

Mass protests in Mexico over Iguala Massacre

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Young people mobilized around the world on Wednesday October 22, in support of the missing 43 Mexican *normalistas* (teaching students) kidnapped on September 26 in Iguala, Guerrero, México. There were demonstrations, marches and rallies in 50 Mexican cities. Demonstrations also took place in other cities in the Americas and in Europe.

The epicenter of the global demonstration was Mexico City, where over 50,000 marched from the Monument to the Angel of Independence to the Zócalo Square, in the center of Mexico City's historic district.

At the rally, a message was read from the Ricardo Flores Magón Student Association at the Raúl Isidro Burgos School in Ayotzinapa [where the disappeared students were from] demanding that the investigation into the killing and abduction of their classmates be taken out of the hands of the government and placed in the hands of a people's committee.

The statement also demanded that President Enrique Peña Nieto, Government Secretary Miguel Angel Osorio, Education Secretary Emilio Chuayffet and Attorney General Jesús Murillo produce the students alive.

In Iguala, about 5,000 demonstrators, students and residents of the city of 140,000, marched and rallied in the city center. Towards the end of the day, a few hooded people forced open the gates of city hall, destroyed windows and furniture and started a fire.

This is the third mass march on the issue of the Ayotzinapa *normalistas*. The first, on October 2, coincided with the commemoration of the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, when some 500 students were ambushed and massacred in the Tlatelolco district of Mexico City. The second march took place on October 15 and was led by family members and fellow *normalistas* from the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal College.

Ayotzinapa students and family members were also

present at this march and rally, as well as students from universities across México. Among the picket signs that the demonstrators carried were denunciations of the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and other political parties for being part of a "narco-government." Other signs made the connection between this massacre and the one at Tlatelolco in 1968. At the rally, speakers vowed to continue fighting until the students are found and justice is done.

Joining the protests in Morelia, Michoacán were members of Mexico's movie industry—actors, directors, writers and producers, who lit 43 candles on the steps of a Morelia theater.

At this event, Daniel Giménez, from the artist collective "*Grito más fuerte*" (Loudest Shout), said that in the last two years 4,397 people have been killed and that the violence is not just in Guerrero, but part of a pattern of growing violence across Mexico.

Elsewhere around the globe students and youth showed their support for the Mexican protests. In Venezuela, students protested at the Central University of Venezuela. "We are making their rage ours," declared a student in reference to the Mexican protests.

In Texas, students and professors rallied at the El Paso campus of the University of Texas (UTEP). The name of each disappeared student was read out loud and signatures were gathered for an open letter of protest to the Mexican consulate. "We are here to raise our voice and demonstrate our support to a Mexico that is losing hope ... to the Mexican people who are rising strong more than ever against this atrocity, and against corruption, impunity and drug trafficking, which have been at the root of all of our societies' problems," declared UTEP student Sharon Murillo.

Other protests took place in London, Paris, Vienna and Buenos Aires.

As the demonstrations were taking place, federal

prosecutors made public indictments against Iguala's mayor, José Luis Abarca, and his wife, María Pineda, for having ordered the armed attack on the students. The alleged motive was to prevent the students from disrupting a social event promoting Pineda's work with children.

Jesús Murillo, the federal prosecutor, said that the order was given for the police and the narco-gang "to discourage people from showing up at the celebration that night, where the mayor and his wife were present." The dinner/dance party had another motive, that of launching Pineda's PRD candidacy for the mayor's spot in 2015.

Six people died in the attack, in addition to the 43 missing normalistas. Both Abarca and Pineda have fled and remain at large.

Sidronio Casarrubias, leader of the narco-terrorists Guerreros Unidos (GU), allegedly told authorities that the police had, in fact, turned the students over to his gang and that his men thought they were receiving members of a rival gang [the Rojos], setting off the chain of events that resulted in the killing of the 43 students and their burial in shallow graves.

The indictment also suggests that in Iguala, there is little difference between the police and the gangsters, since it was Casarrubias and other GU leaders who appointed police officers to their posts.

The massive and growing protest movement is a matter of mounting concern to the Peña Nieto administration and the Mexican ruling class. Following Wednesday's protests, Guerrero Governor Angel Aguirre announced on Thursday that he would be stepping down. At a press conference in Chilpancingo, he stated that he was requesting a leave of absence from the state legislature to "promote a political climate" that will help solve this crisis.

Aguirre's resignation has been one of the demands of the protest movement.

On behalf of the Peña administration, Government Secretary Osorio expressed his support for those demonstrations that are peaceful, and he assured the protesters that the federal government is leaving no stone unturned in its investigations.

This is a lie. A long string of massacres, from Tlatelolco to Ayotzinapa, have been met with stonewalling and cover-ups by the governments in charge. On July 1, two months before the Iguala

massacre, one story made all of the headlines and was the lead story in all of the TV broadcasts. In a shootout with the Mexican army on June 30, 22 members of a gang known as the Michoacán Family were killed. According to army reports, the 22 were holding three women hostage and guarding a warehouse full of weapons.

The army's account was quickly exposed as a cover-up for what turned out to be a summary execution of unarmed youth who had surrendered.

This confrontation produced the highest death toll in any single incident since 2007. Other mass killings since the 2007 shootout include those that took place on July 23, 2013 (Michoacán, 20 dead), February 10, 2009 (Chihuahua, 20 dead), and April 29, 2014 (Reynosa, 14 dead).



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