

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/018/2003

11 April 2003

Further Information on UA 36/03 (AMR 41/005/2003, 7 February 2003) and follow-up (AMR 41/008/2003, 20 February 2003) - Fear for safety/possible abduction

MEXICO

Erika Abigail Loera Varela (f), aged 26
Viviana Rayas (f), aged 16
Marisela Ortíz Rivera (f), human rights defender

Erika Abigail Loera Varela, who was reported missing on 20 December 2002 in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua State, has been found and is safe and well. Amnesty International is however, concerned for the safety of both Viviana Rayas who went missing on 16 March 2003 and Marixela Ortíz Rivera, who was reportedly subjected to acts of intimidation and harassment following her work as a human rights defender.

Sixteen year old Viviana Rayas was reportedly last seen on 16 March 2003 in the City of Chihuahua, Chihuahua State. Prior to going missing, she had been with a study group of school students carrying out a school assignment. At 5.30 pm she left to take the bus home, but never arrived. Viviana's parents, friends and colleagues searched for her, but were unable to locate her. A report was lodged with the *Procuraduría General de Justicia de Estado de Chihuahua*, (PGJE), Chihuahua State Prosecutor's Office. Despite the case being reported as abduction, the authorities allegedly do not consider there to be sufficient grounds to investigate it on this basis. At present, Viviana's family have not been given any information about the progress of the enquiry.

Viviana is the eighth young woman to go missing in the City of Chihuahua since December 2002. In 2002, a young woman called Paloma Anglica Escobar Ledesma went missing in the city. A month later she was found dead near to the main road to Ciudad Juárez, the other major city of the state. She had been raped and tortured. Since 1993 scores of women have gone missing and been murdered in Ciudad Juárez. The authorities have failed to effectively prevent or investigate this pattern of crimes.

Marisela Ortíz Rivera is a women's rights defender who works with *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, Our Daughters Return Home, which is one of the organizations created by mothers of the missing and murdered young women of Ciudad Juárez. Her organization has made frequent public criticism of the failure of the authorities to effectively investigate these crimes and campaigns for justice on behalf of the victims and their families.

On 20 March, as Marisela Ortíz Rivera was driving home, she was followed by a van which stopped her vehicle and rammed into her at a set of traffic lights. She managed to escape, but the following day the driver of the van was seen outside her house. Her family reported the details of the van and driver to the police. They have not received any further information regarding action taken by the authorities to investigate the incident or apprehend the driver.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Viviana Rayas who went missing in Chihuahua on 16 March 2003;
- calling on the authorities to investigate urgently, impartially and effectively the fate of Viviana Rayas and inform the family of all steps taken to establish her whereabouts;
- expressing concern for the safety of Marixela Ortíz Rivera and other members of *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, Our Daughters Return Home, and calling for their safety to be guaranteed;

- calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the reported act of intimidation against Marixela Ortiz Rivera and the results to be made public;
- urging prompt, full, effective and impartial investigations, enjoying the full collaboration of state and federal institutions, of all cases of women who have been murdered or gone missing in Chihuahua State in similar circumstances;
- calling for the authorities to take effective steps to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women in Chihuahua State.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. Patricio Martínez

Aldama 901

Colonia Centro

Chihuahua State

Mexico

Telegram: Governor of Chihuahua State, Chihuahua State, Mexico

Fax: + 52 614 429 3464

Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of the Republic

General Rafael Marcial Macedo de la Concha

Procurador General de la Republica

Procuraduría General de la República

Reforma Norte esq.Violeta 75

Col. Guerrero

Delegación Cuauhtémoc

C.P. 06300, México D.F., Mexico

Telegram: Attorney General of the Republic, Mexico DF, Mexico

Fax: +52 555 346 0983 (if someone answers, ask for the fax: *pedir tono de fax, por favor*)

Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

Attorney General of Chihuahua State

Lic. Jesús José Solís

Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Chihuahua

Calle Vicente Guerrero 616

Col Centro

Chihuahua State

CP. 31000, Mexico

Telegram: Attorney General of Chihuahua State, Chihuahua State, Mexico

Fax: +52 614 415 0314

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/ Señor Procurador

Minister of Interior

Maestro Ricardo Sepúlveda Iguiniz

Secretaría de Gobernación

Reforma 99, PISO 21, PH

Colonia Tabacalera

C.P. 06030, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Telegram: Interior Minister, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Fax: + 52 (please try with or without a 55 here and then dial) 51 28 02 34/ 02 24

Salutation: Dear Interior Minister/Estimado Maestro

COPIES TO:

Mexican Comisión for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights

Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A.C. (CMDPDH)

Tehuantepec 155

Col. Roma Sur

CP 5584 2731, Mexico DF, Mexico

Email: **cmdpdh@laneta.apc.org**

Please also send copies to Viviana Rayas' family: ayudandoabibis@todito.com.

And to Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa: marixxela@hotmail.com

(for safety reasons we are only using their email addresses)

and to diplomatic representatives of MEXICO accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 May 2003.