

URGENT ACTION

TORTURE SURVIVOR DENIED COVID-19 SUPPORT

Adrian Vásquez Lagunes was diagnosed with COVID-19 on 16 June. He survived torture and 3 years unjust imprisonment in Tijuana (Northern Mexico). The authorities have failed to provide him with the reparation mandated by the Baja California State Human Rights and Citizen Protection Ombudsman's Office in 2015. We are demanding that authorities urgently ensure that Adrian Vásquez receives health and social security coverage, an emergency fund, and that his full reparation package is finalized urgently.

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

Jaime Bonilla Valdez
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Dear Governor,

I am deeply concerned to hear that Adrian Vásquez Lagunes was diagnosed with COVID-19 on 16 June. The torture he suffered at the hands of Baja California police in 2012 left him with chronic injuries in his ribs and lungs, which makes him at risk as a COVID-19 patient. The lack of reparation awarded by the government and his work as a public transport and uber driver place him and his family in a precarious economic situation to cover any medical and livelihood costs.

I call on you to urgently ensure immediate economic support and health care coverage for Adrián Vasquez and his family and ensure that his full reparation package is finalized without delay.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Adrián Vásquez Lagunes was detained by state police as he drove in Tijuana on 26 September 2012.

During the 12 hours that he remained in police custody, he was subjected to threats, beatings, and near-asphyxiation – including by forcing water into his nose. Afterwards, police presented him to the media declaring that he was a known drug trafficker. Vásquez Lagunes spent three years in prison unjustly on false charges. He was released from prison and acquitted from charges in December 2015, after Amnesty International campaigned on his case.

Seven and a half years after his detention, comprehensive reparation for his case is urgently necessary. It should be noted that, as part of the obligation to compensate victims comprehensively, the United Nations Committee Against Torture has recommended that compensation for cases of torture must be prompt, just, and adequate. However, Vásquez Lagunes and his family have been forced to live in precarious economic conditions as the State of Baja California has failed to fulfil Recommendation No. 15/15, issued on 5 May 2015 by the then Human Rights and Citizen Protection Ombudsman's Office, (now the State Commission on Human Rights), which stipulated that authorities should compensate him without delay.

The State Human Rights Commission of Baja California had a meeting with Adrián and his family on Friday 12 June in which they said that they would take urgent action to get Adrian and his family enrolled in the public health social security system – called INSABI. Adrian currently has no access to free or low-cost health services and his 4 children lack support. Of his 4 children, one of them has down syndrome and has special needs which require an extra economic difficulty for the family.

The Baja California government's prior administration had multiple meetings with Adrian and his family and reached provisional agreements, however continued to cite administrative details for not advancing with the reparation. The authorities had explored the possibility of making operational some provisional economic support for Adrian while the full reparation package was finalised. However, this provisional and emergency economic support has not materialized. The current governor took office in December 2019 and has not taken concrete steps to further actions on these commitments.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [29 July 2020]

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Adrián Vásquez Lagunes (He, him, his).

And copies to:

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