

New testimony exposes Mexican government's complicity in Ayotzinapa massacre

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The Mexican National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH) announced Thursday that federal police played an active role in the disappearance of 43 student teachers from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers College in the southwestern state of Guerrero in September 2014.

The new revelations, stemming from previously unpublished testimony by federal police officers themselves, prove that the federal government has been lying for a year-and-a-half about their involvement in the attacks on the *normalistas*, as the student teachers are known.

On September 26, 2014, police monitored a group of students traveling by bus to protest against cuts to education by the administration of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. The students were stopped and attacked by a group that included local and federal police, and 43 of them have not been found since. Ever since the immediate aftermath of the attack, the government has lied to the public and the families of the student teachers, resorting to violence and intimidation against those protesting the disappearances.

Luis Raul Gonzalez Perez, CNDH President, told the press Thursday, "Today we now know information that exposes the participation of elements of [local police] from Huitzuco and elements of the Federal Police" in the attacks.

Since the attack itself, the Mexican ruling class has been attempting to sweep the disappearance under the rug by stating that the students were attacked by members of a gang working in alliance with corrupt local police. The direct involvement of federal police in the attack exposes this story as false. All signs point to

the fact that the highest levels of the Mexican state were involved in the attack and its cover-up.

As more facts emerge showing federal complicity, the federal government is trying to close investigations into the massacre. Earlier in April, the government announced it would seek to shut down by April 30 an investigation carried out by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI). The GIEI's probe has undercut the official version of the massacre, most recently by producing evidence placing in question the government's claim that the bodies of two teachers were placed in a garbage dump by gangsters. Parents of the disappeared teachers made a statement yesterday, following a meeting with government prosecutors, announcing that they would fight to keep the GIEI investigation open until their children were found.

Parents of the disappeared teachers also learned yesterday that their phones had been tapped by the government for a year and five months. Mario Cesar Gonzalez, the father of one of the disappeared *normalistas*, told the press: "Why did they not use this technique against those responsible" for the September 2014 attacks? "If they thought that criminalization was going to separate us, they are wrong and the result is to the contrary, we are more united than ever. The only thing the government wants is for its version of the story to prevail."

The revelations could not come at a worse time for President Peña Nieto. A poll released this week by the Mexican daily *Reforma* shows his administration is the most hated since polling began in 1995.

According to the poll, 66 percent of Mexicans oppose Peña Nieto's presidency, an increase from the 58 percent who opposed him in a December 2015 poll. In

the latest poll, 56 percent said the economic situation in the country has worsened in the last year, with only ten percent responding that it had improved. Sixty-eight percent oppose Peña Nieto's handling of poverty and employment.

The government is preparing to meet the growing social opposition with police state forms of rule. In two months, the "Atenco Law" will take effect, granting the government of the State of Mexico the ability to cancel democratic rights in case of social protests or strikes. A similar bill, amending the Mexican Constitution to grant the president emergency powers, was passed out of committee in the Chamber of Deputies earlier this month.

In preparation for the outbreak of social struggles, the ruling class has increased its ties to the US military, militarized its own southern borders and laid the foundations for police state rule.

Meanwhile, the Mexican economy remains mired in crisis as the fall in commodity prices—in particular the price of Mexican crude oil—has been used to justify a renewed assault on the living standards of the Mexican working class. This week, the Mexican government pledged \$4 billion USD in aid for the struggling state-owned oil company, Pemex. The bail-out funds were provided on the express condition that Pemex carry out further cuts to oil workers' pensions, which were already slashed with the help of the trade unions late in 2015. Renewed calls for austerity at Pemex come after the government cut federal spending by \$10.1 billion USD last year, a figure totaling 0.7 percent of GDP.

While Mexican Finance Minister Luis Videgaray said these cuts would be made to programs "without a high economic and social impact," the Pemex bailout strongly suggests that low commodity prices are forcing the Mexican bourgeoisie to intensify its attacks against the working class with rapidity and with less attention to mitigating social tensions. Edward Glossup, emerging markets economist at the firm Capital Economics, said that the Pemex aid "could mean the government needs to announce more fiscal austerity measures to bring the deficit under control."

These cuts will lead to a further deterioration of living standards for the already deeply impoverished Mexican working class and peasantry. A report released by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) in March revealed that poverty

in Mexico increased from 51.6 percent in 2012 to 53.2 percent in 2014.



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