



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

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Date: February 26, 2023,

Re: The disappearance of Reina Carolina Morales Rojas

Dear Mayor Wu and Commissioner Cox,

The Boston City Council is obligated to ensure that the City of Boston's safety departments are responding to our residents' emergency needs promptly. It had come to our attention that it took nearly two months before the Boston Police Department publicly announced the disappearance of Reina Carolina Morales Rojas—an East Boston resident, Salvadoran immigrant, and mother of two.

Today marks 90 days since Ms. Morales Rojas's disappearance, and little continues to be known about her case. The community has been demanding answers, and with this letter, we would like to echo their requests for more information.

Ms. Morales Rojas was last seen on November 26, 2022, getting into a silver van in East Boston and subsequently being dropped off on Allston Street in Somerville. After multiple reports of her disappearance, the Boston Police Department publicly announced her disappearance on January 12, 2023. Unfortunately, the type of response Ms. Morales Rojas' case received reflects a nationwide pattern. Missing cases of women of color are often unmet with the same urgency as their white counterparts. In this case, Reina is not only a woman of color but also an immigrant, which further makes her susceptible to dismissive treatment.

We speak on behalf of women of color, immigrants, and linguistically diverse communities whose emergency needs are too often not prioritized. Moreover, this case has revealed that the East Boston Latino Spanish-speaking community feels unheard and unseen by the Boston Police Department. Police protection should be afforded equally to all residents regardless of race, class, national origin, or gender. The status quo is unacceptable, especially for communities of color, and a "business as usual" approach will not protect Ms. Morales Rojas or other cases like hers.

We hope the City of Boston and the Boston Police Department will thoroughly investigate Ms. Morales Rojas' disappearance. We are further asking that they take the concerns of the East Boston Latino Spanish-speaking community seriously. We want to ensure a plan for how BPD will respond to such cases moving forward. We encourage BPD to demonstrate good faith efforts to serve and protect our most vulnerable communities, and our offices are available and willing to support this work.

Respectfully,

Julia Mejia,
Boston City
Councilor,
At-Large

Kendra Lara,
Boston City
Councilor,
District 6

Ricardo Arroyo
Boston City
Councilor,
District 5

Ruthzee Louijeune
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