



Ms Federica Mogherini  
High Representative of the European  
Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

21<sup>st</sup> September 2016

**Joint letter calling on the European Union to take action in response to the lack of concrete outcomes in locating the 43 students of Ayotzinapa two years after their disappearance.**

Dear Ms Mogherini:

The coming September 26th will mark the two-year anniversary of the attacks against the students of the “Raúl Isidro Burgos” Rural Teachers' College of Ayotzinapa in Iguala. These grave acts of violence resulted in 6 deaths, at least 40 injured and 43 disappeared students. What's more, taking the relatives of the disappeared students into account, there have been over 180 direct victims and around 700 indirect victims of human rights violations<sup>1</sup>. The Inter-American Commission of Human rights (CIDH) has stated that the actions taken to date by the state authorities have yet to produce any concrete outcomes or positive advances enabling the whereabouts of the 43 disappeared to be established.

In accordance with its mandate to verify the lines of investigation, the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE) has revealed diverse findings and irregularities in the investigation in the two reports produced on the case of Ayotzinapa. More specifically, it highlighted potential motives that could be related to drug trafficking between Mexico and the United States.

Moreover, the Group of Experts and the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team have rejected the claim that the 43 students were incinerated at the Cocula dump site, a version of events which continues to be strongly maintained by the Attorney General's Office of the Republic (hereinafter PGR). It is also worthy of mentioning that in relation to the Cocula dump site story, the IGIE made various recommendations due to the multiple deficiencies that were identified in the investigation process, such as the lack of scientific rigour in the expert reports and the alteration of tests refuted to Tomás Zerón de Lucio, Head of the Criminal Investigation Agency at the PGR. The signs of mistreatment or torture of various suspects, without having initiated an investigation in accordance with international standards is of particular concern. In response to the conclusions presented by the IGIE, UN experts have maintained that “much remains to be done to unveil the truth, guarantee justice and provide reparations to the victims”<sup>2</sup>.

1 [XXII Informe de actividades. ¡Pueblo indignado! Resistir con el corazón por delante. Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña, Tlachinollan](#)

2 <http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19883&LangID=E>

The involvement of different police forces and the army in the events of the night of September 26-27th 2014, also remains to be clarified. The IGIE highlighted the total lack of protection of the student teachers by all of the security forces, in spite of them having knowledge of the facts. In turn, the National Commission for Human rights has reported on the potential involvement of municipal and federal police in the disappearance of a group of student teachers. According to the PGR, 168 people have been remanded, 73 of which are municipal police<sup>3</sup>, however, few advances have been made in the investigation of the other security forces identified.

In order to follow up on the precautionary measures granted by the CIDH and the recommendations of the IGIE, the Mexican State, the CIDH, relatives of Ayotzinapa and their representatives decided to create a special follow-up mechanism on July 29th. This agreement recognises that the Ayotzinapa case continues to meet the requirements of severity, urgency and irreparability, and aims to continue with the search for the 43 disappeared students and “to double efforts to determine their whereabouts”. The implementation of the mechanism recently began which is an important step, but it is essential that the international community carefully monitors compliance with the commitments and that the necessary guarantees are made so that the designated advisors can carry out their work without restrictions.

Various international human rights mechanisms have warned of the grave situation that Mexico is facing in terms of disappearances. Official sources estimate that there are 28,472 missing persons<sup>4</sup>. In this sense, the legislative actions propelled by the Government for the approval of a General Law on Disappearances are valued positively. However, further efforts should be made to include in the law the civil society proposals led by collectives of relatives and victims of disappeared. Finally, the high risk suffered by families that initiate searches for their loved ones must be stressed. Collectives of relatives from various states have reported threats, surveillance, intercepted communication, harassment and even assassinations for starting search brigades for disappeared persons. This alarming situation requires international attention.

Given the gravity of the Case of Ayotzinapa, which illustrates an alarming situation in terms of disappearances and violence in the country, we, the signatory organisations, hereby call upon the High Representative **to issue a public statement to express concern for the lack of specific results in determining the whereabouts of the 43 missing students and to support the effective implementation of the special follow-up mechanism. Likewise to bring the following demands to the immediate attention of the Mexican authorities:**

- Take all possible measures to determine the whereabouts and the circumstances surrounding the forced disappearance of the 43 students.
- Initiate an exhaustive investigation of the possible cases of torture and mistreatments of persons detained because of the Ayotzinapa case, in adherence with international standards.
- Guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of the families of Ayotzinapa and the human rights defenders and accompanying organisations working under high risk in the pursuit of truth and justice.

In addition, we urge both the EU Delegation and the Embassies of the EU member states in Mexico **to visit the state of Guerrero and to hold meetings with the relatives of Ayotzinapa and their legal representatives.**

Yours sincerely,

Peace Brigades International (PBI) - Mexico  
CIFCA - Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico  
German Network for Human Rights in Mexico  
OMCT - Organisation Mondiale contre la Torture  
PI - Protection International

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.razon.com.mx/spip.php?article319881>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2016/09/07/politica/009n1pol>