

URGENT ACTION

POLICEMEN FORCE ENTRY INTO WOMEN'S SHELTER

Heavily armed policemen forced their way into a Mexican women's shelter on 9 June. This has threatened the safety and security of the women inside, many of whom were hiding there from violent partners.

At 12.30 on 9 June, 14 men, including six heavily-armed municipal policemen and a state court official, arrived at a shelter for the protection of women at grave risk due to extreme violence (Sin Violencia, Refugio para Mujeres en situacion de riesgo por violencia extrema), in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state, northern Mexico. The men demanded entry to the shelter and showed staff an official court document, which ordered public forces to search for a young girl who they said had been kidnapped. The document did not refer to the women's shelter. When the staff at the shelter refused to allow the men entry, because the shelter's protocols on protection and confidentiality do not allow men to enter the premises, they were repeatedly threatened. One of the policemen pointed at his gun and said to the coordinator of the shelter, "You're going to regret this, you'll get yourself into trouble, it's better if you cooperate or we will push down the doors and break the locks" (se van a arrepentir, se meteran en problemas, es mejor que cooperen, y vamos a tirar las puertas y a violar las chapas").

Following repeated threats and fearing for their lives, the staff eventually allowed the men into the shelter. The armed men violently searched the shelter, turning over furniture and searching under beds. The men left when they realised that the young girl they were searching for was not being held at the shelter.

Many of the survivors of physical and sexual violence under protection at the shelter have fled violent partners, who include several municipal policemen. The entry of armed policemen into the shelter breached their confidentiality and jeopardised the security of the women at the shelter, exposing them to future reprisals.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to take urgent measures to reinstate high security protection measures for the shelter, its staff and the women and children who are currently staying at the shelter according to their wishes;
- Calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the forced entry into the shelter and reports of intimidation during the search;
- Urging the authorities to respect the confidentiality and security of women's shelter for the protection of victims of violence by avoiding any further attempts to enter women's shelters which contravene the shelter's protocols.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 JULY 2010 TO:

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. José Reyes Baeza Terrazas
Gobernador del Estado de Chihuahua,
Palacio de Gobierno, 1er piso, C.
Aldama #901, Col. Centro,
Chihuahua, Estado de Chihuahua, C.P.
31000, Mexico

**Fax: +52 614 429 3300 (then dial
extension 11066 when prompted)**

Salutation: Dear Governor

Mayor of Ciudad Juárez

Lic. José Reyes Ferriz
Presidente Municipal de Ciudad Juárez
Unidad Administrativa Benito Juárez.
Primer piso, ala norte.
Av. Francisco Villa # 950 Norte, Cd.
Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico

Fax: +52 656 615 0690

Salutation: Dear Mayor

And copies to:

Centro de Derechos Humanos de las
Mujeres
Av. Juarez no. 4107/B
Chihuahua
Chih
Mexico

Email: cedehm@prodigy.net.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are extremely high levels of violent crime and impunity in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state, including high levels of violence against women. The municipal and state authorities have consistently failed to take effective action to combat violence against women and improve the safety of women at risk. Women's rights organizations have campaigned for many years for justice and safety for women and have established some services for women so that survivors of violence can receive medical and psychological assistance in a place of safety. The confidentiality and security of these facilities is essential in order to guarantee the safety of the women and staff.

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