# Three Women Killed in Suspected Homophobic Attack in Buenos Aires Boarding House



Three women were killed and one remains hospitalized after a fire attack at a boarding house in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 6. The victims were identified as Pamela Cobas, 52; Mercedes Roxana Figueroa, 52; and Andrea Amarante, 42. Cobas died shortly after the attack, Figueroa succumbed to her injuries on May 10, and Amarante passed away on May 14. The fourth victim, 49-year-old Sofia Castro Riglos, is reportedly recovering in hospital.

Local reports suggest that the attack, involving a Molotov cocktail thrown into their room, may have been motivated by homophobia. The women were reportedly two lesbian couples. Witnesses stated that as the women attempted to escape the fire, the attacker, identified as Justo Fernando Barrientos, 62, beat and pushed them back into the flames.

Barrientos has a reported history of homophobic threats against the victims. He was detained by police and is accused of homicide and causing serious injuries. Police discovered burned rags soaked in flammable liquid at the scene.

The incident has elicited strong reactions, with the Argentine LGBT Federation calling it a "potentially abhorrent hate crime." Human Rights Watch noted a rise in anti-LGBT sentiment in Argentina, which has been exacerbated by inflammatory rhetoric from political figures. The investigation is ongoing.