

URGENT ACTION

THREATS AGAINST MEXICAN UNDER HOUSE ARREST

Mexican Israel Azarte Meléndez has been under house arrest since 26 September in the border city of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state, Mexico, accused of involvement in murder based on a confession made under torture. He has received death threats and the state authorities have stated that they cannot guarantee his safety.

A state court judge issued a judicial order on 23 September to the Chihuahua state Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General del Estado) to transfer **Israel Arzate Meléndez** to house arrest in his home, rather than being held in preventive custody (*arraigo*) in a former police academy. Israel Arzate Meléndez had been held in preventive custody since 2010. The transfer to house arrest was the result of a victory in a legal challenge to his preventive detention in the police academy, which was not compliant with state law. However, representatives of the state Attorney General's Office have since said that even with 20 police guards they cannot guarantee his safety in his home as he has received death threats. There is concern that state authorities may use the situation to avoid responsibility for effectively protecting him.

Israel Arzate Meléndez was arbitrarily detained by members of the Mexican army in February 2010 in connection with the killing of 15 youths at a party in the Villas de Salvácar district of Ciudad Juárez on 31 January 2010. He was held in a military barracks. Over several days he was tortured by military personnel in the presence of a prosecutor and was forced to make a video confession, which has since been used against him in court proceedings to sustain the charges. A National Human Rights Commission investigation confirmed his torture, but Israel Arzate Meléndez's confession continues to stand as evidence. In February 2012 the United Nations Working Group on arbitrary detentions declared that he had been arbitrarily detained and called for his release. Israel Arzate Meléndez maintains he is a scapegoat and was not involved in the mass killings.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling for authorities to guarantee the safety of Israel Arzate Meléndez and the family members that live with him, and ensure that he can be held under the terms of his house arrest without security being at risk;
- Calling for authorities to investigate the threats against him and bring those responsible to account;
- Calling for authorities to comply with the National Human Rights Commission to fully investigate the torture suffered by Israel Arzate Meléndez and for all those responsible to be held accountable;
- Calling for the authorities to guarantee Israel Azarte Meléndez a fair trial.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 NOVEMBER 2012 TO:

Governor of Chihuahua State

Lic. César Duarte Jáquez
 Gobernador del Estado de Chihuahua,
 Palacio de Gobierno, 1er piso, C.
 Aldama #901, Col. Centro,
 Chihuahua, Estado de Chihuahua, C.P.
 31000, México
 Fax: +52 614 429 3464
 Email:
 despachodelejecutivo@hotmail.com
Salutation: Dear Governor

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Alejandro Poiré Romero
 Secretaría de Gobernación
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
 Delegación Cuauhtémoc
 México D.F., C.P.06600, México
 Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
 Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

National Human Rights Commission
 Comisión Nacional de los Derechos
 Humanos de México
 Email: correo@cndh.org.mx
Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human
 Rights Centre
 (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel
 Agustín Pro Juárez)
 Email:
 internacional@centroprodh.org.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

Several regions of Mexico, including Ciudad Juarez, have suffered extremely high levels of criminal violence during President Calderon's militarized campaign to combat organized crime and drug cartels. Incidents of extreme violence by criminal gangs, such as the notorious shooting of youth during a party in Villas de Salvárcar, have provoked public outrage and concern at the impact of government policy. Police and military have repeatedly resorted to grave human rights violations. Torture of criminal suspects, particularly in the context of public security operations against those suspected of gang involvement, has become routine in many parts of Mexico. Those responsible are almost never brought to justice and victims face many obstacles to secure justice and prevent information obtained under torture serving as evidence during judicial proceedings.

Name: Israel Arzate Meléndez

Gender m/f: m

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