



**Amnesty International USA
SVAW Campaign Action Kit:**

**Femicides in
Juárez/Chihuahua, Mexico
and Guatemala**

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Introduction

Violence against women is a human rights scandal. At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. In Europe, domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability for women aged 16 to 44. In the United States, a woman is raped every 6 minutes; a woman is battered every 15 seconds. Rape of women is widespread in armed conflicts, such as in Colombia and Sudan. Human trafficking has become a global phenomenon in which victims, often women and girls, are exploited, forced into labor and subjected to abuse. Murders of women in Pakistan, Russia, India, and other countries often go uninvestigated and unpunished. The experience or threat of violence affects the lives of women everywhere, cutting across boundaries of wealth, race and culture. In the home and in the community, in times of war and peace, women are beaten, raped, mutilated, and killed with impunity (<http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/svaw/about.html>).

Violence against women is a global epidemic and a serious human rights violation. VAW takes many forms, from so called “honor” killings and domestic violence to rape used as a tool of war and the sexual exploitation of women in prison. Violence against women is rooted in a global culture of discrimination, which denies women equal rights with men, and legitimizes the violent appropriation of women’s bodies for individual gratification or political ends.

Amnesty International (AI) has worked to reveal and combat violence against women all over the world. AIUSA is specifically concerned with widespread and systematic abuse of women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, Mexico and in Guatemala. Since 1993, almost 400 women and girls have been murdered in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, Mexico. In Guatemala, over 2,200 women and girls have been brutally murdered since 2001. Many of these murders were determined to be sexually violent and gender-based. Femicide, or the killing of women because they are women¹, is a term that has been used to describe these crimes. The governments of Mexico and Guatemala have inadequately responded to these crimes. Violence against women must not be allowed to be committed with impunity. Join Amnesty International in fighting violence against women in Mexico and Guatemala and holding these governments responsible for preventing violence against women, investigating incidents of violence against women, and holding perpetrators accountable. Only by ending impunity and the culture of discrimination and violence against women will we achieve true equality and human rights for all.

¹ Caputi and Russell.

Background: Ciudad Juárez & Chihuahua, Mexico

Since 1993, almost 400 women and girls have been murdered and more than 70 remain missing in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, Mexico. All the evidence seems to indicate that these young women are chosen by their killers because they are women who have no power within Chihuahuan society, itself characterized by high crime rates and public insecurity due to the fact that drug trafficking and organized crime operate in the area. The women are often workers from the *maquilas*, or export factories, set up by the multinational companies that control the economy of Ciudad Juárez as well as waitresses, workers in the informal economy, or students. Many of them live in poverty, often with children to support. They are women who have few options but to travel alone on the long bus journeys that take them from the poor suburbs surrounding Ciudad Juárez to their place of work or study.

These horrendous crimes in which women and girls are kidnapped and later found dead with signs of sexual assault and torture are simply one of the most dramatic examples of the violence perpetrated against women in Chihuahua State, where domestic violence and sexual harassment in the community and in the workplace are also serious problems. However, despite the high number of cases, domestic violence was not made a criminal offense at the state level until 2000. As of 2003, there appear to have been no convictions for domestic violence, indicating the authorities' response to violence against women is extremely slow and limited.

As far as state authorities are concerned, most of the murders—including cases of domestic violence or other types of violence—have been "solved". However, although according to government figures, 79 people have been convicted in relation to the Juárez murders, in the vast majority of cases justice has not been done. Impunity is most evident in the case of the so-called "serial murders" that have been recognized as such by the state, but in which there has been only one conviction and 18 detainees are in detention awaiting the outcome of the judicial process, in some cases for several years. Furthermore, the quality of the investigations and the alleged failure to provide adequate guarantees of guilt during the trials cast doubt on the integrity of the criminal proceedings brought against those arrested in connection with these crimes. Meanwhile, year after year, the killings continue.

It is now almost 14 years since the brutal cycle of abductions and murders of young women began in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. Over the last few years there has been intense national and international pressure to stop violent crimes against women and to end the impunity with which these crimes have been committed. In 2003, the Mexican Federal Government finally began to implement a program of measures to prevent and prosecute acts of violence against women in Ciudad Juárez.

Despite the positive steps that have been taken, Amnesty International has serious concerns on a number of key issues. Of particular concern is the failure to fully incorporate cases from the city of Chihuahua into the program of measures; the absence of any judicial review of abuses, such as torture of suspects in custody, resulting in apparent miscarriages of justice and impunity; insufficient action to integrate gender perspective into every element of preventive and investigative measures to combat violence against women; and the failure to halt smear campaigns and harassment of the victims' relatives and organizations working on their behalf.

For more background and information on violence against women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, read *Intolerable Killings: 10 years of abductions and murders in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua* at www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez.

Resources: Juárez/Chihuahua

AIUSA SVAW Juárez webpage: www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez

Amnesty International Reports and Public Statements:

Amnesty International USA Welcomes Congressional Passage of Legislation Condemning Murders of Women in Mexico
May 5, 2006-Press Release

Killings and abductions of women in Ciudad Juárez and the City of Chihuahua - the struggle for justice goes on
Feb 20, 2006-AI Public Statement

Justice fails in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua
Feb 28, 2005-AI News Feature

Ending the brutal cycle of violence
Mar 7, 2004-AI Report

Intolerable Killings: 10 years of abductions and murders in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua
August 10, 2003-AI Report

“The Juárez Murders” by Debbie Nathan
Amnesty Now Magazine, Spring 2003
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/amnestynow/juarez.html>

Books/Articles:

Juárez: Laboratory of the Future by Charles Bowden, Aperature Publishing, 2004.
Revealing photographs and text show a side of life in Ciudad Juárez and help understand a city caught not just between two worlds but between many worlds, material, economic, political, social, cultural, and spiritual. Winner of Berder Regional Library Association 1998 Southwest Book Award.

Secrets in the Sand: The Young Women of Juárez by Marjorie Agosín, Whitepine Press, 2006.
In her book, Agosín through her words and images invites her readers to bear witness to the reality that the grieving families of the disappeared and murdered young women face every day. As a poet and human rights activist, Marjorie Agosín has dedicated her life's work to the search for justice and human dignity.

Harvest of Women by Diana Washington Valdéz, Oceano de Mexico Publishing, 2005.
An investigative reporter for the *El Paso Times* who has covered the murders of Ciudad Juárez for three years, Valdéz contends the killings are part of a circuit of parties hosted by prominent Juárez citizens.

Movies and Documentaries:

Señorita Extraviada by Lourdes Portillo, Women Make Movies Distributors, 2001
Tells the haunting story of the nearly 400 kidnapped, raped and murdered young women of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.
(available from AI regional offices)

Dual Injustice/Doble Injusticia by Witness and Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos AC, 2005.

Tells the story of Neyra Azucena Cervantes, who disappeared in May 2003, and her cousin, David Meza, who was tortured to confess to her murder.
(available from AI regional offices)

In the News:

Frontera NorteSur.

Provides online news coverage of the U.S./Mexico border in English and daily updates about Ciudad Juárez: <http://frontera.nmsu.edu/>

La Jornada.

Mexican daily newspaper (Spanish only). <http://www.jornada.unam.mx>

Websites and Organizations:

Amnesty International USA's Juárez SVAW Page
www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez

Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa

Organization of family members of murdered women and girls in Cd. Juárez, Mexico
<http://www.mujeresdejuarez.org/> (Spanish only)

Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas

Organization of family members of murdered women and girls in Chihuahua, Mexico
<http://espanol.geocities.com/justhijas/> (Spanish only)

Casa Amiga Centro de Crisis (Spanish and English)

Women's crisis center in Cd. Juárez, Mexico
www.casa-amiga.org

Amigos de las Mujeres de Juárez (English)

Advocacy organization in Las Cruces, New Mexico
<http://www.amigosdemujeres.org/>

Women on the Border (English)

Community-based organization facilitating awareness of the impact of the global economy on the border

www.womenontheborder.org

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Actions: Juárez/Chihuahua

Level 1: Easiest: Takes you just 5 minutes to complete!

- **Complete Online Action**
 - Visit the AIUSA website and complete an online action to support justice for all of the women and girls who have been murdered and disappeared in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, Mexico since 1993.
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez>
- **Condolence Card**
 - Send a condolence card to the Mexican Ambassador. In it write a personal message to the Ambassador of Mexico and to let him know how you feel about the continued injustice in Ciudad Juárez. *Please select condolence cards without religious or controversial images.*
 - Sample text: “With deepest sympathies for the families of the nearly 400 women who have been murdered or disappeared in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, I send you this card today. I ask you to support all human rights defenders who seek justice in Mexico and ask you to take steps to stop the killing in Juárez and Chihuahua.
 - The mailing address is:
Embassy of Mexico
His Excellency Carlos Alberto de Icaza
1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006.

Level 2: Takes you just Less than 30 minutes to complete!

- **Do-it-yourself stickers**
 - Go to an office supply or art store and buy full sheet sticker labels. Download the sticker image from the website and print them onto the label paper. Give them out to your family and friends. Print sticker image from:
www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez/activism.html
- **Do-it-yourself posters**
 - Use any kind of paper, preferably card stock if you want them to be sturdy. Download the poster image and print it on the paper. Make copies and take them to school, libraries or community centers. Print poster image from:
www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez/activism.html
- **Make your own t-shirt!**
 - Got to an office supply or art store and buy special t-shirt transfer paper. Use one of your own t-shirts or buy one. Download the t-shirt image from the website and print it onto the t-shirt transfer paper. You may need to reverse the image. To iron it onto you shirt, follow the instructions included with the transfer paper you purchased. Print the t-shirt image from: www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez/activism.html

Level 3: Takes just you! 30-45 minutes to complete.

- **Write a letter to the editor**

- The May 2006 passage by the United States House and Senate of Concurrent Resolutions on Juárez and Chihuahua was a great victory. A next step is to publicize this victory and to highlight the need for Mexican authorities to take action. One way to do this is by submitting letters to the editor to get the word out about this important action by the U.S. Congress.
 - Refer to the Appendix #1 for talking points and write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Level 4: Takes a minimum of one person, less than 30 minutes to plan, 1-2 hours for the collection.

- **Petition**

- Collect 25 (or more!) petition signatures. Ask your friends and family to sign the letter or get permission to table at a local coffee shop for an afternoon, attend a poetry slam or music event, or present the issue in your class. A petition form is attached at the end of this action kit in Appendix #2.

Level 5: Takes a minimum of one person, a few hours to plan, and a few hours for the event.

- **Plan An Event in Your Community**

- Organize events like tabling, letter writing, vigil, or a house party to help raise awareness and mobilize friends and neighbors to "Demand Justice for the Women of Juárez."
 - Make your own t-shirt or pins; print posters and stickers, hand them out to friends, and post them at school or in your community; distribute letters and petitions
 - Excellent opportunities to table with your petitions are at local rallies, community and school events, academic discussions, concerts, farmers markets, women's clothing boutiques, etc. *Make sure to get permission from the proper parties.*

- **Host a Party!**

- Host a movie night for your friends, school or community center and show *Senorita Extraviada* or *Dual Injustice/Doble Injusticia*.
 - After the film, host a speaker on the femicides or have a discussion on the topic.
 - During or after the film, you can make stickers, posters, or t-shirts to display and distribute.
 - After the film, have your friends, family, and/ or activist colleagues take a pledge to collect petition signatures. Any pledge of 25 to 50, 100, or 500 is appreciated. You may download additional copies of the petition at www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez/.

- **Educate Your Community**

- Visit other Latina and/or women's groups in your community and give a short presentation on the situation in Juárez, have the audience members sign letters and, if interested, pledge to collect another 25 signatures.

Level 6: Takes a minimum of one person, several hours to plan, and 3-4 hours of volunteer time.

- **Lobbying Your Member of Congress**

Lobbying can be a great way to inform legislators about the issues that concern you. The key to influencing the people who represent you is proving to them that you are a committed, well-informed, and persistent constituent. Taking the time to send them a handwritten letter is good; a face-to-face meeting is even better. Be sure to familiarize yourself with Amnesty International's legislative agenda by reading the issue brief and/or report on violence against women in Mexico.

Citizen lobbying includes several levels:

1. Sending a mass postcard, e-mail, or letter, with your full address so that they know you live in their district.
 2. Hand-writing a letter to a Members of Congress.
 3. Speaking with an aide over the telephone—be brief, polite, and to the point.
 4. Meeting with your legislator's aide, with follow-up.
 5. Meeting with the legislator in his or her home district, with follow-up
 6. Meeting with the legislator in Washington, DC, with follow-up.
- *Remember that all contact is good! Start small, and then increase your activism as your group gains experience.

To find sample letters and to learn the basics of lobbying visit the AIUSA website at http://www.amnestyusa.org/activist_toolkit/planevents/lobby.html.

- **Embassy/Consulate Visit**

Step 1 - Gauge Interest: Contact the activists in your region who have expressed interest in participating in a consulate visit; the AIUSA Campaigns Unit will provide you with the names and contact information for these activists.

- Introduce yourself as delegation leader, and explain that you will soon be calling the Consul General to request a meeting. Ask the activist/group leader what dates and times work for their group for a consulate meeting and how many people from their group are hoping to attend such a meeting.
- Explain the two possible scenarios listed below for a meeting with the Consul General (see Step 3).
- Suggest that they prepare for the meeting by reading the issue brief and/or the report on VAW in Mexico: *Intolerable Killings: 10 years of Abductions and Murders of Women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua* available at www.amnestyusa.org/juarez.

Step 2 - Contact the consulate: Fax or mail a letter to the Mexican Consulate as soon as possible requesting a meeting. A sample letter is attached as Appendix #3.

Step 3 - Follow up with the consulate: Soon after faxing or mailing the letter to the Consul General, follow up with a phone call requesting a meeting. Be persistent. You may need to call several times. Before calling the Consul General, know the approximate size of the group attending the meeting and share this with the Consul General so the two of you can determine if

it will be a "meeting" or "brief presentation". See if the Consul General has some flexibility and can meet at a time you identify will work for most of the AIUSA activists wanting to participate.

Step 4 – Prepare for the meeting: Arrange a pre-meeting or phone call with members of the delegation. Ideally, the delegates should meet once before the meeting with the Consulate to become familiar with the issues to be raised and decide how the information will be presented. This may even happen immediately prior to meeting with the Consular General.

Step 5 - The meeting: Delegation leaders: please bring a copy of the Mexico SVAW report—download the PDF and print. Please bring a camera to photograph your group at the Mexican consulate—we would like to print your photo in an AIUSA publication!

Your AIUSA delegation is now ready to meet at the Consulate. Embassies and Consulates act as listening posts for what is happening in the host country in order to defend the interests of the home country. Generally, the Ambassador and Consul Generals will not be in a position to make decisions independently and will have to report back to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but an Embassy and its Consulates can have considerable influence through the way they report back on what they hear to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Step 6 -- After the meeting: Follow-up on the meeting by sending a letter to the Consulate immediately after the meeting thanking him or her for meeting the AIUSA delegation, summarizing the main points of the meeting, and confirming any requests or agreements made. Enclose any publications that you promised to send. If no reply has been received after a month or so, another letter could be sent recalling the meeting and any requests or agreements made and expressing the hope that the Consulate will soon be able to send you any promised information or updates on the issues you discussed.

Please send an email to Meredith Larson reporting on the visit. Please include:

- Who participated in the meeting, both from AIUSA and from the Consulate
- A brief write up of what was said at the meeting, what happened
- Write-up of the information that Consul General gave you about what steps the government is currently taking to stop violence against women, any steps they intend to take in the near future, what follow up they promised you, etc.
- Any digital or regular photos
- Any evaluative comments you'd like to send us on what went well, what you would have liked to have gone differently, any suggestions for the SVAW team

Whatever actions you take, please stay in touch and let us know what you are doing to stop violence against women in Juárez and Chihuahua! We'd love to share your stories, successes and ideas with all of the activists at AIUSA. Send Meredith Larson any pictures or news clippings from your event at mlarson@aiusa.org.

For more information and updates about Ciudad Juárez, Mexico please visit:
www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez/

Background: Guatemala

Since 2001 over 2,200 Guatemalan women and girls have been brutally murdered, and the number of murders is increasing each year. Exceptional cruelty and sexual violence characterize many of the killings. Some of the victims have had their throats cut, were beaten, shot or stabbed to death. Most of their bodies show signs of rape, torture, mutilation or dismemberment. Many women and girls in Guatemala live with gender-based violence: violence against women in the family, rape, and sexual harassment in the workplace are commonplace. Women and young girls are also the victims of commercial trafficking and sexual exploitation. A number of the victims of the killings were under 18 years of age. While the murders may be attributed to a variety of motives and may have been committed by both state and non-state actors, a study of the cases shows that the violence is usually gender-based. The gender of the victim appears to be a significant factor in the crime, influencing both the motive and the context, as well as the kind of violence suffered by the woman and the manner in which the authorities respond.

The prevalence of violence against women in Guatemala today has its roots in historical and cultural context which has maintained women's subordination and which was perhaps most evident during the 36-year internal armed conflict that ended with the signing of the United Nations-brokered Peace Accords in 1996. According to the investigations and subsequent reports produced by the Guatemalan Catholic Church's Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory (REHMI, *Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*) (1998) and the Historical Clarification Commission (CEH, *Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico*) (1999), of the estimated 200,000 people who "disappeared" or were extrajudicially executed during Guatemala's internal armed conflict, a quarter of the victims were women. Rape and sexual violence were an integral part of the counter-insurgency strategy.

The State's failure to bring to justice those responsible for the atrocities committed during the internal armed conflict or to provide reparations to the victims and their families has left a terrible legacy. The continuing general pattern of impunity has meant the perpetrators of past human rights violations have evaded criminal prosecution, and this has contributed to a spiraling level of violence in society and continuing human rights violations. The failure to hold those accountable for past and current violations has further undermined public confidence in the justice system, thereby weakening the rule of law.

According to Guatemala's Human Rights Ombudsman, up to 70 percent of murders of women have not been investigated and no arrests were made in 97 percent of cases. In the few cases that are investigated, the process is usually flawed: forensic evidence is not properly gathered and preserved, few resources are allocated to each case, and witnesses are denied protection. In many cases, the survivors, families and witnesses of gender-based violence are too afraid to give testimony for fear of reprisal. Although the government has begun to take action to address some of these issues, these measures have been limited and insufficient to effectively address the scale and severity of the problem. As long as the vast majority of killings remain uninvestigated and unpunished, and until top leadership denounces the violence and instructs police and prosecutors to take the crimes seriously, these crimes will continue to occur.

Resources: Guatemala

AIUSA SVAW Guatemala webpage: www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala

Amnesty International Reports/Public Statements:

Visit AIUSA's violence against women in Guatemala webpage for press releases and updates.

Guatemala: No protection, no justice: killings of women (an update)

July 18, 2005-AI Report

New report finds murders of women in Guatemala increasingly frequent in 2006

July 18, 2004-AI Press Release

115 Members of Congress sign letter condemning violence against women in Guatemala

May 10, 2006-AI Press Release

Killings of Women in Guatemala Continue Unchallenged

Nov 24, 2005-AI Press Release

No Protection, No Justice: Killings of Women in Guatemala

June 9, 2005-AI Report

Guatemala: Women in danger - killings of women and girls

June 9, 2005-AI Press Release

Discrimination, Incompetence in Murder Investigations of Guatemalan Women Fuels Impunity, Amnesty International Charges

June 9, 2005-AI Press Release

"Unrelenting Danger" by Laura E. Asturias and Virginia Del Águila

Amnesty Now Magazine, Fall 2005

http://www.amnestyusa.org/magazine/unrelenting_danger.html

Articles and Other Resources:

"Guatemala Pressed to Investigate Surge in Killings" by Bojana Stoparic

Women's eNews, June 2005

<http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2776/context/archive>

"Unsolved killings terrorize women in Guatemala: Culture of impunity seen" by Indira A. R.

Lakshmanan

The Boston Globe, March 2006

http://www.boston.com/news/world/articles/2006/03/30/unsolved_killings_terrorize_women_in_guatemala/

"Fighting Femicide in Guatemala" by Jennifer Sauer

Off Our Backs. 35(3/4): 36, 2205.

“GUATEMALA: Murders of Women Recall Counterinsurgency Techniques” by Adrián Reyes
Inter Press Service, June 2005

<http://us.oneworld.net/article/view/113856/1/>

“Ending Violence against women in Guatemala”

AIUSA online panel discussion, December 2005

<http://www.movingideas.org/chat/Guatemala/Guatemala.php>

“Beasts of prey” by Christine Toomey

The London Times, August 28, 2005

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2099-1740992,00.html>

"Guatemala and Mexico: Brutal Murders of Women Continue"

2004 NACLA Report on the Americas. 37(4): 46

http://www.nacla.org/art_display.php?art=2315&nacla_Session=&nacla_Session=

“Killing sprees terrorize Guatemalan women: Hundred slain in 2 years -- only a handful arrested” by Jill Replogle

The San Francisco Chronicle, December 2003

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/12/30/MNGBN3V7141.DTL>

“Guatemala urged to act on killings”

BBC News, 18 July 2006

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/5187102.stm>

Movies and Documentaries:

“**This World: Killer’s Paradise.**” BBC Documentary. © 2006

Contact your regional SVAW liaison for a copy.

“**Ni protección ni justicia-Homicidios de mujeres en Guatemala.**” (Spanish only) Amnesty International Holland. © 2005

Contact your regional SVAW liaison for a copy.

Websites and Organizations:

AIUSA Get on the Bus 2006

Washington, DC

<http://getonthebustonyc.blogspot.com/2006/04/resources-on-femicide-in-guatemala.html>

Center for Gender and Refugee Studies

Hastings College of Law

<http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/campaigns/femicide.php>

Speakers List: Guatemala

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Actions: Guatemala

Level 1: Easiest: Takes just you! 5 minutes to complete

- **Online Action**

- Visit the AIUSA website to send an email to Guatemalan authorities expressing your concern for the women and girls who have been murdered or have disappeared in Guatemala and calling for concrete steps to be taken to end impunity and achieve justice. www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala/

- **Send a Postcard**

- Send a postcard to Guatemalan Ambassador José Castillo, urging him to become engaged in ending violence against women in Guatemala. Download the postcard at [www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala.](http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala/)

Level 2: Takes just you! Less than 30 minutes to complete.

- **Write a letter to the editor**

- A sample letter is attached as Appendix #4.

- **Do-it-yourself Postcards**

- To create mailable postcards, print cards back to back on cardstock. Download the postcard image to your computer and print on to the paper. Send a postcard to the Guatemalan Ambassador, another one to President Berger and distribute the rest among your friends.
- To download English and Spanish versions:
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala/activism.html>

Level 3: Takes a minimum of one person, less than 30 minutes to plan, 1-2 hours for the collection.

- **Petition**

- Collect 25 (or more!) petition signatures. Ask your friends and family to sign the letter or get permission to table at a local coffee shop for an afternoon, attend a poetry slam or music event, or present the issue in your class. A petition form is attached at the end of this action kit as Appendix # 5.

Level 4: Takes a minimum of one person, a few hours to plan, and a few hours for the event.

- **Plan An Event in Your Community**

- Organize events like tabling, letter-writing, a vigil, or a house party to help raise awareness and mobilize friends and neighbors to raise awareness for violence against women in Guatemala and demand justice for women in Guatemala.
 - Make your own t-shirt or pins; print posters and stickers and hand them out to friends, and post them at school or in your community; distribute letters and petitions.
 - Excellent opportunities to table with your petitions are at local rallies, community and school events, academic discussions, concerts, farmers

markets, women's clothing boutiques, etc. ***Make sure to get permission from the proper parties.***

- **Host a Party!**

- Host a movie night for your friends, school or community center of *This World: Killers Paradise* or *Ni protección, ni justicia-Homicidios de mujeres en Guatemala* (Spanish only).
 - After the film, host a speaker on the femicides, or have a discussion on the topic.
 - During or after the film, you can make stickers, posters, or t-shirts to display, give to your friends, and/or hand out in your community.
 - After the film screens have your friends, family, and/ or activist colleagues take a pledge to collect petition signatures. Any pledge of 25 to 50, 100, or 500 signatures is appreciated. Petitions can be found as Appendix #5. You may download additional copies of the petition at www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala/.

- **Educate Your Community**

- Visit other Latina and/or women's groups in your community and give a short presentation on the situation in Guatemala, have audience members sign letters and, if interested, pledge to collect another 25 signatures.

Level 6: Takes a minimum of one person, several hours to plan, and 3-4 hours of volunteer time.

- **Lobbying Your Member of Congress**

Lobbying can be a great way to inform legislators about the issues that concern you. The key to influencing the people who represent you is proving to them that you are a committed, well-informed, and persistent constituent. Taking the time to send them a handwritten letter is good; a face-to-face meeting is even better. Be sure to familiarize yourself with Amnesty International's legislative agenda by reading the issue brief and/or report on VAW in Guatemala.

Citizen lobbying includes several levels:

1. Sending a mass postcard, e-mail, or letter, with your full address so that they know you live in their district.
 2. Hand-writing a letter to a Members of Congress.
 3. Speaking with an aide over the telephone – short, polite, and to the point.
 4. Meeting with your legislator's aide, with follow-up.
 5. Meeting with the legislator in his or her home district, with follow-up
 7. Meeting with the legislator in Washington, DC, with follow-up.
- *Remember that all contact is good! Start small, and then increase your activism as your group gains experience.

To find sample letters and to learn the ABCs of lobbying visit the AIUSA website at http://www.amnestyusa.org/activist_toolkit/planevents/lobby.html.

- **Embassy/Consulate Visit**

Step 1 – Gauge Interest: Contact the activists in your region who have expressed interest in participating in a consulate visit; the AIUSA Campaigns Unit will provide you with the names and contact information for these activists.

- Introduce yourself as delegation leader, and explain that you will soon be calling the Consul General to request a meeting. Ask the activist/group leader what dates and times work for their group for a consulate meeting and how many people from their group are hoping to attend such a meeting.
- Explain the two possible scenarios listed below for a meeting with the Consul General (see Step 3).
- Suggest that they prepare for the meeting by reading the issue brief and/or the report on VAW in Guatemala: *No Protection, No Justice: Killings of Women in Guatemala* available at www.amnestyusa.org/guatemala.

Step 2 – Contact the Consulate: Fax or mail a letter to the Guatemalan Consulate as early as possible requesting a meeting. A sample letter is attached as Appendix #6.

Step 3 – Follow up with the Consulate: Soon after faxing the letter to the Consul General, follow up with a phone call requesting a meeting. Be persistent. You may need to call several times. Before calling the Consul General, know the approximate size of the group attending the meeting and share this with the Consul General so the two of you can determine if it will be a "meeting" or "brief presentation". See if the Consul General has some flexibility and can meet at a time you identify will work for most of the AIUSA activists wanting to participate.

Step 4 – Prepare for the meeting: Arrange a pre-meeting or phone call with members of the delegation. Ideally, the delegates should meet once before the meeting with the Consulate to become familiar with the issues to be raised and decide how the information will be presented. This may even happen immediately prior to your meeting with the Consular General.

Step 5 -- The meeting: Delegation leaders: please bring a copy of the Guatemala SVAW report—download the PDF and print. Please bring a camera to photograph your group at the Guatemalan consulate—we would like to print your photo in an AIUSA publication!

Your AIUSA delegation is now ready to meet at the Consulate. Embassies and Consulates act as listening posts for what is happening in the host country in order to defend the interests of the home country. Generally, the Ambassador and Consul Generals will not be in a position to make decisions independently and will have to report back to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but an Embassy and its Consulates can have considerable influence through the way they report back on what they hear to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Step 6 -- After the meeting: Follow-up on the meeting by sending a letter to the Consulate immediately after the meeting thanking him or her for meeting the AIUSA delegation, summarizing the main points of the meeting, and confirming any requests or agreements made. Enclose any publications that you promised to send. If no reply has been received after a month or so, another letter could be sent recalling the meeting and any requests or agreements made and expressing the hope that the Consulate will soon be able to send you any promised information or updates on the issues you discussed.

Please, send an email to Meredith Larson reporting on the visit. Please include:

- Who participated in the meeting, both from AIUSA and from the Consulate
- A brief write-up of what was said at the meeting and what happened
- Write-up of the information that the Consul General gave you about what steps the government is currently taking stop violence against women, any steps they intend to take in the near future, what follow up they promised you, etc.
- Any digital or regular photos
- Any evaluative comments you'd like to send us on what went well, what you would have liked to have gone differently, any suggestions for the SVAW team

Whatever you do, please stay in touch and let us know what you are doing to stop violence against women in Guatemala! We'd love to share your stories, successes and ideas with all of the activists at AIUSA. Send any pictures or news clippings to Meredith Larson at mlarson@aiusa.org.

For more information and updates about Guatemala, please visit:
www.amnestyusa.org/women/guatemala/

Important Contacts

Meredith Larson

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APPENDIX #1: Talking points: Letter to the Editor: Juárez/Chihuahua

Below are talking points that you might use in drafting a letter to the editor of your local paper to highlight the recent passage of the Congressional Resolutions on Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. Remember that personalizing your letters will make them more effective. If your letter is published, consider faxing a copy of it to your elected officials to thank them, and also consider faxing one to the Mexican Embassy or Consulate near you to urge them to follow through on investigations and prosecutions for the murders and to protect the women and girls of Juárez and Chihuahua.

- Violence against women, whether it occurs in this country or elsewhere in the world, is unacceptable.
- I am writing to applaud the U.S. Congress for the leadership it showed in May 2006 by passing a unique resolution to help stop an epidemic of murders and kidnappings of women and girls in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, on the border of New Mexico and Texas. This resolution encourages authorities in Mexico to bring perpetrators to justice.
- Amnesty International reports that more than 400 young women and girls have been murdered in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua since 1993; at least 137 of those women suffered some form of sexual torture before being killed (www.amnestyusa.org/women/juarez).
- Congress has now unanimously called on the Secretary of State and the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico to take specific steps to ensure that addressing these horrendous murders becomes a part of the U.S.-Mexico bilateral agenda. This legislation reflects the broad sentiment of the US Congress and the US people that these brutal attacks against women are unacceptable.
- In many of the murder and disappearance cases in Juárez and Chihuahua, the investigations were either mishandled or not carried out at all. While the appointment of a Special Federal Prosecutor for Ciudad Juárez was an important first step, this alone has had very little impact.
- The United States Government, by passing these resolutions, has called on the Mexican Government to work harder to solve the crimes and bring perpetrators to justice.
- It's everyone's responsibility to oppose violence against women. I applaud our elected officials for working with the US Administration to press the Mexican Government to bring justice and accountability to those who have attacked women in Mexico.
- Name, City, State

APPENDIX #2: Juárez/Chihuahua Letters and Petitions in English and Spanish (see attached)

APPENDIX #3: Sample Letter to the Consular General: Juárez/Chihuahua

[insert date]

The Honorable *[insert name of Consul General]*
[insert mailing address]

Your Excellency,

We are writing to request a meeting with you to discuss the human rights concerns of Amnesty International USA about ongoing violence against women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua and AI's recommendations to improve the human rights situation for women.

Amnesty International has organized an international campaign to Stop Violence Against Women that addresses many countries, including Sudan, Turkey, Mexico, Guatemala, Russia, and others.

We applaud and thank your government for statements declaring its intention to improve protection of the rights of women. However, we are concerned that impunity continues for those who commit violence against women, and we fear that this may impede the Mexican Government's ability to improve the situation for women. AI's report on violence against women in Juárez and Chihuahua, *Intolerable Killings: 10 years of Abductions and Murders of Women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua*, contains information about the problem and recommendations. We can bring this report with us to an appointment, or I can mail it to you ahead of time.

We thank you for your commitment to protect women in Juárez and Chihuahua from violence and look forward to meeting with you. I will call you shortly to inquire about scheduling a meeting.

Sincerely,

(insert name)

(insert AIUSA title – e.g. Stop Violence Against Women Coordinator; member, AIUSA local group #, student area coordinator, etc).

(insert mailing address and telephone number).

APPENDIX #4: **Sample Letter to the Editor: Guatemala**

Below is a sample letter that you might use in drafting a letter to the editor of your local paper to raise awareness for violence against women in Guatemala. Remember that personalizing your letters will make them more effective. If your letter is published, consider faxing one to the Guatemalan Embassy or Consulate near you to urge them to follow through on investigations and prosecutions for the murders and to protect the women and girls of Guatemala.

Violence against women, in this country or abroad, is unacceptable.

According to Amnesty International's June 2006 report "No Protection, no justice – killings of women Guatemala", women in Guatemala face an untenable situation that demands our immediate attention.

More than 2,200 Guatemalan girls and women have been brutally murdered since 2001. Despite the savagery of these murders, which are often preceded by rape, mutilation, and dismemberment, in 97% of cases no arrests are made. Although the Guatemalan government has established new investigative and forensic agencies to solve these crimes, it has not provided sufficient financial or technical resources, putting into doubt the government's political will to resolve these crimes. Similarly, the Guatemalan Congress refuses to criminalize many serious acts of violence against women, contributing to a nationwide climate of immunity for perpetrators of violence against women. The Guatemalan Government simply must do more.

Congress should immediately pass resolutions urging President Bush and Secretary of State Rice to incorporate the investigation and prevention of crimes against women in Guatemala into the bilateral agenda of the two nations. All state institutions in Guatemala must cooperate in bringing justice to the more than 2,200 grieving families.

It's everyone's responsibility to oppose violence against women. Contacting our elected representatives is the least we can do.

Name
City, State

APPENDIX #5: Guatemala Letters and Petitions in English and Spanish (see attached)

APPENDIX #6: Sample letter to the Consular General: Guatemala

[insert date]

The Honorable *[insert name of Consul General]*
[insert mailing address]

Your Excellency,

We are writing to request a meeting with you to discuss the human rights concerns of Amnesty International USA about ongoing violence against women in Guatemala and AI's recommendations to improve the human rights situation for women.

Amnesty International has organized an international campaign to Stop Violence Against Women Campaign that addresses many countries, including Sudan, Turkey, Mexico, Guatemala, Russia, and others.

We applaud and thank your government for statements declaring its intention to improve protection of the rights of women. However, we are concerned that impunity continues for those who commit violence against women, and we fear that this may impede the Guatemalan Government's ability to improve the situation for women. AI's report on violence against women in Guatemala, *No Protection, No Justice: Killings of Women in Guatemala*, contains information about the problem and recommendations. We can bring this report with us to an appointment, or I can mail it to you ahead of time.

We thank you for your commitment to protect women in Guatemala from violence and look forward to meeting with you. I will call you shortly to inquire about scheduling a meeting.

Sincerely,

(insert name)

(insert AIUSA title – e.g. Stop Violence Against Women Coordinator, member, AIUSA local group #, student area coordinator, etc).

(insert mailing address and telephone number).