

# Global protests mark anniversary of Mexican massacre

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Tens of thousand of students, workers and youth marched in Mexico and across the world to mark the first anniversary of the massacre and wounding of Ayotzinapa Rural Teaching College students ( *normalistas* ) and kidnapping and disappearance of 43 of their comrades in Iguala, México on September 26 and 27, 2014.

In Mexico City more than 25,000 marched for several hours and cut through this vast city, from the Los Pinos Presidential Palace to a rally in the Zocalo, the capital's historic main square.

The protests in Mexico City included a cross-section of the Mexican working class, students, and relatives of the disappeared. Many came as part of neighborhood associations; residents of the working class district of Iztapalapa marched behind a sign that read: "Killer State, truth and justice!"

Thousands of others arrived independently and carried hand-drawn signs that expressed their anger and indignation. "I am missing 43 sons," said one. Another that perhaps summarized the general sentiment said, "Fear must change sides; it cannot be that an evil few can hold hostage more than 100 million!" Parts of the route, along the tree-lined Reforma Blvd, had been coated with blood-red dye.

In the Zocalo, relatives of the missing addressed the crowd: "Once again, we have shown this government that all the Mexican people are with us and will not leave us isolated," declared Carmelita Cruz, mother of missing student Jorge Anibal Cruz. "We are showing [the government] that our flame of indignation and courage still burns."

Mario Cesar Gonzalez, the father of Cesar Manuel Gonzalez, also among the missing, declared that this past year has been "a year of enormous pain, that has also opened my eyes and taught me what our country

really is like, how despicable this government is, how it makes people disappear, how it is capable of massacre and repression." He added that "if he [Mexican president Peña Nieto] gambled that people would tire and forget, he lost that bet."

In Guadalajara, México's third largest city, onlookers applauded while more than one thousand marched from Revolution Square to Guadalajara's historic old city center behind a giant banner accusing Peña Nieto of murder. The marchers also demanded free and public education for all. Another banner pointed out that in Jalisco State alone, thousands have been disappeared. Forty-three youth with blindfolds and bloodied tee shirts marched solemnly to the beat of a drum.

Equally solemn was the march in Iguala, where the massacre took place, a year ago. The protest took the route that the students had taken in Iguala that night. Hundreds of students, educators and their supporters marched as riot-equipped police "protected" businesses along the route. Also heavily fortified was the Iguala military base. No violent incidents took place.

At the scene of the first of two attacks on the students, the marchers rallied and demanded justice for the dead and disappeared. One contingent of marchers rallied at the Cristina private clinic, where a student survivor of the massacre told of how, when a group of students carried in one of the wounded comrades, shot in the face, the personnel refused to treat him. Soldiers arrived shortly thereafter, but instead of helping the students, they "attacked us and made fun of us."

Iguala citizens lined the route of the march, offering fruits and water to the protesters.

Demonstrations also took place in Chipalcingo, capital of Guerrero State, and across Mexico, in Central and South America (Guatemala City, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Santiago), Europe (Frankfurt, Paris,

Belgium, Nice), the United States (New York, North Carolina) and across the world (Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong).

In New York protesters rallied at the UN building shouting “murderer”, as Mexican President Peña Nieto delivered a hypocritical address to the General Assembly boasting of Mexico having among the “most advanced legislation” on human rights.

The outcry over the 43 disappeared and six murdered Ayotzinapa students has brought to light the existence of over 25,000 disappeared people, tens of thousands known dead and a million internal refugees. In Iguala alone, over 200 shallow graves have been uncovered of yet to be identified victims of the drug war and political violence.



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