

PUBLIC

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27 March 2009

UA 88/09 Fear for safety/Fear of torture/Possible enforced disappearances

MEXICO Miguel Alejandro Gama Habif (m), aged 25
Israel Ayala Ramírez (m), aged 20

The two men named above were detained by soldiers on the evening of 17 March in the town of Nuevo Laredo, in the northern state of Tamaulipas. They have not been seen since, and their relatives fear that they are being held in a clandestine detention facility and are at risk of torture.

According to relatives, they were seen being stopped by soldiers as they were driving through Nuevo Laredo. Miguel Alejandro Gama managed to phone his wife to let her know that he had been stopped by soldiers, but the call was cut off suddenly. According to his wife, later that evening soldiers searched her house without a warrant, taking computers, mobile phones, documents, money and even food. She also claims that soldiers were seen driving her husband's car the day after he was detained.

Relatives of the two men filed a habeas corpus petition (*amparo*) and went looking for them at the local military barracks, but the military authorities denied having them in custody. On 20 March relatives filed a complaint of enforced disappearance with the Federal Attorney General's Office.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 2007, violence arising from organized crime has spiralled in Mexico. In 2008, more than 6,000 people were killed in violent incidents that the authorities attributed to organized crime. President Calderón's administration has attempted to deal with drug-related violent crime by deploying thousands of federal police and some 45,000 soldiers in the worst affected areas, including cities such as Nuevo Laredo. However violent crime has continued unabated. Reports of unlawful killings, torture, arbitrary detentions and illegal house searches by soldiers and police have increased, many of which the authorities have not adequately investigated.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Miguel Alejandro Gama and Israel Ayala, who were seen being detained by soldiers on 17 March 2009 in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas state;
- urging the authorities to make every effort to locate Miguel Alejandro Gama and Israel Ayala;
- calling on them to order an independent and impartial investigation into the unlawful detention of Miguel Alejandro Gama and Israel Ayala, and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to immediately acknowledge the detention of Miguel Alejandro Gama and Israel Ayala, if they are in custody, and ensure that they are given access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention they may require, and are charged with a recognizably criminal offence or released;
- calling for effective measures to ensure police and military anti-crime operations are carried out in accordance with the law and international human rights standards, and that any alleged abuses are promptly and impartially investigated.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of National Defence
Gral. Guillermo Galván Galván

Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional
Blvd. Manuel Ávila Camacho s/n, esq. Av. Industria Militar
Col. Lomas de Sotelo, Del. Miguel Hidalgo
México D.F., C.P. 11640, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52 55) 55575571
Email: dn_sdn@mailsedena.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

President of Mexico
Lic. Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa
Presidente Constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos
Residencia Oficial de "Los Pinos", Casa Miguel Alemán
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec
México D.F., C.P. 11850
Mexico
Fax: +52 55 50935321
Email: felipe.calderon@presidencia.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Presidente/Dear President

Attorney General of the Republic
Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza
Procuraduría General de la República
Av. Paseo de la Reforma n° 211-213, Piso 16
Col. Cuauhtémoc, Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P. 06500, MEXICO
Fax: +52 55 53 46 09 08
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador General

President of the National Human Rights Commission
Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández, Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos,
Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, Edificio "Héctor Fix Zamudio", 6° piso
Blvd. Adolfo López Mateos n° 1922, Col. Tlacopac San Ángel, Del. Álvaro Obregón
México D.F., C.P. 01040, MEXICO
Fax: +52 55 5681 7199
Salutation: Señor Presidente/Dear President

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization
Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A.C. - CEFPRODHAC
Calle Allende 245, Zona Centro, Cd. Reynosa, Tamaulipas, C. P. 88500.

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 8 May 2009.