

# URGENT ACTION

## DEMAND PROTECTION FOR RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED

The relative of a disappeared young man in Mexico has been assaulted and threatened in an apparent attempt to stop him and his family from campaigning on their case. In July the authorities withdrew police protection for the family, days after another relative visited Canada to campaign with Amnesty International. Existing protection measures are inadequate as they failed to prevent the latest attack.

**Víctor Manuel García Herrera** is the brother-in-law of Héctor Rangel Ortiz, who disappeared in northern Mexico in 2009. Víctor García told Amnesty International that on 22 September at 4pm three armed men hit and kicked him to the ground in his home city of Querétaro, central Mexico, where the Rangel family is from. While they hit and kicked him, they told him “calm down or we’ll kidnap you. This is for you to calm down, fucking lawyer. You guys don’t even know you’re in deep shit” (*ya bájale o te vamos a dar un levantón. Esto es para que te aplaques, pinche abogado. No sabes en qué pedos se están metiendo*).

Víctor García and his wife, **Brenda Rangel Ortiz**, have vocally campaigned to get truth and justice for Héctor Rangel. Since beginning their campaign, they have received threats from local police officers, as well as death threats from a detainee during judicial proceedings. Federal authorities granted them police protection in 2013, but it was cancelled, without warning or adequate explanation on 6 July 2016, days after Brenda Rangel returned from Canada where she campaigned with Amnesty International on disappearances in Mexico. The authorities left them with minimal protection measures which failed to prevent the latest attack. Brenda Rangel and Víctor García also support dozens of families who are looking for their disappeared relatives in Querétaro state.

### Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to immediately and effectively protect Víctor García, Brenda Rangel and their family, including through police protection measures, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on them to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the 22 September incident and bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on them to establish the fate and whereabouts of Héctor Rangel Ortiz, and bring those responsible to justice;
- Calling on them to take effective measures to prevent and combat disappearances in Mexico, including by passing new legislation to protect victims and establish an effective search system across the country.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 NOVEMBER 2016 TO:

Federal Human Rights Undersecretary  
 Roberto Campa Cifrián  
 Subsecretario de Derechos Humanos  
 Secretaría de Gobernación  
 Dinamarca 86, Colonia Juárez,  
 Del. Cuauhtémoc, Ciudad de México,  
 C.P. 06600, México  
 Email: rcampa@segob.gob.mx  
 Twitter: @1campa  
**Salutation: Dear Undersecretary /**  
**Estimado Subsecretario**

Federal Attorney General  
 Arely Gómez González  
 Procuradora General de la República  
 Paseo de la Reforma 211-213,  
 Delegación Cuauhtémoc, Ciudad de  
 México, C.P. 06500, México  
 Email: arely.gomez@pgr.gob.mx  
 Twitter: @ArelyGomezGlz  
 Facebook: SenArelyGomezG  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General /**  
**Estimada Señora Procuradora**

**And solidarity messages to:**  
 Brenda Rangel and Víctor García  
 Email:  
 brennadesaparecidosjusticia@gmail.com  
 Facebook: brenn.rangel  
 Twitter: @brennrangel

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 304/13. Further information:

[www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR41/030/2014/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR41/030/2014/en/)

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INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Héctor Rangel has been disappeared since November 2009, moments after municipal police in the northern city of Monclova, Coahuila state, stopped him while he was driving his car. Brenda Rangel and the rest of her family have been searching for him since then, at great risk, and demanding the authorities establish his whereabouts and bring those responsible to justice. The case is with prosecutors of the Coahuila state Attorney General's Office and the Federal Attorney General's Office. The investigation is ongoing but there has been very little progress. In fact, three police officers were acquitted earlier this year. The Rangel family was unable to challenge this because the authorities failed to inform them before the legal deadline.

Brenda Rangel and Víctor García run the small local organization "Desaparecidos Justicia" (Justice for the Disappeared) and have supported 48 families who have suffered disappearances in Querétaro state. They have located 16 victims, nine of them alive.

According to current official figures, more than 28,000 people have disappeared or gone missing in Mexico, most of them since 2007. Most of these cases seem to have taken place under the current administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto. Many of these abductions have been carried out by criminal gangs and it is unclear whether any public officials could have played a role. In other cases, there is direct or indirect involvement of public officials, amounting to enforced disappearances under international law. The spike in disappearances has coincided with the "war on crime" on the part of the authorities. Impunity is the norm for these crimes. In 2015 the government told the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances that it had achieved six convictions in cases of enforced disappearances.

The Mexican government has taken some steps to address the crisis of disappearances in the country, but the measures have failed to match the gravity of the situation or to show meaningful results. In November 2014 President Peña Nieto promised to support a General Law on Disappearances, which would be binding at the federal, state and municipality levels. However, the law is still a paper promise. Dozens of networks of relatives from across the country, including Brenda Rangel and her family, have launched a campaign to demand a prompt and effective law (see [www.sinlasfamiliasno.org](http://www.sinlasfamiliasno.org)) and to be fully included in the process.

In order to be effective, the law must fulfil all international standards on this matter, such as:

- Correct definition of the crime of enforced disappearance (in which officials are directly or indirectly involved) and the crime of disappearance committed by non-state actors;
- Establishing the obligation on the part of the authorities to launch an immediate and effective search of anyone reported missing, through specific procedures which should be developed in consultation with experts, civil society organizations and relatives of victims;
- Ensuring that relatives of victims can promptly and effectively get a "certificate of absence" (*declaración de ausencia*) of their loved ones in order to protect their property, social security and other rights.

Name: Víctor Manuel García Herrera (m), Brenda Rangel Ortiz (f) and their family

Gender m/f: all

Further information on UA: 3034/13 Index: AMR 41/4916/2016 Issue Date: 29 September 2016