

4 November 2016

Honduras: Assassination attempts against two human rights defenders

On 1 November 2016, student activist **Dayanara Castillo** was almost run over by a vehicle in Tegucigalpa, in what appeared to be an intentional act. Four days earlier, on 27 October 2016, LGBTI rights defender **Jlo Córdoba** was shot at repeatedly by an unknown man in Comayagüela.

[Dayanara Castillo](#) is a student activist at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras - UNAH* (National Autonomous University of Honduras), where she is an active member of the **Movimiento Amplio Universitario** (Ample University Movement, MAU) and the **Mesa Amplia de Estudiantes Indignados** (Broad Table of Outraged Students), which campaign for free and quality superior education. She has also been actively involved in advocating for the rights of sexual minorities as a member of the LGBT rights organisation *Asociación Kukulcan*. [Jlo Córdoba](#) is a member of the LGBTI rights organisation **Asociación Arcoiris** (Rainbow Association) and of trans rights group **Muñecas Trans** (Trans Dolls).

On 1 November 2016, in Tegucigalpa, while Dayanara Castillo was driving her motorcycle with a friend, a vehicle with tinted windows and no licence plates attempted to run over the human rights defender. Dayanara Castillo managed to avoid the vehicle, and she and her passenger were not physically injured. As a result of her activism, Dayanara Castillo has reported that she was intimidated by university faculty members and security guards, expelled from the UNAH, that she received threatening phone calls and that members of her family had been followed by unidentified vehicles. The human rights defender has also faced judicial harassment, and in August 2015 she was detained and reportedly threatened with death and beaten by police officers.

On 27 October 2016, Jlo Córdoba was standing on the street with colleagues, in proximity to the Asociación Arcoiris office in Comayagüela, a man suddenly approached them, drew a gun and pointed it directly at Jlo Córdoba. The attacker attempted to shoot her point blank, but the gun jammed, giving the human rights defender time to run away, before the attacker repeatedly fired in her direction. Eye witnesses allege that when the police arrived on the scene, officers picked up the bullet shells from the ground and left, without approaching or assisting Jlo Córdoba's colleagues who were still on the scene. This is not the first time that Jlo Córdoba has been the target of an assassination attempt. [On 29 March 2016](#) an unidentified man approached the human rights defender and fired at her twice, injuring Jlo Córdoba. She had to be hospitalised but made a full recovery. In retaliation to her human rights work advocating for the LGBTI community in Honduras, she has also been subjected to harassment, intimidation and threats.

Front Line Defenders remains deeply concerned by the worsening climate of repression and attacks against human rights defenders in Honduras, including the assassination of several leaders of Honduran civil society in 2016, such as [Berta Cáceres](#), [José Ángel Flores](#) and [René Martínez](#). On 19 August 2016, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) jointly [condemned](#) the killing of defenders in Honduras, dubbing it "one of the most dangerous countries for human rights defenders."

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the assassination attempts made against Dayanara Castillo and Jlo Córdoba as it considers the attacks to be in retaliation to their peaceful work in defence of

human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Honduras to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination attempts against Dayanara Castillo and Jlo Córdoba, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Ensure that the human rights work of Dayanara Castillo and Jlo Córdoba are considered as a line of inquiry in the investigation for the attacks suffered by the defenders;
3. Take all necessary measures, in consultation with the defenders, to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Dayanara Castillo and Jlo Córdoba as well as of the members of their families, ensuring that the protective measures acknowledge and respond to the specific needs of the women human rights defenders;
4. Provide the necessary psycho-social support to Dayanara Castillo and Jlo Córdoba, in consultation with the women human rights defenders;
5. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Honduras are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.