



## Andrea Loi Valenzuela

1965 – 2010

Andrea Loi Valenzuela, a national of Chile, was a Human Rights Officer for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

She first traveled to the country in 1993 to work for the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH), a joint effort between the UN and the Organization of American States. She committed most of her life to helping the poor and the vulnerable in Haiti.

Andrea joined MINUSTAH in 2005 where she was responsible for investigating human rights violations in several impoverished areas in Haiti, including Port-de-Paix, Hinche and Ft. Liberté. Many of her UN colleagues left Haiti after working there for a while and moved on “but her moving on,” said a friend, “was to stay in Haiti.”

To many of her friends, Andrea was an unofficial ambassador of Haiti.

“Beneath that distinctive mane of blonde curls lies a brain that was like a database of all things Haitian,” said a friend. She remained close to ordinary Haitians and really defended their rights.

Andrea communicated effortlessly with Haitians in fluent Creole and French.

A Chilean diplomat and Andrea’s friend of 16 years said “she was never afraid of speaking her mind. She was fearless and would go after anybody to find information.”

“Many ordinary Haitians have been touched by her presence [...] and will surely mourn her untimely departure,” said a colleague.

Those who knew her said “she was radiant and the minute she walked into a room, the whole room came to life.”

A fearless human rights defender and a generous friend, “she brought light and hope to everything,” recalled another who knew her, adding “her loss is a colossal one for not only Haiti but for the UN system in Haiti.”

A lawyer by training, Andrea graduated in 1987 from the Gabriela Mistral University in Chile. The same year, she joined the Humanist Party and actively participated in the referendum of 1988.

Daughter of a renowned Chilean writer and architect, Andrea lived a life that was unimaginable to many Chilean women. One of her friends said, “She overcame cultural destiny. She was ahead of time for our country.” Andrea broke many barriers by not conforming to the traditional role of a woman from South America and led by example the empowerment of women, said her friend.

According to another friend, Andrea played an essential role in supporting the life of one of her friends during his battle with cancer. For four years, she would visit him whenever she could and cheered him up. She also organized parties and other events to lift his spirit. When he passed away, Andrea became part of his family.

“Andrea was a bright star, she was dazzling, full of enthusiasm and boundless energy,” said a friend. According to this friend, Andrea loved nature, food, traveling, art, Jacmel in Haiti, spending time with friends and reading books by Cortázar.

Andrea is survived by her grandmother, father, mother, two adult brothers and a younger sister and brother.