

United States Senate Committee on
FOREIGN RELATIONS
Chairman Robert Menendez

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

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Chairman Menendez Joins Group of Bipartisan Senators in Letter to Sec. Kerry on Missing Mexican Students

WASHINGTON, DC – In a letter sent to Secretary of State John Kerry on Tuesday, a group of 14 Senators including Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez (D-NJ), wrote to express their deep concern for the lives of the 43 young students that disappeared on September 26th in the State of Guerrero, Mexico. The Senators call for additional attention on “strengthening the investigative and forensic capacity of Mexican law enforcement and its ability to serve victims of crime, violence, and human rights abuses.”

In addition to Menendez, the letter was signed by: Sens. Richard Durbin (D-IL); Ben Cardin (D-MD); Tom Udall (D-NM); Christopher Coons (D-DE); Tim Kaine (D-VA); Patrick Leahy (D-VT); Edward Markey (D-MA); Dianne Feinstein (D-CA); Christopher Murphy (D-CT); Marco Rubio (R-FL); Mark Kirk (R-IL); Barbara Boxer (D-CA); and Cory Booker (D-NJ).

A copy of the November 25 letter to Secretary of State John Kerry is below.

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express our profound concern for the lives of the 43 young students that disappeared on September 26th in the State of Guerrero, Mexico. After more than a month of continuous investigations by Mexican authorities, it is disconcerting that the fate of these students remains uncertain, even as mounting evidence implies that they have become the latest victims of the country's drug-related violence.

In the midst of this crisis, we urge you to do everything possible to support the Mexican government by making additional investigative and forensic resources available to assist in locating the missing students. Even if our worst fears are confirmed, we ask that you assist the Mexican government in its efforts to bring all those responsible to justice and to ensure positive post-mortem identifications that allow families to begin their grieving and healing process.

As thousands of frustrated Mexicans gather throughout the country to protest against impunity, we are concerned that the situation in Guerrero is symptomatic of a larger issue that has been endemic to Mexico in recent years. We are deeply troubled by the reports of multiple clandestine mass graves that have been found throughout the search process. According to the Mexican Attorney General's Office, there are more than 22,000 people who disappeared or went missing over the past decade, and who remain unaccounted for. This number constitutes one of the largest in the hemisphere and one that can't be ignored.

At a time when President Peña Nieto has taken great strides to reform Mexico's economic and energy sectors, it is imperative that attention also be focused on strengthening the investigative and forensic capacity of Mexican law enforcement and its ability to serve victims of crime, violence, and human rights abuses. It is critical that the United States stand in partnership with these efforts to ensure justice for the 43 young students and for the tens of thousands of Mexicans that have gone missing.

In closing, our hearts go out to the families of the missing students and we once again reiterate our request for support to our Mexican partners during this time of crisis.

Sincerely,

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| 1. Menendez | 9. Feinstein |
| 2. Durbin | 10. Murphy |
| 3. Cardin | 11. Rubio |
| 4. Udall | 12. Kirk |
| 5. Coons | 13. Boxer |
| 6. Kaine | 14. Booker |
| 7. Leahy | |
| 8. Markey | |

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