

22 February 2022

Mexico - Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván sentenced to ten years and six months in prison

On 19 February 2021, the Trial Court of the Judicial District of Almoloya de Juárez, State of Mexico, sentenced woman human rights defender **Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván** to ten years and six months in prison, following her conviction on 5 February 2022 on the fabricated charge of "robbery with violence". The woman human rights defender has been deprived of her freedom for one year and four months, since her arbitrary detention in October 2020.

[Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván](#) is an Amuzga indigenous and feminist human, 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 seven cases open in relation to fabricated charges against the human rights defender in retaliation for her work in defence of human rights.

The Trial Court delivered a sentence of ten years and six months in prison and a fine of twenty-one thousand Mexican pesos (approximately one thousand US dollars) against the woman human rights defender. The sentence forms part of a strategy of judicial harassment and arbitrary detentions against Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván in retaliation for her legitimate and peaceful activities in defence of the rights of peasant communities. It is also related to one of the seven criminal cases (five federal and two common law cases in the State of Mexico) that have been opened against her.

Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván was detained on 18 October 2020 at the Amozoc toll booth in Puebla by a group of approximately 22 police officers and 20 patrol cars without a warrant. Her whereabouts remained unknown until the morning of 19 October 2020, when it became known that she had been transferred to the Santiaguito Social Rehabilitation Centre, located in Almoloya de Juárez.

On 25 October 2020, following a new arrest warrant issued by the Attorney General's Office (FGR) for the alleged crime of "attacks on communication routes", Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván was transferred to the maximum security centre No.16 Federal Centre for the Social Readaptation of Women (CEFERESO), in the municipality of Coatlán, Morelos state, where she has remained until now. At the end of 2021, Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván went on hunger strike for 61 days to denounce the judicial harassment she has been subjected to by the Mexican government.

Front Line Defenders condemns the criminalisation and judicial harassment of Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván by the Mexican authorities 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. Immediate and unconditionally release Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván and drop all charges against her;
2. Guarantee that pending her release, the treatment of Kenia Inés Hernández Montalván 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 the woman human rights defender;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Mexico are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from reprisals and free from all restrictions, including judicial harassment.