

URGENT ACTION

RELATIVES OF THE DISAPPEARED INTIMIDATED

A group of relatives of the disappeared in Querétaro state, including Brenda Rangel Ortiz, have been intimidated for demanding a meeting with state authorities.

On 27 July three tires of the car belonging to **Brenda Rangel Ortiz** were slashed in the central Mexican city of Querétaro. On 26 July Brenda informed state officials that she and other relatives of the disappeared would hold a demonstration after the refusal of officials to agree a meeting between the Querétaro State Governor and the group of relatives. It is believed the tire slashing was an act of intimidation intended to deter the group from demonstrating.

According to relatives of the disappeared, during the demonstration on 27 July which blocked one lane of a highway out of the city, government officials warned Brenda Rangel that security forces were being sent "who would give her a beating" (*quien le parta su madre*). Despite the arrival of heavily armed police and other unidentified civilians monitoring the demonstration, it concluded without further incidents.

On 31 July, relatives of the disappeared were granted a meeting with the Querétaro State Governor to ask for information on the steps taken by state authorities to investigate disappearances and abductions. Brenda Rangel raised the case of her brother **Héctor Rangel Ortiz**, who was forcibly disappeared in the state of Coahuila in November 2009, with the collusion of local police. The governor reportedly promised to inform families of the steps taken to locate the victims and investigate the disappearances, but did not address the acts of intimidation against Brenda Rangel.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to initiate a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the acts of intimidation against Brenda Rangel Ortiz on 27 July and for those responsible to be held to account;
- Urging them to provide effective security to Brenda Rangel Ortiz and the families of the disappeared in Querétaro State, in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the governor to promptly provide information to relatives on steps taken to investigate disappearances and locate victims, including pressing other state and federal authorities to fully investigate cases, including the case of Héctor Rangel Ortiz, and hold perpetrators to account.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 SEPTEMBER 2014 TO:

Querétaro State Governor

Lic. José E. Calzada Rovirosa
Gobierno del Estado de Querétaro
5 de Mayo Esq. Luis Pasteur
Querétaro, C.P. 76000, Mexico
Fax: +52 442 214 2929
Email: poderejecutivo@queretaro.gob.mx
Twitter: @ppcalzada

**Salutation: Dear Governor / Estimado
Señor Gobernador**

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**

And copies to:

FUUNDEC
Hidalgo Sur 166, Zona Centro
Saltillo, C.P. 2500, Coahuila, Mexico
Email:
dhsaltillo.desapariciones@gmail.com
Facebook: FUUNDECoahuila

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 304/13. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/071/2013/en

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The number of people who have disappeared or 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 published a list of more than 26,000 people who had been reported missing since 2006. In May 2014 the government officials reported that 16,000 continued missing, but failed to make clear how they had reached that figure.

Many relatives of victims have faced threats and intimidation from criminals and public officials, as well as indifference or inadequate responses from state institutions. Around 70 of these families, including the Rangels, have formed Fuerzas Unidas por Nuestros Desaparecidos en Coahuila (Joint Forces for our Disappeared in Coahuila, FUUNDEC) in order to pressure the authorities in a coordinated way.

Héctor Rangel disappeared with two other people on 10 November 2009 in the city of Monclova, Coahuila state, after they were stopped by municipal police. They were making a brief business trip but they were never seen again. Given the lack of investigation, Brenda Rangel and her relatives carried out their own enquiries, at great personal risk. Since June 2013 the case has been assigned to the Specialized Search Unit for Disappeared People (Unidad Especializada de Búsqueda de Personas Desaparecidas) of the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR). To date, Héctor Rangel's whereabouts remain unknown and nobody has been brought to justice.

According to international law, only those cases in which public officials are implicated directly or indirectly, constitute enforced disappearance. Nevertheless, international law also requires the authorities to investigate all disappearances or abductions regardless of the suspected perpetrator and bring those responsible to justice. The authorities have frequently tried to place sole blame for all abductions at the door of organized criminal gangs and failed to conduct basic investigations. As a result, evidence of collusion or direct involvement of public officials has been ignored so cases are almost never investigated as enforced disappearances.

Amnesty International's 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>). Brenda Rangel tells her own story to Amnesty International in this video clip: bit.ly/brendarangel. Several other families from FUUNDEC and other groups feature this video clip: bit.ly/tirelesssearch.

Name: Brenda Rangel Ortiz (f), Héctor Rangel Ortiz (m) and families of disappeared victims in Querétaro State
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 304/13 Index: AMR 41/030/2014 Issue Date: 31 July 2014