

## **Urgent Action: Demand release of family of murdered activist Marisela Escobeda**

For many years, Amigos de las Mujeres de Juarez has worked with non-profit organizations in Juarez and Chihuahua. We are concerned by the rash of assassinations and attacks on activists who are demanding justice. These assassinations have been carried out by unknown paramilitary organizations, operating with impunity. Instead of justice for the victim, the Mexican government attempts to place blame on the victim, alleging involvement in organized crime.

The disturbing pattern has been that the entire family then also begins to receive threats and then is also assassinated after demanding justice for their loved one.

Marisela Escobedo's daughter, Rubi was murdered. Marisela's demand for justice led to her assassination in front of the Governor's Palace in the main square of Chihuahua City. Her husband's business was burned down, her brother-in-law was murdered and the family began to receive death threats. Knowing that the Mexican government would not protect them or was complicit in the murder, they fled to the border, asking for political asylum.

In a most egregious act, the U.S. government placed the family in immigration detention. Thanks to pressure on the U.S. government, Marisela's 3 year-old granddaughter was released from immigration detention. However, her son Juan Manuel Frayre Escobedo and brother Hector Escobedo Ortiz both remain detained in the Otero County Processing Center. This same center is the focus of a recent report by the ACLU, documenting a large variety of abuses to those held in this facility. <http://aclu-nm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/OCPC-Report.pdf>.

Amigos de las Mujeres de Juárez asks that you again write to your congressional representatives, asking for the release of threatened family members from immigration detention. We support a call to institute the changes to detention policy recommended by the ACLU, especially the call to:

### **"Continue work to expand and utilize the Alternatives to Detention Program.**

Release individuals who pose no danger to national security or risk to community safety. Individuals should be released under the least restrictive requirements and with the appropriate case management services to ensure program success.

**"End unnecessary and unconstitutional prolonged detention of immigrants who pose no risk ."<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico. Outsourcing Responsibility: The Human Cost of Privatized Immigration Detention in Otero County. Retrieved from <http://aclu-nm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/OCPC-Report.pdf>.