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Mexico: Second sentence against woman and indigenous human rights defender Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván

On 10 March 2022, the judge of the Ecatepec Trial Court sentenced woman and indigenous human rights defender **Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván** to 11 years and 3 months' imprisonment. In less than a month, Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván has been sentenced twice by the State of Mexico on two fabricated charges of "robbery with violence" leading to a total of 21 years and 9 months in prison for the woman and indigenous human rights defender. It has already been one year and five months since Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván was [arbitrarily detained](#) in October 2020.

[Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván](#) is an Amuzgo human rights, land and indigenous peoples' rights defender. She is the coordinator of the Zapata Vive Libertarian Collective, which promotes different forms of peaceful resistance to neo-liberal development models imposed by the Mexican state. There are currently 5 open cases in relation to fabricated crimes against the defender in retaliation for her work in defence of human rights.

On 10 March 2022, after a six-hour hearing, the judge of the Ecatepec Trial Court handed down a sentence of 11 years and 3 months' imprisonment to Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván for the fabricated crime of "robbery with violence". The charge against her was allegedly committed at a toll booth on the Circuito Exterior Mexiquense (CEM) in the municipality of Ecatepec, State of Mexico in March 2020, while the woman and indigenous human rights defender was 600 kilometres away in the state of Guerrero.

On 19 February 2022, the Trial Court of the Judicial District of Almoloya de Juárez, State of Mexico sentenced woman and indigenous human rights defender, Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván, to ten years and six months in prison, as well as a fine of twenty-one thousand Mexican pesos (approximately one thousand US dollars). This was followed by her conviction on 5 February 2022 for the fabricated crime of "robbery with violence" allegedly committed at a toll booth on the Toluca-Zitácuaro highway.

Front Line Defenders condemns the sentencing of Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván and reaffirms its deep concern for the physical and emotional safety of the woman human rights defender.

Furthermore, Front Line Defenders reaffirms its concern regarding the practice of levying baseless allegations against human rights defenders, which has become an effective strategy to intimidate those working for the promotion and protection of human rights in Mexico.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Mexico to:

1. Drop the fabricated charges against Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván and allow for her immediate and unconditional release, as she is motivated solely by her legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee that, pending her release, the treatment of woman and indigenous human rights defender, Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván, while in detention adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of

Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

3. Provide prompt assistance and quality medical treatment to Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders, including indigenous human rights defenders, in Mexico are able to carry out their work and legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from all restrictions, including judicial harassment.