

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
First UA: 31/25 Index: AMR 41/9193/2025 Mexico of March 28, 2025

MEXICO

RESTORE THE CITIZEN COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL SEARCH SYSTEM

The Citizen Council of the National Search System has remained vacant since May 2024, despite repeated calls from civil society for a fully functioning institution. The Mexican Senate has yet to launch the public process to appoint new members.

Without a working Council, families searching for missing loved ones are denied a voice in decisions that shape government policies on the country's disappearance crisis. This lack of action weakens oversight and slows progress in addressing the issue.

We urge the Senate to act now—immediately open the application process and appoint new Council members without further delay.

Write to the President of the Political Coordination Board urging the authorities to:

- Take all necessary steps to fill the vacancies in the National Citizen Council of the National Search System.
- Ensure that the families of victims of enforced disappearance can fully exercise their right to search for their loved ones.
- Allow relatives of the disappeared to take part in decision-making processes related to the search efforts.

Write to:

Sen. Adán Augusto López Hernández
President of the Political Coordination Board
Mexican Senate
Address: Av. Paseo de la Reforma 135,
esq. Insurgentes Centro, Colonia Tabacalera,
Alcaldía Cuauhtémoc, 06030,
Ciudad de México, México,
E-mail: adan.lopez@senado.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Mr. Lyons

And copy:

His Excellency Carlos Manuel Joaquin Gonzalez
Ambassador
Embassy of the United Mexican States
45 O'Connor Street, Suites 1000, 1010 and 1030
Ottawa, ON K1P 1A4
Tel: (613) 233-8988, -9272, -9917 / 613-795-1868 (24h) Fax: (613) 235-9123
Email: infocan@sre.gob.mx

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2017, the Mexican government approved a strong legal framework to address disappearances. This law was shaped by thousands of families who demanded their right to participate in the process under the slogan “Not Without the Families.” Their involvement was recognized as a key pillar in tackling the disappearance crisis.

One of the ways families are ensured a voice is through the Citizen Council. According to the General Law on Forced Disappearance, this council must include:

- Five relatives of missing persons
- Four experts in human rights or search efforts
- Four representatives from human rights organizations

The Mexican Senate is responsible for appointing these members through a public consultation process, ensuring gender balance. The Citizen Council plays a crucial role in improving search efforts. It proposes measures to enhance programs, databases, and tools, provides technical assistance, reports misconduct by public officials related to disappearances, and makes recommendations on the work of the National Search Commission.

The last Citizen Council was appointed in April 2018 and completed its term in April 2024. Since May 2024, the Council has remained vacant. In February 2025, the former members issued a statement urging the Senate to fulfill its duty and restart the selection process.

On March 5 and 11, 2025, women searching for missing loved ones discovered clandestine graves and crematoriums in Teuchitlán, Jalisco, and Reynosa, Tamaulipas. In response, President Sheinbaum announced new measures, including the creation of a Single Identity Platform, a National Database for missing persons, a Forensic Data Bank, and strengthened National and Local Search Commissions.

While civil society groups welcomed these steps, they stressed that the main problem is not creating new laws or institutions, but ensuring proper resources, political will, and enforcement of existing laws. Given this reality, restoring the Citizen Council and ensuring it operates effectively is more urgent than ever. .

Please take action as soon as possible until May 23, 2025. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.