

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 4901 Estimado Sr. Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto President of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5346 0908 Estimada Sra. Procuradora Arely Gómez González Attorney General of Mexico
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April 13, 2015

Dear President and Attorney General:

We are extremely concerned about the flawed process of investigating the enforced disappearance of 43 college students Guerrero in September 2014 (cf our letter of October 13, 2014).

On September 26, 2014, 43 students were forcibly disappeared and six other people (three students and three bystanders) were killed during an attack believed to be perpetrated by local police operating in collusion with criminal gangs in Iguala, Guerrero. More than 90 people, including the former mayor of Iguala, police officers, and gang members are being investigated. On January 27 of this year, the Federal Attorney General's Office announced that all the students had been killed and burnt to ashes. Nevertheless, forensic experts with access to the investigation pointed out serious flaws in the handling and interpretation of forensic evidence. These include excessive reliance on the testimony of four alleged hit-men; lack of adequate and sufficient forensic evidence to back up the Attorney General's hypothesis; biased interpretation of the available forensic evidence; and failure to secure and protect the alleged crime scene in a prompt and effective manner. We are aware that the Federal Attorney General's Office has disqualified the experts, but we have not seen credible efforts to address the flaws.

Understandably, the victims' families are anxious to find out what happened to their missing sons and daughters. At their request, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) appointed an international group of experts (*Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes*) who are reviewing the government's response to the case. We understand that government authorities in Mexico have agreed to this. We are expecting to see full cooperation with the group.

A report released in February 2015 by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances states that the case of the 43 students is illustrative of the serious challenges the government of Mexico faces in the prevention, investigation and punishment of enforced disappearances. More than 22,000 people are missing or disappeared in Mexico; their whereabouts remain unknown. Welcoming outside assistance would help to show that your government is taking this seriously.

We **strongly urge** that you

- take all effective measures necessary to establish the whereabouts of the disappeared students;
- fully support the group of experts appointed by the IACHR by ensuring that they can carry out their review without obstacles and by publicly committing to comply with their recommendations;
- guarantee a full, prompt and impartial investigation into all the human rights violations committed in this case and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

copies: Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan" ~ via email accion.urgente@tlachinollan.org
 Lic. Rogelio Ortega Martínez, Governor of Guerrero ~ via fax: 011 52 74 7471 9956
 Alejandro Estivill Castro, Mexican Interim Ambassador from Mexico to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
 Earl Anthony Wayne, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
 Chris Andino, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via email: andinoc@state.gov
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: