

Burned bodies of 28 Mexican teaching students pulled from mass graves

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So far, 28 badly burned and dismembered bodies, believed to be those of missing student teachers, have been pulled from hidden pits on the outskirts of the City of Iguala, in Guerrero state, Mexico.

Forty-three students went missing September 26 after they were attacked by police while commandeering buses to take them to a demonstration against cuts in funding for their school. The whereabouts of the remaining missing students from the Normal Rural School Raúl Isidro Burgos in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero remain unknown.

The recovered bodies had been placed on top of branches, and some had been doused with gasoline and burned, according to persons involved in searching for the students.

Guerrero state prosecutor Iñaki Blanco said that two members of the Guerrero Unidos gang confessed to killing 17 of the students and burying them. The two said that the order to pursue and detain the students came from the Iguala Director of Public Security, Francisco Vallardes, the police chief. The order to take them to an unknown location and kill them then came from the local gang leader, El Chucky.

Both Vallardes and the municipal president of Iguala, José Luis Abarca Hernández, have fled and are missing.

The governor of the Guerrero state, Ángel Aguirre Rivero confirmed that the drug gang had infiltrated the police force in Iguala, as well as other police departments in the state, and work with many local city halls.

These words had scarcely escaped the Governor Aguirre's lips when the mother-in-law of Abarca Hernández, while conceding in an interrogation that her sons belonged to the Guerrero Unidos gang and her son-in-law protected them, charged that Aguirre's political campaign had been funded by the drug cartel of the

notorious Beltrán Leyva brothers, which has links to Guerrero Unidos. The last Beltrán Leyva brother not in prison, Hector, was only captured last week in the state of Guanajuato.

The question immediately arose, if the governor likewise was beholden to narco capos, how could anyone trust an investigation of the student massacre carried out by state prosecutors who report to him?

With outrage mounting in Mexico, President Enrique Peña Nieto went on national television Monday and promised a "profound investigation" to find out what happened and bring the guilty to justice.

But 11 months ago, on November 7, 2013, Abarca Hernández's office released a photo of him embracing Peña Nieto, while both smiled at the camera. The photo was accompanied by a press release crowing that Abarca and his wife, María de los Ángeles Pineda Villa, were interviewed in Iguala with Peña Nieto in order to present "social development projects" intended to grow the Iguala economy.

By that time in November, relations of Maria Pineda Villa's family with the Beltrán Leyva cartel were already well known. In fact, her brothers, Mario Pineda Villa y Alberto "El Borrado" Mario Pineda, were executed in 2009 for betraying cartel chief Arturo Beltrán Leyva.

In October of last year, the political current known as the National Democratic Left (IDN) of the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) also delivered to the federal government and the PRD testimony linking Abarca Hernández and Maria Pineda Villa with this cartel.

This included testimony from a survivor of torture and executions ordered by Abarca Hernández, himself a PRD member. Moreover, one Nicolás Mendoza specifically provided testimony, certified before a

notary, relating how Abarca Hernández killed PRD leader Arturo Hernández Cardona with a shotgun blast to the chest and later had his body dumped in a pit.

Pena Nieto's government also knew that the widow of Hernández Cardona and other kin of victims and survivors of Abarca Hernandez's depredations made presentations in July 2013 to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

Abarca Hernández was denounced last year as well before the Mexican Attorney General, Jesús Murillo Karam, and the Secretary of the Interior, Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong. But neither took any action against him.

Instead, the Mexican president cozied up to him a short while later in November. Fast forward 11 months, and Albarca Hernández's minions in Iguala brutally massacred the Ayotzinapa students.

On Tuesday a PRD federal deputy, Silvano Blanco de Aquino, proclaimed with substantial force that narcotics trafficking had infiltrated all levels of government, including the presidency. Silvano Blanco said that "In Mexico there exists a narco-state; one has to recognize that the narcos are there from the presidency of the Republic to the municipal presidencies and give money to their election campaigns."

Blanco noted that not all public servants are tied in with organized crime, but that it is necessary to recognize that there is not a state in the Republic where drug trafficking does not touch municipal presidents, local deputies, and federal officials, including the financing of presidential campaigns.

On Monday, families of the missing students, all of them freshmen, who made up about one third of their school's first-year class, gathered at the school in Ayotzinapa.

"These are not the first forced disappearances and executions that we have had to deal with," said a member of the group, Javier Monroy. "We are governed by a society of drug traffickers."

"What they do is they criminalize protest," said one father. "They go after students, and the real delinquents are in the government."

Deeply mistrusting the government, the families said they would not accept its identification of the bodies. They have asked a renowned team of Argentine forensic investigators to conduct DNA and other tests.

A spokesman for the families, Manuel Martinez,

announced plans for a nationwide march on October 8, which he vowed would "paralyze" Mexico. Other teacher, peasant, student and activist groups announced a day-long mobilization in various cities to demand justice for the 43 missing teaching students.

Adelfo Gómez Alejandro, leader of Section VII of the National Union of Educational Workers, said that 45,000 teachers in the southern states of Chiapas and Oaxaca would march on October 8 to repudiate the "repressive attack of the Mexican government." He called on all teachers to go into the streets and demand that the federal government and the state government in Guerrero return the missing 43 students.

Menacingly, on Monday a banner signed "Guerreros Unidos" appeared in Iguala demanding the release of the 22 police officers who were arrested a few days ago in connection with the attack on the students. It warned: "The war has started."



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