

Mexicans protest President AMLO's "neglect" in case of 43 Ayotzinapa teaching students

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On Monday, demonstrations were held in Mexico City and the central state of Guerrero to protest the failure of the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) to bring to justice those responsible for the killing of the 43 Ayotzinapa teaching students, or normalistas, in 2014.

The parents of the victims and supporters marched along Calzada de Guadalupe Avenue in Mexico City carrying posters with the words "Ayotzinapa: 8 years," and, "They were taken alive, we want them alive."

Simultaneously, normalistas from across Guerrero blocked the main avenue in the state capital, Chilpancingo, and held a rally downtown to denounce the "neglect" of the AMLO administration. "Because Ayotzinapa does not forgive or forget," they shouted.

Melitón Ortega, spokesperson for the Parents Committee of the Ayotzinapa 43, told *Jornada* that the government has not met with them since the government's "Truth Commission" announced its latest findings in late September.

"The federal government has not given due attention to the case, even though it insists that it was a state crime and claims to be committed and willing to clarify the issue. However, the facts show that the reality is completely the opposite," he said.

Vidulfo Rosales, lawyer for the parents, explained to Aristegui Noticias: "What we've seen is that the report [by the Truth Commission] pretends to close the case. That has become the parameter of the president. He says that all of those who are mentioned there will be prosecuted and those who do not appear will not. That worries us."

This continued protection of the highest ranks of the state behind the Ayotzinapa killings and cover-up exposes the reactionary character of the efforts to perpetuate the domestic deployment of the military.

These efforts include AMLO's initiatives, approved recently by Congress, to place the National Guard, which was created by his own administration, under the control of

the Army, and to extend the deployment of half a million Mexican soldiers and marines on national soil until 2028.

Having been elected largely due to their promise to send the military back to the barracks, AMLO and his Morena party now insist that these measures are necessary to halt the historic levels of homicides largely tied to the drug cartels. This administration saw 137,500 killings and over 30,000 disappearances in its first four years, more than any other government over the previous six years.

AMLO claims that a military trained for combat is less corrupt and less prone to abuse its power than the police. But as of November the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) had received over 1,250 complaints against the National Guard, including over its arbitrary use of force, cruel and inhuman treatment, torture and extrajudicial killings.

Despite the well known repressive character of the military, as demonstrated by the central role it played in the Ayotzinapa events, the Mexican ruling class and AMLO have been able to continue their military buildup only thanks to the pseudo-left organizations and publications in Mexico and internationally that have promoted the president's "progressivism" and are now justifying the strengthening of the capitalist state's repressive apparatus.

In a September 29 article, *Jacobin*, a publication associated with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in the US, sought to differentiate AMLO from his predecessors. The article stated: "The philosophy of AMLO is fundamentally different, as it seeks to address the root causes of violence—poverty, corruption, injustice, inequality—instead of attempting to keep a lid on social unrest through brute force."

While *Jacobin* wants its readers to take AMLO's demagoguery for good coin, the article doesn't explain why his philosophy is any different. Are the economic interests and the political superstructure defended by AMLO, and for that matter *Jacobin*, any different?

AMLO's most consequential policies include historic tax cuts for corporations while sacrificing hundreds of thousands to COVID-19 before the altar of capitalist profits, while unconditionally defending private property and Mexico's place as a cheap labor platform for global finance capital. The first task directed by AMLO to the National Guard was to detain and deport hundreds of thousands of migrants, as requested by the fascistic US President Donald Trump.

In other words, just like his predecessors in the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI)—from whose ranks he emerged—his philosophy derives from the corrupt services offered by the same rotten state to Mexican billionaires like German Larrea and Carlos Slim, and to Wall Street. Such politics and philosophy are incompatible with any defense of the interests of workers in Mexico, whose poverty is the basis for the super-profits extracted by the rich.

Jacobin then cites a WikiLeaks cable indicating that as early as AMLO's 2006 presidential campaign he called for giving "the military more power and authority in counter-narcotics operations." Like any traditional bourgeois politician, AMLO has a long record of calling for a stronger capitalist state under the false premise that it represents an impartial arbiter between social classes.

To feed this lie, *Jacobin* joins the cover-up of the Ayotzinapa massacre, claiming that the handful of incomplete investigations and arrests "hardly suggests a military acting with the near-total impunity of the past."

Such a statement is ludicrous, considering that only local military officials are being arrested. Less than two years before, AMLO exonerated former defense minister Gen. Salvador Cienfuegos, who had been detained in the US for facilitating drug shipments. Cienfuegos was the chief of the military during the Ayotzinapa killings and famously denied any military involvement—"We had nothing to do with that"—but AMLO has continued to uphold his supposed innocence and that of the military as an institution.

"It was the Army: indeed. We are acting, but the Army is an institution," declared AMLO in a speech on September 26. He added: "Who must be punished? We are working on that. But it's not a question of 'Well, it was the whole Army.' What do you want? To weaken our Army?"

Two days earlier, *Reforma* reported, based on an unedited copy of Truth Commission documents, that the AMLO administration was covering up the extent of the involvement of the military leadership. The article said: "In the online chats where the murders had been coordinated, criminal figures, public and military officials discussed how they were digging out the bodies to take them to the 27th Infantry Battalion. No one would go in there. Until mid-November [2014], they were still digging out and moving the bodies."

Arrest warrants have only been issued against two top federal officials charged for torture, forced disappearances and a cover-up: former general prosecutor Jesús Murillo Karam and the director of the Criminal Investigation Agency, Tomás Zerón. Karam is in prison, but Zerón is a fugitive under the protection of Israel. Among all the gruesome details, Zerón had handed journalists pictures of the pyres in Nazi concentration camps as evidence of the official lies that the bodies of the normalistas had been burned at a garbage dump.

A "state crime" by a capitalist state is a crime at the behest of capitalism—at the time, to crush the rising wave of struggles against a reactionary education reform and other cost-cutting measures embodied in the "Pact for Mexico." How else can it be explained that the military had infiltrated the Ayotzinapa normalistas ahead of the killings, as uncovered by the investigations?

The systematic capture, killing and forced disappearance of busloads of normalistas on the night of September 26, 2014, and the cover-up coordinated at the highest levels—during which time "all information was obtained through torture" by the military, arrest warrants were falsified, and numerous key witnesses were systematically murdered—give the events in Guerrero the character of a dress rehearsal for a fascist dictatorship.

The working class in Mexico and internationally can only settle accounts with those responsible for this crime and create conditions to prevent future atrocities and suffering by organizing politically and internationally to abolish the capitalist system.



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