



MEXICO: JOINT STATEMENT OF NGOS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE FINAL GIEI REPORT

As human rights organisations working on Mexico, we recognise the important work of the Inter-Disciplinary Group of Independent Experts (*Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos y Expertas Independientes*, GIEI) to investigate the case of the 43 disappeared students from Ayotzinapa teaching college and welcome their final report presented on April 24, 2016.

Established in November 2014 as an agreement among the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the students' families and representatives, and the Mexican government, the GIEI published a preliminary report in September 2015 that substantially disproved the Mexican government's official version of the disappearances and proposed further lines of investigation.

The final report underscores grave shortcomings in the follow-up of these proposed key lines of investigation and highlights grave concerns, including the manipulation of evidence, and torture of suspects to secure confessions. The Mexican government denied a request from the families of the disappeared to further extend the GIEI's mandate in order to continue their investigation.

The Mexican government has committed publicly to ensure that investigations do not cease until justice is done, and to develop, in cooperation with the IACHR, a special monitoring mechanism for follow up on this and other cases of enforced disappearances. The case of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa is emblematic of a larger crisis of enforced disappearance in Mexico, with tens of thousands of people disappeared to date. The Mexican authorities urgently need to step up efforts to search for the disappeared and to carry out effective investigations that result in victims being identified and those responsible punished.

Two members of the GIEI attended a hearing of the European Parliament's (EP) Sub-Committee for Human Rights (DROI) in March 2016. They outlined the findings of their first report and welcomed the possibility to provide a further briefing following the publication of the GIEI final report.

As Mexico and the EU prepare for the annual EU-Mexico Human Rights Dialogue scheduled to take place in Brussels on 21 June 2016, we call on the European institutions to join the GIEI in its strong public demands for an end to impunity for enforced disappearance in Mexico and to support the families of the victims. They should:

- Ensure a full and public briefing from the GIEI in the European Parliament and commit to a follow-up resolution to the October 2014 EP resolution on Ayotzinapa
- Maintain full support for an independent and impartial investigation of the Ayotzinapa case and follow up to all of the recommendations of the GIEI's preliminary and final reports
- Urge the Mexican government to support the IACHR's efforts to develop an effective and independent monitoring mechanism
- Express concern to the Mexican government about the risk to families of the disappeared and their legal representatives, which has worsened in recent months
- Reiterate the recommendations of the GIEI's report during the upcoming Human Rights Dialogue and place human rights at the centre of joint work on the revised Global Agreement and on the Security and Justice dialogue
- Commit to advance the joint projects agreed to by the EU and Mexico during last year's Human Rights Dialogue, including EU funded technical support and programming to reinforce the work of the Mexican government on torture, enforced disappearances, and human rights defenders.