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Mexico: Full investigation urged into killing of man who denounced police abuse

The killing of a man who took a stand against police kidnapping, torture and extortion in Mexico's northern border city of Ciudad Juárez must be subjected to an effective, impartial investigation, Amnesty International said.

Over the weekend it came to light that Eligio Ibarra Amador, 62, had been found dead on 12 April after unknown attackers entered his home in the city and stabbed him before setting his body alight.

In September 2011, the businessman had denounced members of the federal police for torture and extortion after they allegedly abducted him from his home – 10 police officers have been detained in connection with the incident.

“Eligio Ibarra Amador's death is especially regrettable given his courage in going to the authorities to denounce federal police officers' role in his torture and extortion,” said Rupert Knox, Amnesty International's Mexico expert.

“Mexico's authorities must promptly complete an impartial and full investigation to bring to light the facts surrounding his killing and to rule out revenge as a motive.

Eligio Ibarra Amador's killing reportedly came just before he was due to attend a court procedure related to the case.

When the businessman filed a complaint with the federal Attorney General's Office last September, he accused the federal police officers of abducting him from his home and torturing him before threatening to incriminate him as a drug trafficker if he failed to pay them US\$5,000.

Although some of the deceased man's family have relocated to the USA, Amnesty International urges Mexican authorities to ensure full protection to family members remaining in the country and others who may be at risk because of the case.

“In a sensitive case like this, it's extraordinary that the authorities failed to provide efficient and reliable protection for Emilio Ibarra Amador and his family – this must be remedied immediately to guarantee the safety of anybody else potentially at risk in this case,” said Rupert Knox.

“It should come as no surprise that citizens in Mexico are reluctant to step forward and denounce human rights violations by public officials when there is little or no provision to ensure their security.”

Amnesty International calls on the Mexican authorities to proceed with the kidnapping and extortion case against the federal police and to bring those responsible to justice.