

URGENT ACTION

MARINES ABDUCT ADULT AND TWO CHILDREN

Three people, two of them children, were detained by Mexican marines in the northern city of Nuevo Laredo in late July and have not been seen since. The military authorities have denied arresting them. They may have been subjected to enforced disappearance.

José de Jesús Martínez Chigo and 17-year-old **Diana Laura Hernández Acosta** were driving home in the early hours of 29 July in Nuevo Laredo, northern Mexico, when marines stopped them at a checkpoint. According to a relative of José Martínez who was nearby and saw their arrest, marines forced them and another driver into a military vehicle and drove them to a provisional military compound at a local sports stadium. The relative drove after them and saw them go in. He told the family what had happened. Both victims' families went to the base the same day, but were told that no civilians were detained there. Relatives have filed a complaint at the local branch of the Federal Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General de la República*) supported by several eyewitness statements confirming the marines' involvement.

In a separate incident, 17-year-old **Raúl David Álvarez Gutiérrez** was stopped by marines at a checkpoint in the south of the city on 30 July at about 11.30am. Eyewitnesses including a family friend, have told his relatives that marines asked him to come out of his car and, after a brief conversation they took him to a military lorry. Raúl Álvarez has not been seen since. The eyewitnesses have been unwilling to testify for fear of reprisals. Relatives tried to file a complaint with the Federal Attorney General's Office, but they were refused on the grounds that they could not provide witnesses.

The military authorities have so far failed to respond to requests from relatives and a local human rights organization for information concerning the detention and whereabouts of the three people.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern that José de Jesús Martínez, Diana Laura Hernández Acosta and David Álvarez Gutiérrez appear to have been subjected to enforced disappearance by Mexican marines since 29 and 30 July, and calling on the authorities to reveal where they are and ensure their safety;
- Calling on the civilian authorities to carry out a prompt, full and impartial investigation into their apparent abduction by members of the Mexican Navy, publish its findings and bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on them to ensure that the three people's families and eyewitnesses receive protection in line with their wishes, and ensure that all agencies cooperate with civilian investigations and measures to locate the victims.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO:

Federal Attorney General

Jesús Murillo Karam
Procuraduría General de la República
Paseo de la reforma 211-213
Col. Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06500
Mexico City, Mexico
Fax: +52 55 5346 0908
Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General /
Estimado Señor Procurador**

Secretary for the Navy

Almirante Vidal Soberón Sanz
Secretaría de Marina
Eje 2 Oriente, Tramo Heroica Escuela
Naval Militar Núm. 861
Col. Los Cipreses, Delagacion Coyoacán
México D.F., CP. 04830
Mexico

Email: srio@semar.gob.mx
**Salutation: Dear Secretary /
Estimado Señor Secretario**

And copies to:

NGO
Comité de Derechos Humanos de Nuevo
Laredo
Calle Enriqueta Castañeda #8836
Col. La Joya
Nuevo Laredo C.P. 88125
Tamaulipas, Mexico

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The number of people who have gone missing in Mexico - whether abducted by criminal gangs or subjected to enforced disappearance by public officials – has grown substantially since December 2006 when the then federal authorities launched a large-scale policing operation, involving the deployment of the military, to combat organized crime. In February 2013, the current government, led by President Enrique Peña Nieto, published a list of more than 26,000 people who had been reported missing since 2006. The government has failed to provide any further information on the whereabouts of these people.

Amnesty International has documented at least 152 people who have gone missing since 2007. In at least 85 of these cases there is sufficient evidence of the involvement of public officials to make them enforced disappearances under international law. These include the enforced disappearance of six men in Nuevo Laredo by members of the Mexican navy in 2011. Despite the National Human Rights Commission recognising these enforced disappearances and recommending a full investigation, their whereabouts remain unknown and military officials have never been held to account (<http://www.amnesty.org/es/library/info/AMR41/044/2011/es>).

The government of President Peña Nieto has partly recognised the gravity of the situation, but not the scale of involvement of public officials in enforced disappearances and the consistent failure to conduct proper investigations. Many state governments are still in complete denial.

In only two cases of enforced disappearance have those responsible been brought to justice since 2006. In all other cases the perpetrators remain at large, which puts further people at risk and leaves the fate and whereabouts of thousands of victims unknown.

In May 2013 the Federal Attorney General established the Specialized Search Unit for Disappeared People (*Unidad Especializada de Búsqueda de Personas Desaparecidas*) and initially staffed it with 12 prosecutors. It is possible that hundreds of cases have already been allocated to this unit but it is unclear whether it has been equipped with the necessary resources to carry out its tasks. The Federal Attorney General and the 32 State Attorney Generals have adopted common procedures for handling cases of people who have gone missing or been subjected to enforced disappearance, but these have not been made public, widely applied or assessed.

These are as yet small-scale and isolated measures which do not adequately address the systemic failure of federal and state authorities to respect the rights of victims to truth, justice and reparation. They are also insufficient to clarify the direct or indirect involvement of public officials in enforced disappearances.

Amnesty International's latest report on this issue, *Confronting a nightmare. Disappearances in Mexico*, was published on 4 June 2013 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/mexico-relatives-disappeared-deserve-more-promises-2013-06-04>)

A web action for this campaign is available here: <http://www.alzatuvoz.org/hastaencontrarles/> (in Spanish only).

Name: José de Jesús Martínez Chigo (m), Diana Laura Hernández Acosta (f), Raúl David Álvarez Gutiérrez (m)
Gender m/f: both

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