



Crimes Without Punishment: Gender-Motivated Killings in Guatemala

Thursday, April 23, 2009

Speakers:

Carmen Aída Ibarra Morán, Mónica María Leonardo Segura and Professor Karen Musalo

Reception: 5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Program: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

U.C. Hastings School of Law, Alumni Reception Center

200 McAllister Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

Violence in Guatemala, particularly violence against women, has risen to epidemic proportions. Those who beat, maim or kill women are rarely held accountable for their actions, and enjoy almost total impunity. In the last eight years almost 4,000 women have been murdered in gender-motivated killings, known as “femicides,” and less than 2% of these crimes have been investigated and prosecuted. On April 23, representatives from the Myrna Mack Foundation, a Guatemalan organization which is internationally known and respected for its work on issues of justice and the rule of law, will come to U.C. Hastings to discuss impunity and violence in Guatemala.

Since the 1990s, the Myrna Mack Foundation and its founder, Helen Mack Chang, have been on the forefront of the struggle to promote peace, democracy and the rule of law in Guatemala. The Foundation has just completed a study on the criminal justice system in Guatemala, and its handling of the killings of women. Please join the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, as the Myrna Mack Foundation presents the findings of its study. We will discuss why the Guatemalan criminal justice system is plagued with impunity, and possible strategies for addressing this problem, and strengthening the rule of law.

Speakers

Carmen Aída Ibarra Morán

Political Coordinator, Myrna Mack Foundation

Carmen Aída Ibarra Morán is a policy expert, whose work focuses on justice, security, peace, human rights, and democracy in Guatemala. She is responsible for the development and implementation of advocacy strategies for the Foundation's agenda within Guatemala, as well as before international bodies such as the Inter-American system of human rights, the Human Rights Council, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ms. Ibarra Morán also consulted on the case of the assassination of Guatemalan anthropologist, Myrna Mack, for whom the Foundation was named. Myrna Mack was assassinated on September 11, 1990, during Guatemala's civil war, for her research into the government's destruction of indigenous communities as part of its war strategy.

Mónica María Leonardo Segura

Legal Analyst, Myrna Mack Foundation

Mónica María Leonardo Segura has litigated before Guatemala's Supreme Court and highest Constitutional Tribunal, and has worked internationally on human rights issues. As a Fulbright Scholar, she received her Masters of Law at Georgetown University Law Center. While in Washington D.C. she worked for the Organization of American States, and the Inter-American Commission of Women, assisting Senior Specialists with gender issues. Ms. Leonardo Segura recently completed a memorandum on draft laws for police reform and criminal investigation in Guatemala and was one of the authors of the Myrna Mack Foundation's study on the Guatemalan legal system's response to the femicides.

Karen Musalo

Clinical Professor of Law, U.C. Hastings

Director of the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies at U.C. Hastings, Karen Musalo has been a pioneer in the area of "gender asylum," litigating landmark cases which establish refugee protection for women fleeing gender-related human rights violations such as female genital cutting, honor killings and sexual violence. Prof. Musalo is attorney of record for the Guatemalan asylum seeker, Rodi Alvarado, whose case may well determine whether women who are victims of domestic violence qualify for protection under U.S. law. Prof. Musalo has led efforts to make connections between human rights violations in the home country and the need for asylum protection. Her interest in this area has led to an initiative addressing the femicides in Latin America.

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