**STORIES**

Verónica Razo, detained for five years awaiting outcome of trial

Verónica Razo, a 37 year old mother of two, was abducted by men dressed in plainclothes as she walked along a street near her house in central Mexico City on 8 June 2011.

The men took her to a Federal Police warehouse where she was held for 24 hours and tortured.

She was beaten, subjected to near asphyxiation and electric shocks and repeatedly raped by several police officers. She was threatened and forced to sign a “confession”. After her interrogation by police and prosecutors, she collapsed and was rushed to the hospital where she was treated for severe heart palpitations.

Police claimed they arrested Verónica the following day and accused her of being part of a kidnapping ring. However, the night of her arrest her mother had already filed a missing person’s report with local officials.

Two years after her arrest, psychologists from Mexico’s Federal Attorney General´s Office confirmed Verónica presented symptoms consistent with torture. She has spent five years in prison awaiting the outcome of her trial. Veronica’s daughter was just six years old at the time of Verónica’s arrest and her son was 12. Her son, now 18, has been unable to go to university because of the financial burden that his mother´s imprisonment has had on the family. Verónica´s mother had to leave her house and sell her shop because of the difficultly that accompanying her daughter has represented.

**Tailyn Wang: Miscarried inside prosecutor’s office after brutal police beatings**

Tailyn Wang was approximately seven-weeks pregnant when her house was broken into by federal police officers in February 2014 and she was taken to police installations without any arrest warrant. After prolonged beating and sexual abuse at the hands of federal police, Taylin miscarried inside the offices of the PGR in Mexico City.

Two state doctors undertook a medical examination while she was under official custody, and despite her injuries, the first doctor did not properly examine her and dismissed her claims that she had been brutally beaten. Neither doctor reported her allegations of torture and ill-treatment.

She was given no medicine for her pain and was simply handed a few sheets of paper towel to stuff down her pants before she was whisked away, handcuffed, to board a commercial plane and taken to a federal prison. When the plane landed in Tepic, northwest Mexico, the airline seat was drenched with blood.

Tailyn told prison officials she had had a miscarriage, but they only yelled at her. It was only then, in prison and at least four days after the arrest, when Tailyn was told that she was being accused of being part of a gang of kidnappers and charged with organized crime. She bled for five more days in prison without being given any proper medical attention. Tailyn remains in prison awaiting the outcome of her trial. Despite denouncing torture over two years ago, she is still waiting to be examined by an official forensic doctor to document the torture and other ill-treatment she suffered.

**Maria Magdalena Saavedra: Noted as “physically healthy” by Navy Doctor after being raped**

Magdalena was abducted by armed Navy marines from her house on 10 May 2013 in San Luis Potosí. The marines burst into her bedroom and beat her while they yelled questions at her. They accused her of being the financial controller for a major drug gang.

They placed a bag over her head until she suffocated and passed out. Then, they loaded her into a van and continued to beat her and raped her with objects. They later took her to a building that to Magdalena appeared to be a police station and applied electric shocks to her genitals and her mouth. They had grabbed the address of her daughter from Magdalena´s belongings and threatened to harm her. The torture at the hands of the Navy marines lasted for 20 hours.

Magdalena was then taken to the offices of the PGR and forced to sign a “confession” with her fingerprints. On her way to the Federal Prosecutor’s Office (PGR), a marine stayed by her side and continued to beat her. In the PGR she was presented as a criminal to the media by the Navy and the police.

The Navy doctor, after conducting a medical examination following her arrest, noted that “the detainee is ‘physically healthy’”. At her first hearing before a judge a couple of days after, the judge’s description of Magdalena’s state was in stark contrast to that documented by the Navy: “the suspect was sobbing, with tension, depression and manifest anxiety”. When Amnesty International interviewed Magdalena in early 2016, more than three years after the arrest, scars were still visible and she showed clear signs of trauma. Magdalena remains in prison awaiting the outcome of her trial.

**Denise Blanco and Korina Utrera, humiliated for being lesbians and raped by the Navy**

On 27 August 2011, 25-year-old Korina de Jesús Utrera Domínguez and her girlfriend, Denise Francisca Blanco Lovato, were at Korina’s home in Tabasco, southern Mexico, when armed marines in camouflage uniforms stormed into the house and started to beat them and yell at them. Both women were blindfolded and taken away without any arrest warrant to a Navy base. There, they were both raped and subjected to near asphyxiation and electric shocks. According to Korina, one of the marines tried to put his penis into Korina´s mouth and shouted “Come on bitch, have a try.” When marines were forcing her to eat food off the ground, one of them yelled: “Enough! They are going to sue us!” Denise was also raped by marines who placed their gloved fingers into her vagina and applied electric shocks to her genitals. Denise told Amnesty International that marines screamed at them ´You fucking lesbians’.´´

When, more than 30 hours after their arrest, the women were finally taken to a public prosecutor in the neighbouring state of Veracruz, Korina was pressured into signing a “confession” admitting to involvement in organized crime and drug offences. Denise was accused of the same crimes. When Korina told a Navy doctor what the marines had done to her, she told Amnesty International he said: “shut the fuck up, don´t say bullshit.” Both women reported the torture they suffered in front of a judge, but their allegations were later ignored by an appeals judge. The PGR opened an investigation into the torture allegedly carried out by marines and, four years later, official forensic doctors examined both women. A year after the examination, Denise and Korina still did not know the results. At the time of writing, both women remained in prison awaiting the outcome of their criminal trial. No marine has been charged in the case.