

# *Protests Target U.S. Forces Agreement in Philippines Following Murder of Transgender Woman*

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Manila, October 25 (RHC)-- Protests are continuing in the Philippines where a U.S. Marine is suspected of murdering a transgender woman. Outrage has focused on the so-called "Visiting Forces Agreement" -- a decades-old deal between the United States and the Philippines, which critics say has been used to shield U.S. soldiers from punishment.

Under the deal, U.S. Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton remains on board a U.S. Navy vessel while local authorities investigate the murder of Jennifer Laude. She was found in a motel bathroom where she was apparently drowned in the toilet.

Philippine President Benigno Aquino has rejected calls to abandon the Visiting Forces Agreement. The murder came less than six months after the United States signed a 10-year agreement to revive its military presence in the Philippines, which is a former U.S. colony.

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