

June 7, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write today to request your assistance in bringing home 25-year old United States citizen and Marine Corps veteran, Armando Torres. As you are aware, Armando was kidnapped in La Barranca, Tamaulipas, Mexico on May 14, 2013. While we appreciate efforts by the State Department on his behalf thus far, it is critical that we raise awareness about Armando and send a message to his kidnapers that their actions against a US citizen and Marine Corps veteran have gained the full attention of the United States government and will not be tolerated. We ask that you devote the maximum amount of resources at your disposal to ensure that Armando is brought home as soon as possible and his kidnapers brought to justice.

On May 13, 2013, Armando crossed the International Port of Entry Bridge at Progresso, Texas, and was kidnapped shortly after arriving at his father's ranch near the U.S.-Mexico border. According to eyewitnesses, several armed men, believed to be members of a drug cartel, forcibly removed Armando, his father, and his uncle from the ranch and have not been seen or heard from since. According to Armando's family, the cartels may have been targeting Armando's father's ranch to use it as a transshipment point for drugs.

Armando served honorably in the United States Marine Corps from 2005 to 2011, including a tour in Africa and as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As a US Marine, Armando had not been allowed to cross the border for years because he was on active duty and his trip to Mexico was likely to say farewell to his father prior to moving across the country.

The US Marine community has been working hard to bring attention to Armando's plight, including working with the mother of US Marine Jon Hammar. As you know, Jon was detained in Mexico last year and eventually released, thanks in part to the combined efforts of the State Department and Congress. We hope that by working together with your office, the FBI, and other authorities, we can also secure the release of Armando.

Armando put his life on the line for our country and we have a responsibility to him and his family to do everything within our power to bring him home safely. We stand ready to work with you to show his kidnappers the full capabilities of the United States government and just how determined we can be on behalf of an American citizen.

Sincerely,

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress