

URGENT ACTION

BROTHER OF WITNESS RECEIVES DEATH THREAT

The brother of a witness to an alleged extrajudicial execution in the town of Puerto de San Felipe, Baja California state, northern Mexico, has received a death threat. He and the relatives of another witness, and of the victim of the killing, are in grave danger.

On 13 November, a note was delivered to the house of **Alonso Ruíz Lara**. On the note, someone had drawn three crosses. One cross was labelled with the name of Guillermo Audelo Murrieta, who was killed on 20 August 2011, and another was labelled with the name of Jesús Manuel Moreno, who died on 13 November 2011. Alonso Ruíz Lara's name was written on the third cross. According to the family a campaign of harassment, apparently instigated by members of the 19th Infantry Company of the Mexican Army based in San Felipe, began after a soldier sexually harassed Guillermo Audelo's wife. Guillermo Audelo's family have filed an official complaint. No action has yet been taken to protect them. Jesús Manuel Moreno, whose name was included in the death threat, was the brother of Guillermo Audelo's wife. He died after a fire at his home. Amnesty International has no further information on the circumstances of his death.

On 20 August, Guillermo Audelo was in a hotel with two friends, **Julio César Ruíz Lara** and **Lorenzo Antonio Ruíz Lara** (brothers of Alonso Ruíz Lara). Soldiers raided their hotel room, and killed Guillermo Audelo Murrieta. The details of his death are still unclear, and are being investigated by the National Human Rights Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos - CNDH*), and a military authority. The two other men were arrested during the raid. They have alleged that Guillermo Audelo was tortured then extrajudicially executed, and that they were tortured and threatened with death if they mentioned what had happened to him. The men are detained on drugs and firearms charges. They have filed an official complaint about their treatment. It appears that the death threat issued to Alonso Ruíz Lara is an attempt to stop his family and the family of Guillermo Audelo Murrieta from testifying against military personnel or pursuing their complaint for harassment.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure that Alonso Ruíz Lara, his family, and the family of Guillermo Audelo Murrieta, receive all necessary protection, in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling for an investigation into the death threat, and assurances that the men and their families are not subject to death threats and malicious or unfounded prosecutions in reprisal for their complaints against military officers;
- Calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation by the civilian authorities into the apparent pattern of harassment and ill-treatment and threats against members of the Audelo Murrieta and Ruíz Lara families, including the clarification of the killing of Guillermo Audelo Murrieta and the alleged torture of family members, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JANUARY 2012 TO:

Attorney General of the Republic

Marisela Morales Ibáñez

Av. Paseo de la reforma 211 – 213

Col. Cuauhtémoc, Del. Cuauhtémoc

México D.F., C.P. 06500, México

Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (keep trying and ask for "fax")

Email: mmoralesi@pgr.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Minister of Defence

Gral. Guillermo Galván Galván

Secretario de Defensa Nacional

Manuel Avila Camacho Esq con Av.

Industria Militar S/N, Col. Lomas de Sotelo,

Miguel Hidalgo, México DF

C.P. 11640, México

Fax: +52 55 55575571

Email: ggalvang@mail.sedena.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

National Human Rights Commission

Comisión Nacional de los Derechos

Humanos de México

Email: correo@cndh.org.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to the family of Guillermo Audelo Murrieta, on one occasion in the summer of 2010 an army lieutenant with the 19th Infantry Company (XIX Compañía de Infantería No Encuadrada), began to sexually harass Guillermo Audelo Murrieta's wife. After Guillermo Audelo Murrieta requested that the soldier stopped, the military carried out a series of searches without warrants on the family home. On 1 May 2011, their home was raided by soldiers while Guillermo Audelo was absent. They arrested his 16-year-old son, Guillermo Audelo Amador, as well as an 18-year-old and another 16-year-old present in the house at the time. All were detained for over 15 days. The two 16 year-olds were held in the military base and apparently tortured, including with plastic bags over their heads, to extract information about Guillermo Audelo's whereabouts. As a result the family filed a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH). In June 2011, the state human rights commission (Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos) supported the request for protection measures on behalf of the family. They have not yet received any protection.

On 19 August 2011, 16 soldiers raided Guillermo Audelo's home without a warrant, again in search of Guillermo Audelo. The officer in charge made death threats against the family. Guillermo Audelo's wife was arrested and charged with possession of drugs which the family allege were planted by soldiers. She was later released on bail pending the outcome of her prosecution.

More than 50,000 Mexican military personnel have been deployed in law enforcement duties during Felipe Calderon's presidency to combat organized criminal gangs responsible for tens of thousands of killings. The military deployment has resulted in a huge rise in reports of grave human rights violations such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary detentions. The consistent failure of military or civilian justice system to effectively and impartially investigate allegations of military abuses has resulted in some military personnel operating beyond the reach of the law and in violation of human rights norms. The government has repeatedly refused to acknowledge the systematic nature of abuses or ensure that thorough investigations are undertaken. As a result, virtually all victims of abuses committed by the armed forces are denied access to justice or an effective remedy.

Name: Alonso Ruíz Lara, Julio César Ruíz Lara, Lorenzo Antonio Ruíz Lara,
Gender m/f: m

UA: 344/11 Index: AMR 41/075/2011 Issue Date: 24 November 2011

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