compliance with the Vicky Hernández and others v. Honduras sentence in order to improve the protection of LGTBI+ defenders;
- Ensure compliance with the protection measures granted to LGTBI+ defenders by the National Protection Mechanism;
- Encourage the State of Honduras to promote equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of all human rights by LGTBI+ persons,³ including through the introduction of national legislation and policies, including awareness-raising, that promote equality and non-discrimination in the workplace, in the health sector and in education;
- Publicly recognise the human rights work of LGTBI+ organisations, thus counteracting discriminatory narratives;
- React and speak out against acts of violence against LGTBI+ defenders for defending human rights.

Front Line Defenders also urges the Honduran authorities to carry out concrete actions, in coordination and with the consent of the organisations and human rights defenders, to guarantee the protection of LGBTI+ rights defenders, as well as to promptly investigate and prosecute acts of violence against LGBTI+ rights defenders.

Front Line Defenders is an international organisation founded in 2001 in Dublin, Ireland, dedicated to the protection of human rights defenders at risk, who work, in a non-violent manner, for any or all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It works in collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Council of Europe; it also has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. It also monitors cases globally in which human rights defenders face, among others, criminalisation, stigmatisation and persecution by state and non-state actors in retaliation for their work.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) is an international organisation based in Brussels, Belgium, that has been promoting non violence and protecting human rights since 1981. It provides integral accompaniment to human rights defenders at risk, under the principles of non-violence, non-partisanship and non-interference. The comprehensive accompaniment is divided into four areas: physical accompaniment, advocacy, information dissemination and capacity building through workshops on security and protection. PBI has been present in Honduras since 2013 and accompanies organisations in the thematic areas of land and territory, freedom of expression and LGTBI+ rights. In this last thematic area, it has accompanied the Asociación LGTB Arcoíris de Honduras since 2015 and SOMOS CDC since 2022.

3 https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/07_dh_directrices_lgtbi_es_.pdf