

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Mexico: The protection of human rights defenders and journalists is in the hands of the legislators

Amnesty International is calling on members of the Chamber of Deputies to approve a draft bill that will create a protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists at risk before the end of this legislative session.

We were pleased to hear yesterday that this legislative proposal had been unanimously approved by the Senate. This is a most important step and it is now for the Chamber of Deputies to take one step further in making this law a reality.

It is essential that the Deputies take this unique opportunity and prioritise their consideration of this bill, approving it without amendment.

Amnesty International considers the efforts of the non-governmental human rights organizations and Senators, who have agreed and promoted the adoption of this new legal framework, to be a positive example of civil society participation in achieving important progress in human rights.

We hope that the Chamber of Deputies will recognise these efforts, and the difficult situation facing human rights defenders, and approve this bill, setting aside any possible party political differences.

There have been national and international calls for a number of years now for an effective and lasting protection mechanism to be established, and for the legislative authorities to ensure its enforcement.

The government made a commitment to Mexican society and the international community that it would comply with this essential demand in order to combat attacks and threats against human rights defenders and journalists.

The vote in the Senate fulfilled part of this legislative obligation. It is now for the Chamber of Deputies to take responsibility and ensure that the bill becomes law during this last legislative session before the elections.

Amnesty International recognises that a protection mechanism is crucial to improve the situation of defenders and journalists but also notes that it is essential for the authorities to make progress in bringing the ongoing impunity for these crimes to an end.

In this regard, Amnesty International regrets that progress in this bill of law has thus far not been replicated in the initiative to reform the Military Criminal Code that is with the Senate. The organization is concerned at the news that the plenary debate on the ruling issued is apparently at a standstill. If the Senate refuses to approve a reform consistent with the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation then this will be a serious step in the wrong direction for Mexican society and in terms of fulfilling its duty to the victims of human rights violations committed by members of the Armed Forces.