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Friday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Attn: His Excellency Teppo Tauriainen, Ambassador of Sweden

Re: The murder of Petite Jasmine

Your Excellency,

This is to inform you that Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau Work Educate & Resist (POWER) stand with sexworkers and their allies around the world to denounce the continued stigmatization of sexwork and sexworkers both in Sweden and globally.

Petite Jasmine was an outspoken advocate for sexworkers' rights and a known sexworker. The stigma leveled against sexworkers – a stigma which she fought personally and politically – contributed directly to her murder.

Petite Jasmine was murdered on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, by her ex-husband.

Because of her profession, and the stigmatization thereof, Petite Jasmine was deemed an unfit parent – this in spite of the fact that her ex-husband was already known to be violently abusive – and, thus, was denied custody of her children on the grounds that she was “romanticizing” prostitution and “didn't realize sexwork was a form of self-harm”. Even after years of court battles, Petite Jasmine could only see her children if she also remained in contact with a man who had behaved violently towards her on many occasions.

Since the custody ruling, Petite-Jasmine's ex-husband continued to behave violently towards her, stalking her and threatening her, yet all the complaints she brought to the police were dismissed out of hand, specifically because she was known to be a sexworker. The stigmatization of her work led directly to her reports of violence being denied and ignored.

Sweden's anti-sexwork laws espouse a goal of “ending demand”, and officially criminalize those who buy sexual services rather than those who sell them, however this model has, at its root, a view that all sexworkers are victims and all clients are

predators; a view that infantilizes workers and denies their experiences. By coding sexworkers as *only* and *always* victims, it creates an environment where real and specific instances of violence and victimization can be, *and are*, ignored and dismissed. It has led to the violation of workers' human rights rather than the protection thereof.

Because "end demand", and the accompanying denial of sexworkers' agency and experiences, consistently fails as a means of ending violence against us, POWER calls on the government of Sweden to reconsider its laws in favour of full decriminalization of all aspects of sexwork.

Sincerely,

The Membership and Board of Directors of POWER