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## **Mexican Senate must end impunity for armed forces' human rights violations**

Mexico's military justice system is failing victims of alleged human rights violations by the army and navy, but the Mexican Senate has a key opportunity to change that, Amnesty International said today.

"If the Mexican legislature wants to prove they have a real commitment to upholding human rights, they will seize this key opportunity to reform the military justice system once and for all, and ensure civilian justice to investigate and try all cases of human rights violations by the armed forces," said Daniel Zapico, Amnesty International Mexico director.

"This would bring Mexico in line with international human rights standards as well as rulings by the Inter American Court of Human Rights on the matter over the last years."

Numerous UN human rights mechanisms have recommended that the Mexican authorities reform the country's military justice system – in particular, to limit its scope and ensure the civilian justice system is responsible for investigating and trying cases of alleged human rights violations by the armed forces. The Inter American Court of Human Rights and Mexico's Supreme Court have further established that the state has an obligation to do so.

As Mexico's Senate takes up debate on a bill to reform the Military Justice Code, Amnesty International is asking senators to modify the proposed bill to ensure that human rights violations are investigated and tried in the civilian justice system.

Amnesty International Mexico has been writing and lobbying Mexican members of Congress and today Daniel Zapico of AI Mexico will make a presentation to the Senate as part of a series of public hearings on the proposed bill to reform the Military Justice Code.

"Amnesty International's experience around the world, in the Americas region, and, in Mexico in particular, shows that military justice is an obstacle to ending impunity for human rights violations committed by the armed forces, as military justice lacks independence, impartiality and transparency," said Zapico.

"From the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968 until the enforced disappearances in Nuevo Laredo in August this year, Amnesty International has documented consistent failure to investigate human rights violations committed by the Mexican armed forces, leaving victims and relatives with no access to truth and justice," said Zapico.

According to [the report "Spiralling human rights violations and impunity"](#), Amnesty International's submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review which will take place in October 2013, there has been a surge in cases of grave human rights violations committed by the armed forces since 2006. Most of those cases have been accompanied by impunity.

**Note to editors**

A copy of Amnesty International's letter to Mexican senators is available (in Spanish) [here](#).