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His Holiness, Pope Francis PP.
Apostolic Palace
Via del Pellegrino
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Your Holiness,

I have the honor of writing this letter to request an audience to draw attention to the issue of harassment in the work place.

In the footsteps of my great grandfather, who received a medal from the Vatican for his services to society and the Vatican in particular (copy of documentation attached), I have conducted my personal life and my thirty years of professional activity in accordance with the principles that benefit public health and humanity as a whole.

In recent years, I have had a professional experience which has made me aware of the devastating effects of psychological harassment, particularly with reference to abuses that occur in an increasing number of large corporations. This is the issue which today preoccupies me to the highest degree, as it is a huge injustice to the victims as well as a threat to society in general.

According to my experience, psychological harassment is a mental torture that organizations perpetrate on their victims, very much like the techniques that some governments have used to break their prisoners and to extract information from them. Similarly, psychological harassment in the work place leads to the breakdown of the personality of the person and causes unbearable suffering and long-term damage, to a point that their mere existence becomes impossible; to others, this damage is invisible and perhaps beyond their comprehension. This situation results in the further isolation of the victims, a condition which aggravates their health and social status.

Depending on the intensity and length of the abuse, some lose their means of livelihood and even the capacity to work, to socialize or to maintain an intellectual activity. A spiral of ill-health sets in; in some cases, it may lead to violence towards others or the person him/herself.

In today's work environment, psychological harassment has become a common tool in management. Like the sword of Damocles, it is held over employees to control and bend them to the will of their employers, no matter how unethical this may be. Subsequently, employees live in constant fear: the fear of demotion, the fear of an eventual dismissal and subsequent unemployment, the fear of humiliation and loss of social status. These compel employees to silently accept any wrongdoing or even to participate in unethical practices.

Such is the reality of today's work and business environment. In some of the multinational corporations, the situation of employees is particularly difficult as they do not have the means to confront their employers in a legal procedure. In a world with increasing competitiveness, be it for employment or financial gain, such practices are increasing, with devastating effects on employees and their families.

In psychological harassment, it is the soul that suffers primarily. Therefore, I look up to our religious leaders, as guardians of our moral values, to protect people from the harm that is brought to the soul and the violence that it eventually engenders in society.

I would be grateful if you would be willing to receive me so that I might brief you on my experience, and discuss possible countermeasures such as:

- a) Raising public awareness on the issue of psychological harassment and bring this matter to the attention of media and humanitarian organizations;
- b) Exhorting governments, worldwide, to:
 - i. preserve and protect employees' rights, and not to give away their health and well-being for financial and economic gains in society;
 - ii. reinforce their legal measures against inhumane treatment of their employees, in particular the need for considering harassment a crime, as much as any physical torture or injury; and
 - iii. develop interventions for the prevention of harassment and provide judicial support in investigating reported cases.
- c) Reinforcing employees' rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and urging international organizations to develop instruments to implement these.

I would be grateful to have the opportunity to meet you in person to share with you my experience and possible ways and means that such harassment may be reduced.

With every good wish to Your Holiness, I am, sincerely yours

Yasmine Motarjemi

Enclosures