



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS STATEMENT**

March 18, 2023

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**Pvt. Ana Basaldua Ruiz Found Dead at Fort Hood, Same Base Where Vanessa Guillén was Killed;
Reminds Us that Sexual Violence Continues to Plague the US Military**

Yesterday at Fort Hood, Texas, a Latina woman was found dead after telling her family she had been enduring sexual harassment at work. Combat engineer Pvt. Ana Basaldua Ruiz is said to have died Monday at the base, the same base where Vanessa Guillén was murdered in 2020, who was also a Latina woman in the Army.

According to the New York Times, "Private Basaldua's mother, Alejandra Ruiz Zarco, told Telemundo News that her daughter had told her a few weeks ago that an Army superior 'was harassing her' and that she was the target of repeated sexual advances on the base."

This horrible news reminds us how sexual violence permeates all structures in our communities, including large structures such as the military. As Ohio's anti-sexual violence coalition, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV), recognizes that violence anywhere, including in Texas, contributes to violence everywhere, including Ohio.

Latina women are victimized by sexual violence perpetrators at an increased rate, due to discrimination and oppression that tells people that Latina women are deserving of having violence enacted upon them. One in six Latina women experience sexual victimization in their lifetime, and almost 90% of Latina survivors of sexual violence have experienced more than one form of violence, including physical violence, threats, stalking or witnessing violence.¹ This issue is exacerbated in the military, especially at Fort Hood.

The New York Times reported that a 2020 investigation of Fort Hood, after Specialist Vanessa Guillen was killed, found "major flaws" at the base and that "the total sexual assault risk to Army women at Fort Hood in 2018 was 8.4 percent, compared with a 5.8 percent risk for all women in the Army."

Structures of power in our society and in the military contribute to this violence by creating a culture and space that is accepting of it. Oppression that targets women, people of color, and young people are just some of the harms we see here, as well as power imbalances built into the military by the ranking system.

¹ "The Sexual Assault Among Latinas Survey," by Carlos A. Cuevas, Ph.D. and Chiara Sabina, Ph.D. in 2010

Our communities, including military communities, need a culture shift where sexual violence is not acceptable and where those who commit violence are held accountable. We encourage you to follow the lead of Ana's family in asking for accountability from those responsible.

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Interviews available upon request.

As Ohio's statewide coalition, OAESV uses an anti-oppression lens to advocate for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and to empower communities to prevent sexual violence.