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## **Mexico: President-elect and his government must turn a new leaf in the protection of human rights**

*President-elect Vicente Fox and his future government must make a clean break with Mexico's century-long history of political violence and gross human rights abuses, Amnesty International said today in the wake of Sunday's presidential and parliamentary elections.*

*The President-to-be must at the very earliest opportunity make clear to all Mexicans and the international community that the unrestricted protection of human rights will be a cornerstone of his government's policies and program of work. These must include laying the foundations for effective reform of the institutions designed to protect human rights and bring about an end to impunity.*

*Human rights reforms under the previous governments of the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), in power for over 70 years, have frequently been marred by unchecked arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and killings. For the victims of these abuses, truth and justice has been ignored for too long.*

*A long-standing and widespread lack of confidence in the ability of Mexico's security forces and judicial system to operate within the rule of law is one of the central challenges which the new government must address.*

*Amnesty International has been reporting on Mexico's human rights situation for over 35 years. During these years the organization has documented and appealed to the authorities on thousands of individuals whose rights -- including the right to life -- were taken away from them.*

*The vast majority of these victims never took on the high profile associated with cases like the 1968 massacre of hundreds of students in Mexico City or the 1997 killing of 45 indigenous men, women and children in Acteal, Chiapas. But they are no less important.*

*"President-elect Vicente Fox of the Partido de Accion Nacional (PAN), his yet to be appointed ministers, and the newly-elected representatives in Congress and the Senate must rise to the challenge at a moment when the international community is placing human rights at the centre of its agenda," the organization said.*

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