

UN rights chief urges action in Mexico to end 'outrageous' wave of disappearances

Authorities in Mexico are being urged to act to end what the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has described as [“a wave of enforced disappearances”](#) in the city of Nuevo Laredo, amid “strong indications” that federal security forces may be involved.

A local human rights organization in the city, which is located near the border with Texas, in the United States, estimates there have been at least 40 disappearances from February of this year through to mid-May.

Meanwhile, the UN Human Rights Office in Mexico has documented the disappearance of 21 men and two women during the same period.

“Many of these people are reported to have been arbitrarily detained and disappeared while going about their daily lives. It is particularly horrific that at least five of the victims are minors, with three of them as young as 14,” said UN rights chief Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein in a press statement issued on Wednesday.

“These crimes, perpetrated over four months in a single municipality, are outrageous.”

His Office in Mexico has received testimony stating that the incidents were perpetrated by federal security officials, often late at night or around dawn.

Uniformed personnel reportedly detained people as they walked or drove along public roads, according to the statement, while several burnt out and bullet-ridden vehicles have been found by the roadside.

Zeid noted that “despite ample information and evidence”, the Mexican authorities have made little progress in locating the disappeared people and investigating what happened to them.

Some families have undertaken their own searches, discovering the bodies of at least six victims.

Several witnesses have been subjected to threats, and one was “disappeared” for two days before being released, the statement continued.

Zeid further stated that it was “extremely worrying” that the incidents are taking place just months after Mexico adopted a new General Law on Disappearances.

“What has been happening in Nuevo Laredo is a litmus test of whether this new

law actually represents the change its adoption promises, or whether enforced disappearances, followed by impunity and a lack of reparation to the victims, will continue," the UN rights chief said.