

**Amnesty International
Public Statement**

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It is time for Mexico to implement the protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists

Amnesty International welcomes the unanimous approval by Mexico's Chamber of Deputies of two important laws to improve the protection of human rights in Mexico.

The Law for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists establishes a clear legal mechanism for cooperation of federal and state authorities to implement effective measures to protect human rights defenders and journalists at risk. The full participation of representatives of civil society in the mechanism will be essential to ensure its effectiveness and legitimacy.

The Victims' Law (*ley general de víctimas*) establishes the obligation on federal, state and municipal authorities to provide assistance, support and reparations to all victims of crime and human rights violations, including the right to protection, truth, justice and restitution.

Amnesty International calls on President Calderon's government to sign and publish the laws to bring them into force as soon as possible. It urges the government to ensure that implementing legislation for both bills is urgently developed in consultation with civil society.

The mechanism to protect human rights defenders and journalists agreed between the Interior Ministry and civil society must now be strengthened. It is time to give this the full force of the new law and ensure all operational protocols are agreed and resources are in place to guarantee its effectiveness.

It is also vital that the authorities do not assume that their responsibilities are restricted to establishing a protection mechanism. Impunity for threats, attacks and killings of human rights defenders and journalists remains the greatest obstacle to improving the safety of the vital social actors.

The killing of Proceso journalist, Regina Martinez, in Veracruz on 28 April once again demonstrates their vulnerability. This crime must not be allowed to go unpunished like so many others.

Holding perpetrators of abuses to account and ensuring the protection of victims, journalists and human rights defenders are both essential steps to improve the human rights situation in Mexico.