

# HAMBURGER STIFTUNG

— für politisch Verfolgte

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## Press Release

### **Donny Reyes Velazquez from Honduras – Latest guest with the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People**

May 19, 2014  
Hamburg/ Honduras

**On Monday, May 19, 2014, the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People will be welcoming Donny Reyes as a new guest. The human rights activist from Honduras will be living in Hamburg for one year to recover from the horrors of his persecution and regain his strength in order to continue his valuable work when he returns to his home country.**

Far beyond the boundaries of Honduras' capital city Tegucigalpa, Donny Reyes has established a reputation as an advocate of the rights of sexual minorities. Due to his commitment, the coordinator of the organization LGBT Arcoiris (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rainbow) as well as well-known human rights activists have repeatedly been threatened and attacked. In 2007, for instance, Reyes was first arrested in Tegucigalpa and then – despite several policemen present – beaten and later raped by four men.

In Honduras, human rights activists advocating the rights of the LGBT community are considered a threat to the social order. The level of the social marginalization of LGBT has significantly increased since the military coup in June 2009. Time and again, LGBT Arcoiris has been the target of smear campaigns in the media and brutal assaults by government agencies. Hardly ever, these attacks will be prosecuted, much less punished.

Due to repeated death threats, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission CIDH ordered protective measures for Donny Reyes as early as the year of the military coup. However, these measures were never put into practice by the responsible authorities in Honduras.

When the human rights activist only barely survived an attack on his life, Amnesty International felt compelled to draw attention to his case with a call for "urgent action" on August 17, 2012.

The breaking and entering of LGTB Arcoiris premises by unknowns in September 2013, where several computers and highly sensitive data were stolen from the office, clearly spoke of the persistent endangerment of the activists. That is when the Board of Directors of the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People took action and resolved to award Donny Reyes with a one-year fellowship.

Even as a guest in the protective care of the Foundation, Donny Reyes will continue to advocate the rights of minorities in his home country.

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