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To the attention of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Distinguished Expert:

The International Commission of Jurists is writing to call your attention to a physical attack on Caleb Orozco that recently occurred in Belize City following his return from an international LGBT human rights conference.

Caleb Orozco is the president of the United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM), an organization that represents the interests of LGBT individuals in Belize. On the afternoon of 8 February 2012, as Caleb Orozco was walking down George Street, he was threatened by unidentified men shouting anti-gay slurs. One of the men then threw a beer bottle in his face. Mr. Orozco suffered some bruises to his face and damage to his teeth. Although he filed a police report, police have not identified any perpetrators and there are concerns that they may not be conducting a serious investigation into the incident.

Caleb Orozco is well known as a gay rights activist in Belize. He and UNIBAM are challenging a provision of the Criminal Code that criminalizes same-sex sexual activity. As a result of this lawsuit, as well as other advocacy activities of UNIBAM, Caleb Orozco has frequently appeared on television and radio and been featured in the newspaper. Extremely negative portrayals of Caleb Orozco and UNIBAM have also appeared in the media by people and organizations who oppose the constitutional challenge.

The ICJ is concerned that Caleb Orozco has been targeted as a gay man and as a human rights activist. The ICJ respectfully urges you to call this case to the attention of Belizean authorities and to urge them to conduct a full investigation of the incident. Pursuant to its human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Belize has a duty to investigate and prosecute those individuals who commit unlawful violent acts and to exercise due

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diligence to ensure the safety and security of all its citizens, including those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Only by doing so can Belize send a clear message that anti-gay violence is a criminal offense.

Yours sincerely,

Alli Jernow
Senior Legal Advisor
Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Project