

Bogota D.C., May 18, 2012

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Re: “Concern for attack on Monica Roa and Women’s Link Worldwide”

Dear Colombian authorities,

On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the historic decision that decriminalized abortion in Colombia, threats have escalated against human rights activist **Monica Roa** and **Women’s Link Worldwide** where she works as Director of Programs. On the evening of May 7, 2012, at approximately 6:30 PM an unidentified person **fired shots at the Women’s Link Worldwide office** in Bogota where Monica and two of her colleagues were working. The bullet broke the office window security glass above Monica’s head. Fortunately, no one was injured.

[Monica Roa](#) is a widely known human rights defender who, with Women’s Link Worldwide, filed a lawsuit before the Colombian Constitutional Court six years ago that ended the total abortion ban in Colombia by recognizing abortion as a fundamental right in three circumstances. Since such time she has had bodyguard protection (provided by the Ministry of Justice) as a result of numerous threats directed at her through social media, faxes and phone calls with such warnings as “we will put you in heaven”. During this time Women’s Link Worldwide offices also faced a series of break-ins where their computers were stolen. There is no information at this time about the perpetrators of this crime. The authorities have been contacted but have yet to instigate an investigation into the attack.

Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. This scare tactic comes at a time when the work to implement the right to abortion in Colombia is under fierce attack. Just two months ago on March 1, Women’s Link learned that a criminal complaint had been filed against Monica by

one of the country's highest officials, Ilva Miriam Hoyos, Deputy *Procuradora*. To date, the complaint has not been made public.

Subsequently, the intimidation continued. On April 24, yet another computer was stolen through a window from the Women's Link Worldwide Bogota office. This week's violent attack on the office reveals a pattern of intimidation and presents fear of escalating danger for Monica Roa and her colleagues.

The undersigned women's rights and human rights organizations condemn these actions and are gravely concerned for the physical security and well-being of Monica Roa and all Women's Link Worldwide staff. We demand an end to the ongoing harassment and threats against Women's Link Worldwide and all reproductive rights defenders in Colombia.

The undersigned call on the Colombian authorities to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the events that took place at Women's Link Worldwide offices in Bogota on the evening of May 7, 2012, with a view to publishing the findings and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international human rights standards;
2. Make public the criminal complaint filed against Monica Roa so she is able to respond to the allegations against her and exercise her right to a legal defense.
3. Take measures to ensure that government officials or other public figures refrain from further stigmatizing the legitimate work of women human rights defenders in Colombia and, in particular, Monica Roa and Women's Link Worldwide;
4. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical security and well-being of Monica Roa and all staff at Women's Link Worldwide;
5. Take all appropriate measures to ensure reproductive rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions; this should include, at a minimum: passing protective legislation, conducting human rights trainings for those charged with the administration of justice, and promoting human rights education about the important role of women human rights defenders generally and defenders of sexual and reproductive rights in particular.

Thanks for your consideration,

	Organizational Sign-ons	Country/Region
1	Center for Reproductive Rights	
2	ADIOS - Associazione italiana done per lo sviluppo Via dei Giubbonari	Italy

3	AMMOR-Federación Nacional	Mexico
4	Amnesty International	
5	Apoyo desde Argentina	Argentina
6	APROFA - Chile	Chile
7	Articulación Feminista Marcosur (AFM)	Uruguay
8	Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Regional/Malaysia.	Malaysia
9	Asociación de Especialistas Universitarias en estudios de la Mujer	Argentina
10	Asociacion de Mujeres Mejorando el Horizonte Regional, A.C (AMMOR, A.C)	Mexico
11	ASPIRE	
12	ASTRA Youth Network and the Federation for Women and Family Planning	Poland
13	AWID	
14	Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud	Mexico
15	Caribbean Development Activists and Women's Network (C-DAWN)	
16	Catholics for Choice - USA	USA
17	Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir - Chile	Chile
18	Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir - Colombia	Colombia
19	Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir - Bolivia	Bolivia

20	CEJIL	
21	Center for Constitutional Rights	USA
22	Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, UC Hastings College of the Law	USA
23	Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)	USA
24	Center for Women's Global Leadership	
25	Centro de Educacion y Prevencion del VIH/Sida AC. CEPVIDA	Mexico
26	Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES)	Argentina
27	Centro de Promoción y Defensa por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos (PROMSEX)	Peru
28	Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program, Hampshire College	USA
29	CLADEM Brasil	Brazil
30	CLAE Consorcio Latinoamericano de Anticoncepción de Emergencia	Latin America
31	Coalición Nicaraguense por los Derechos Sexuales y Derechos Reproductivos (CNDSDR)	Nicaragua
32	Colectiva por el Derecho a Decidir Costa Rica	Costa Rica
33	Colectivo Con-spirando	Chile
34	Comissao de Cidadania e Reprodução	
35	Comité contra el Femicidio en Morelos COCOFEM	Mexico

36	Commissioner to the Law Reform Commission of Thailand	Thailand
37	Consortio Latinoamericano Contra el Aborto Inseguro (CLACAI)	Latin America
38	Corporación Humanas – Colombia	Colombia
39	Corporación Sisma Mujer	Spain
40	Cotidiano Mujer, Uruguay	Uruguay
41	CreSer para un desarrollo integral, A.C.	Mexico
42	Cuenta Conmigo Diversidad Sexual Incluyente A.C.	Mexico
43	dance4life	Netherlands
44	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)	Secretariat based in the Philippines
45	Ddeser - Red por los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en México	Mexico
46	De La Calle Londoño López & Posada	Colombia
47	Front Line Defenders	
48	Egypt Member Association IPPF	Egypt
49	El Grupo Multidisciplinario por la Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos en Guatemala	Guatemala
50	ELA - Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género	Argentina
51	Equidad de Género, Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia - México	Mexico
52	Federación Latinoamericana de Sociedades de Obstetrícia y Ginecología (FLASOG)	Latin America

53	Foro de Mujeres y Políticas de Población - México	Mexico
54	Foundation for Women, Law and Rural Development (FORWARD)	Thailand
55	Fundacion Desafio	Ecuador
56	Fundación Oriéntame	Colombia
57	Gestos+HIV, Communication and Gender	
58	Global Doctors For Choice/Brasil	Brazil
59	Grupo Curumim	Brazil
60	ICMER	Chile
61	Coordinadora de la Mujer - Bolivia	Bolivia
62	INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre	Sri Lanka
63	Iniciativa Global para la Equidad la Justicia y la Ecología A.C.	Mexico
64	Integrante de los Diálogos Feministas en Bolivia	Bolivia
65	International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC)	
66	International Planned Parenthood Federation	
67	International Women's Health Coalition	
68	Ipas	USA
69	Ipas - Brazil	Brazil
70	IPPF/RHO	

71	Irish Family Planning Association	Ireland
72	Kalyanamitra Foundation-Indonesia	Indonesia
73	La Fundación Si Mujer	Colombia
74	La Red Chilena contra la Violencia Doméstica y Sexual	Chile
75	Las Hijas Predilectas de la Negrita	
76	L'Association Algérienne pour la Planification Familiale (AAPF)	Algeria
77	Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights	
78	MADRE	
79	Marie Stopes International Bolivia	Bolivia
80	National alliance of women human right defenders Nepal (NAWHRD)	Nepal
81	Network for Glocal Activism/School of Feminism for glocal activists	
82	Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders	
83	O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, Georgetown University Law Center	United States
84	ONG FAD	
85	Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA)	Palestine
86	Peace Foundation Pakistan	Pakistan
87	People for Peace and Defence of Rights (PPDR Uganda)	Uganda
88	Planned Parenthood Federation of	USA

	America	
89	Population Matters	
90	PROFAMILIA Colombia	Colombia
91	Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe (RSMLAC)	Chile
92	Red Latinoamericana de Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir	Latin America
93	Red Par, Periodistas de Argentina en Red por una Comunicación no Sexista	
94	Red por los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en Morelos Ddeser-Morelos	Mexico
95	Rutgers WPF, Netherlands	Netherlands
96	SAMSARA	Indonesia
97	SFPA-Sudan	Sudan
98	SI Mujer Nicaragua	Nicaragua
99	SOS Jeunesse et Enfance en Detresse	
100	Tanzania Network of women living with HIV and AIDS	
101	The Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago
102	Tunis Member Association IPPF	Tunis
103	Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez	Chile
104	Universidad Diego Portales College of Law	Chile
105	Universidade Federal de São Paulo, campus Baixada Santista	Brazil

106	Women for Women's Human Rights	Turkey
107	Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR)	
108	Women's Abortion Action Campaign (WAAC)	Australia
109	Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice	
110	Women's Human Rights Defenders International Coalition	
111	Women's Promotion Centre, Tanzania	Tanzania
112	Youth Intercommunity Network	Kenya
113	YP Foundation	India
114	Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir - México	Mexico
115	Sexuality Policy Watch	Brazil
116	Ipas Central America	Central America
117	Fundación Instituto de la Mujer	Chile
118	Articulación Feminista Por la Libertad de Decidir	Chile
119	Global Doctors for Choice	
120	Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (FEIM)	Argentina
121	Akahatá-Equipo de Trabajo en Sexualidades y Géneros	Latin America
122	International Women's Human Rights Clinic, CUNY Law School	USA
123	IWRAW Asia Pacific	

	Individual Sign-ons	Country
1	Antonio Barreto	Colombia
2	Brian Concannon Jr., Esq.	Haiti
3	Carol Bradford	UK
4	Catalina Ruiz	
5	Claudia Florentin	Argentina
6	Hannah Surowitz	
7	Johana Román Castañeda	Mexico
8	Julissa Mantilla Falcon	
9	Laura Davis Mattar	Brazil
10	Leticia Canseco Rincón	Mexico
11	Mabel Bianco	Argentina
12	Maria Isabel Matamala Vivaldi	Chile
13	María Paulina Mogollón	
14	Mariana Carbajal Periodista	Argentina
15	Marlene Fried	USA
16	Marta Raquel Zabaleta	
17	Meena Jagannath	Haiti
18	Mindy Jane Roseman, J.D., Ph.D.	USA
19	Nadia Maciel Paulino	Mexico
20	Sarah Diehl	Germany
21	Soledad Acevedo Arenas	Chile
22	Sylvia Estrada Claudio, MD, PhD	

23	Wanda Nowicka	Poland
24	María Consuelo Mejía	
25	Angela Freitas	Brazil
26	MD, MSP Jose Luis Wilches Gutiérrez	Colombia
27	Caroline Bettinger-Lopez	USA