

## IHMs in Action



Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz, IHM



Carmen Armenta Lara, IHM

*Sisters Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz, Carmen Armenta Lara, Maureen Kelly and Julie (Marie Benedict) Slowik minister in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico in pastoral care and human rights advocacy.*



Maureen Kelly, IHM



Julie Slowik, IHM

*The sisters work to educate people about their rights; help provide the training needed for self-sufficiency; work toward community-building through personal contact with residents; and organize reflection groups to help achieve a vision of peace.*

*With the current situation in Juarez, the sisters also pray with, console and provide*

*emotional support for the families affected by the violence.*

*This is excerpted from [IHM Overseas Update](#).*

During these last two years, the people of Juarez have experienced a very high level of daily violence because of a war between drug cartels and the failure at all levels of government to control and prevent this insecurity. Currently, Juarez is considered to be the most violent city in the world, with more than 5,000 assassinations related to the drug trafficking in the last two years. The majority of these killings have not been solved despite the city, state and federal police forces present in the city.

We experience the suffering and death of Jesus as a daily reality in the lives of the families with whom we live and work. We hear the voices of the women in Juarez, mothers, wives, daughters, sisters of people who have been killed.

The women say the police and the soldiers have not been able to control the violence. Family members have left Juarez because of threats of kidnapping. Many people cannot work openly or lose their jobs unjustly. Unemployment is high. Businesses have closed because of extortion - pay, close or be killed. Schools have been deserted because of gangs and lack of money. Normal activities are limited, both day and night.

The women say they feel like prisoners in their own homes. Their children cannot play in the park because of the insecurity. There is a sense of powerlessness, hopelessness and anger against, and fear of, the authorities.

But families try to respond positively to the situation. They maintain communication with one another and know where family members are. They avoid late hours, teach

the children prevention and to look out for one another, pray with neighbors and try to create opportunities to share and celebrate together.

They do their best to continue their normal lives. Although some families say they have responded to the violence with fear and apathy and the hope that they won't be attacked, others denounce the injustices and abuses, offering moral support to those in need. They accompany people who are suffering and try to share words of comfort.

As one woman said, "While we are alive, we must struggle for those who have died unjustly. We are the voice of justice."

*2010 marks 25 years the IHM Sisters have ministered in Mexico.*

*If you would like to partner with the IHM Sisters in support of their ministries, secure [online](#) giving is available.*

Return to current [Ministry of the Month](#)