

DNA tests confirm charred remains belong to disappeared Mexican student

Eric London

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The results of DNA tests made public Sunday have confirmed the discovery of the remains of 19-year-old Alexander Mora Venancio, one of the 43 disappeared *normalistas* from Ayotzinapa, in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero.

The charred fragments of bone were found amidst heaps of garbage at a dump in the town of Cocula, 125 kilometers from the school where Mora and others were preparing for careers as teachers of impoverished rural children. It is increasingly likely that Mora was burned—possibly alive—and that his body was then further dismembered before being scattered on a pile of refuse.

In response to the developments and the continuation of large demonstrations nationwide, National Defense Secretary Salvador Cienfuegos made further veiled threats that the Mexican military was prepared to crack down on demonstrations.

Speaking at a military ceremony on Monday, Cienfuegos used the vague language of a military strongman. “We must be united in order to confront adversity; only the convergent forces of all sectors of society, each in its respective area of responsibility, will keep Mexico in peace and security,” he said.

By “all sectors of society,” Cienfuegos means the military, which, he added, would act in accordance with the law in order to maintain the stability of the country.

Beneath the superficial references to the “lamentable experiences” in Ayotzinapa, Cienfuegos continued by directing his comments in an intentionally opaque manner not at those responsible for the massacre, but at the population of Mexico.

“Lies, accusations, unfounded criticisms, violence, and intolerance do not pay,” he said.

It would be difficult to formulate a more hypocritical statement than this. As the events of the past two and a

half months make clear, lies and violence are two of the main pillars upon which the entire political establishment rests.

Cienfuegos’ comments come as the Mexican ruling class prepares for the probability of continued social protest. The state of Mora’s remains—the first to be found since the disappearance of the 43 *normalistas* on September 26—are likely to deepen the justified indignation felt by broad sections of Mexican workers and peasants at the massacre in particular and at the political and social state of affairs in general.

Mora’s father Ezequiel, a small farmer from the town of El Pericón, issued a forceful indictment of the Mexican government while speaking to the press on Sunday. “They took my son’s dream of becoming a teacher,” he said. “They told me the news that they killed my son; I couldn’t believe it. It can’t be that he is dead. It’s too much.”

He continued: “We have the right to justice, because they will give impunity in this case, like the government always does, and that is not OK. If there is not justice I would like to say that [Mexican President Peña Nieto] is in agreement with what they do against the citizenry...

“We peasants can’t demonstrate against [Peña Nieto] because he is killing us, he tortures us. This is not a government that helps the people. This is a corrupt, delinquent government, more than anything, because they are the ones who have killed all those who make social struggle.”

Mora added: “One votes for them ... one fights to vote for these bastards. I’m a man of the left, but a left that is conscious of realities.”

Saena Mora, the sister of the deceased *normalista*, added that “those that killed my brother sooner or later will pay.”

The weeks that have passed since the disappearance have exposed the depth of the social crisis that has engulfed Mexico.

The *normalistas* were initially rounded up by police and then turned over to a drug gang apparently upon the orders of the Mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca Velázquez, for the “crime” of demonstrating against education reforms and the lack of resources made available by the government to rural schools.

Though the government has responded by making some arrests of low-level politicians and policemen, the disappearance has sparked widespread opposition to the collusive relationship between the government and the drug gangs.

Massive demonstrations have broken out across dozens of cities nationally and in many cities in North, Central and South America. Amongst those arrested during demonstrations in Mexico City were 11 students and workers, imprisoned on charges of homicide and kept in a federal penitentiary for 10 days. Parents of those detained joined the street demonstrations and accused the government of torturing their children in prison.

Those detained were released when a judge admitted there was no evidence to substantiate the charges and that the police statements were “inconsistent” with events.

Meanwhile, a coalition in the lower house of the federal legislature voted last week to alter articles 11 and 73 of the Mexican Constitution to facilitate a crackdown on demonstrations. The articles, which guarantee the free movement of the population throughout the country, will now be used to make demonstrations illegal on the absurd legal grounds that the protests restrict the population’s access to public space.

“The State will guarantee the right of all persons to universal mobility attendant to the principles of equality, accessibility, availability and sustainability,” the reform to article 11 says. The reform further authorizes the government “to find alternative mechanisms” for the exercise of the right to demonstrate.

The modifications passed in the lower house by a vote of 292 to 100 and will now move to the Senate. If the changes are affirmed, the local governments of at least 17 states have 180 days to approve the reforms.

Although the 100 deputies voting against the changes were members of the “left” PRD and the Citizens’ Movement, these same parties voted in favor of the same reforms in April. Moreover, the vote took place after having received the support of Julio Cesar Moreno, a PRD deputy and president of the lower house’s commission pertaining to constitutional matters.

The proposed constitutional changes make clear that the Mexican ruling class is preparing for a violent crackdown on the emerging social opposition in Mexico. No section of the Mexican political establishment—including the PRD and its splinter group, MORENA, is capable of securing justice for Alexander Mora and the other disappeared *normalistas*. That task falls to the working class.



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