



*National Advocacy for Local LGBTQ Communities*

**June 10, 2011**

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) mourns the lives of three LGBTQ people recently murdered in Puerto Rico due to hate violence. This continues a tragic and persistent trend of anti-LGBTQ hate murders in Puerto Rico. Last year, NCAVP supported New York City Stands in Solidarity with the Puerto Rican Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community to release a [report](#) that documents and responds to this violence. We stand with the [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#) (NGLTF) and [Puerto Rico Para Tod@s](#) as they call on Puerto Rican authorities to take immediate action to address ongoing anti-LGBTQ hate violence.

A press release from NGLTF is below and also available [here](#).

*[NCAVP](#) works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of over forty local member programs, as well as affiliate organizations and individuals, who create systemic and social change. NCAVP is a program of the [New York City Anti-Violence Project](#).*

## **Task Force: Anti-LGBT violence in Puerto Rico 'must stop now'**

June 09, 2011

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**WASHINGTON, June 9** — The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is calling upon authorities to act immediately to address the ongoing anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) violence in Puerto Rico. In the past week, three LGBT individuals have been killed. On Tuesday, Ramón Salgado was found dead along the side of a highway in Humacao; Karlota Gómez Sánchez, a transgender woman, was shot to death in Santurce on Monday; and Alejandro Torres Torres was stabbed to death in Ponce on Saturday. Task Force staff is currently on the ground in Puerto Rico working with local authorities, the press and the community to respond to this crisis.

In the past year and a half, 18 LGBT individuals have been killed in Puerto Rico. The local hate crimes law requires authorities in Puerto Rico to investigate whether the murders were motivated by the victims' sexual orientation or gender identity and the Task Force urges them to respond adequately to this wave of violence.

The Task Force has been in Puerto Rico on numerous occasions to respond to the scourge of anti-LGBT violence. This includes responding to the killing of Jorge Steven López Mercado, a 19-year-old student murdered in Cayey in November 2009. Last year, the Task Force's National Religious Leadership Roundtable convened one of its semi-annual meetings in Puerto Rico to stand in solidarity with the Puerto Rican LGBT community. This year, the Task Force participated in the International Day Against Homophobia march in San Juan and has been very active in denouncing the attacks against LGBT individuals in Puerto Rico. The Task Force has also assisted in the response to the brutal bashing of Francheska González, a transgender woman who was beaten and luckily survived last April. The Task Force will continue to help local activists with efforts to curb the anti-LGBT violence in Puerto Rico.

**Statement by Pedro Julio Serrano, Founder, Puerto Rico Para Tod@s  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Communications Manager**

"The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force stands in solidarity with the LGBT community in Puerto Rico and sends its deepest condolences to the families and friends of Karlota Gómez Sánchez, Ramón Salgado and Alejandro Torres Torres. As someone who grew up in Puerto Rico and has been very active in its LGBT community, this is a heart-wrenching moment. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to all of the victims' loved ones at this difficult time. Justice must prevail. This is about members of the Puerto Rican LGBT community feeling safe in their communities and being able to take care of the ones they love. We call upon the authorities and political leaders to effectively address this epidemic of anti-LGBT violence. This must stop now."

**To learn more about the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, follow us on Twitter: [@TheTaskForce](https://twitter.com/TheTaskForce).**

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*The mission of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is to build the grassroots power of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. We do this by training activists, equipping state and local organizations with the skills needed to organize broad-based campaigns to defeat anti-LGBT referenda and advance pro-LGBT legislation, and building the organizational capacity of our movement. Our Policy Institute, the movement's premier think tank, provides research and policy analysis to support the struggle for complete equality and to counter right-wing lies. As part of a broader social justice movement, we work to create a nation that respects the diversity of human expression and identity and creates opportunity for all. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., we also have offices in New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis and Cambridge.*