

URGENT ACTION

SENATE MUST RENEW CITIZEN COUNCIL

The Citizen Council of the National Search System is vacant since May 2024 despite multiple calls from civil society groups for a fully functional institution. The Mexican Senate has not yet launched a public call to renew its members. The Council's inability to operate effectively hinders the right of people searching for victims of disappearance to participate in decision-making and overseeing the government's plans and operations regarding the disappeared crisis faced by the country. We call the Senate to immediately open the call for applications to conform to the National Citizen Council and continue with the appointment of its members.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

**Sen. Adán Augusto López Hernández President of the Political Coordination Board
Mexican Senate**

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Dear Senator,

I am writing to you to express my concern about the delay in the renewal of the National Citizen Council of the National Search System, a crucial advisory body to countering the concerning situation of disappearances in the country and ensuring the right of the relatives of victims of enforced disappearances to participate in decision-making.

According to the Mexican General Law on the Forced Disappearance of Persons, the National Citizen Council is made up of relatives of victims of disappearances, experts in human rights or in searching disappeared people, and representatives of human rights organizations. It proposes measures to ensure the search for disappeared people, oversees the government's performance in this respect and reports any possible irregularities. Regarding the Mexican Senate it is in charge of appointing the members of the National Citizen Council, after public consultation, guaranteeing the principle of gender parity.

Mexico is facing a long-lasting crisis of disappearances: according to the National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons, to date, at least 124,000 people are missing or unlocated. Despite the importance of the National Citizen Council in addressing this crisis, since May 2024, the Council is not operating because the Mexican Senate has not yet launched a public call to select its members.

Therefore, I urge you to take all necessary steps to appoint the members of the National Citizen Council of the National Search System ensuring the right to search of the relatives of victims of enforced disappearance, including by participating in decision-making.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2017, the Mexican government approved a robust and specialized [regulatory framework on disappearances](#), following a legislative process that guaranteed the participation of thousands of families under the slogan “no without the families.” Under that framework their right to participate was recognized as one of the main pillars to address the crisis of the disappearances in the country.

One of the mechanisms that guarantee the participation of the relatives of victims of enforced disappearance is the Citizen Council, which, according to Article 60 of the General Law on Forced Disappearance of Persons, Disappearance Committed by Private Individuals and the National Search System for Missing Persons, must be composed. by:

- Five relatives of missing persons
- Four experts in human rights or searching disappeared persons
- Four representatives of human rights organizations

Following the same article, the Mexican Senate must appoint the members of the National Citizen Council, after public consultation, guaranteeing the principle of gender parity.

Based on Article 62 of the same law, the Citizen Council should to propose measures to the National System, the National Search Commission and the institutions that form the National Search System aiming to improve the functioning of programs, registries, databases and tools; propose and, where appropriate, support technical assistance measures for searching disappeared people; report to the competent authorities and internal control bodies of irregularities allegedly committed by public servants related to the search and investigation of missing and unlocated persons; make recommendations about the configuration and performance of the National Search Commission.

Following the law, the Senate appointed the former members of the National Citizen Council in April 2018 who finished their term in April 2024. Since May 2024, this Council is vacant.

As a result, in February 2025, the former members of the National Citizen Council launched a [statement](#) calling the Senate to fulfill their obligations and carry out the Council’s recruitment process

On March 5 and 11, respectively, women searching for the disappeared discovered clandestine graves and crematoriums in Teuchitlán, Jalisco, and Reynosa, Tamaulipas. President Sheinbaum announced measures to address the situation of disappearances in Mexico, such as: i) the creation of the Single Identity Platform; ii) the creation of the National Base of Investigation Files of missing persons, the National Bank of Forensic Data and the National System of alert, search and location of persons; and iii) the strengthen of the National and Local Search Commissions. NGOs and collectives expressed that is positive that measures are being taken to address the situation of disappearances but pointed out that the main problem is not one of creating new laws or institutions, but of resources, political will and compliance with the general law. This context makes it even more urgent that the Citizen Council is effectively operating as soon as possible.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 23 May 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Disappeared people and their relatives (they/them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: na