

## **Reasons why the case of the disappeared students should stay open**

### **The families of the 43 disappeared students of Ayotzinapa condemn the Attorney General's attempt to close the investigation due to political reasons.**

Today, the 27th of January of 2015, the Attorney General's Office released information related to the investigation of the whereabouts of 43 missing students from Ayotzinapa.

According to the statement made by the Attorney General, the families of the 43 disappeared students wish to inform:

1. We strongly condemn the fact that the Federal Government has given priority to inform the media before the victims in regards to the progress of investigations. It is worth mentioning that the President signed an agreement committing himself to inform the families of the victims first, before making information available to the media to avoid revictimization.

2. We didn't know in detail the information that was released today, due to a breach in the agreement of providing us with copies of all the proceedings, despite this being agreed with the president Enrique Peña Nieto.

3. The investigation on the forced disappearance of the 43 students of the Normal Rural Raúl Isidro Burgos of Ayotzonapa cannot be closed due to:

a) This case can't be close, as there is not scientific proof that can support what happened in Cocula. The PGR said today that its hypothesis is based on scientific findings such as chemistry, biology, amongst others. It's well known that the PGR specializes in manufacturing offences, added to this, some very well-known Mexican scientists have expressed their concern about the reliability of this hypothesis; we cannot accept this results until the studies are made by highly-qualified independent experts. Nevertheless, we would like to express our trust in the Argentinan Antropological Forensic Team, and we demand all the obstacles to be removed, so they can work under optimal conditions.

b) This case cannot be closed, as Felipe Rodríguez Salgado's statement, unlike what was stated by the PGR, is not a key to clarify what happened in Cocula; at the press conference it was confirmed that the individual had not declared to have been in Cocula for as long as the events took place.

c) This case cannot be closed, the information given by the PGR depends mostly on statements made in the Attorney General's Office, by people that easily could have been coerced, as is well known that in Mexico torture is used as a tool. Some claims have

been made available to the public in regards to torture being used against defendants, and the National Human Rights Commission has not made any attempts to clarify the claims.

d) This case cannot be closed, the PGR has not made clear, not today neither in another press conference, how Julio César Mondragón, whose body was teared appart and found within the area of the events, was murdered. How can Mr. Murillo explain this incident, not yet solved?

e) The case cannot be closed, it has been 4 months since the disappearance and the Mexican Government has only shown its incapacity to prosecute those who, according to its hypothesis, are guilty. The Federal Government has not been able to arrest the corrupt chief police officer of Iguala, Felipe Flores Velázquez, neither his accomplice and junior Francisco Salgado Valladares. Neither has detained Gildardo Astudillo, known as "El Cabo Gil", whose statement has been of great importance for the PGR. Also, eleven out of the fifteen people who were in Cocula are still in the run, as well as the Guerreros Unidos leader, Ángel Casarrubias Salgado known as El mocho. Given these scenarios; how can it be possible that the Attorney General wants to close the case?

f) The case cannot be close, because the PGR has not been able to open a criminal trial for forced disappearance, which is the correct legal term to refer to. As the Mexcan population has claimed, it was the state who disappeared our children. So, as long as the trials are not conducted using the correct legal terms, the case cannot be closed.

g)The case cannot be closed, because within the same file that contains the gang members' statements, are also statements of others gang members from Iguala, that have declared to attacked our children not in Cocula but in Pueblo Viejo y Cerro la Parota. How can Mr. Murillo explain the fact that within the same file exist claims that contradict each other.

h) The investigation cannot be closed because, opposite to what have been said in today's press conference, there is just certainty of the murder of only one disappeared student. This fact, does not mean that the other students are dead neither confirms the place where the murder might have taken place. In this sense, it is a legal mistake to say that people have been arrested for murder, when in reality they have been arrested for kidnapping with the aggravation of deprivation of life, which technically involves a great deal of difference.

i) The investigation cannot be closed because, the Army's responsibility has not been investigated, even though and contrary to the Attorney General's claim, the file contains proofs that the Army and the organized crime are accomplices, as the officer Salvador Bravo Bárcenas declare to the Public Ministry that since 2013 the Army knew

Guerreros Unidos controlled the police of Cocula. Having said that the Army did not investigate such offenders, instead gave them protection.

j) The investigation cannot be closed because, there has not been a thorough investigation showing those responsible, in the context of political corruption, that triggered the events on September 26th. There is still the need to investigate other mayors, such as the Cocula's, as well as other authorities of the Government of the State of Guerrero.

Given this scene of injustice, the lack of truth and trust in the Mexican authorities, we are forced to seek International Organisations. That is why, in the near future there will be a committee of us to meet with the UN's Committee on Enforced Disappearances to report what is happening in Mexico.

Likewise, a group of experts has been appointed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, to shortly begin with a technical review of the investigation made by the Mexican authorities; this review is fundamental as we know they'll find multiple irregularities in the procedures.

We ask the Mexican Population not to leave us alone and to understand our struggle. The Federal Government is in a hurry to close the Ayotzinapa case. However, we claim our right to doubt about the authorities that once and again have made up files to save them from social and political crisis that demonstrate their inefficiency. We also demand respect for our dignity, as the victims' agendas are not the same as the politicians'.

Today, during the press conference, the PGR asseverated that the disappearance of our children was a rare issue. However, along these four months we have witnessed that forced disappearance in Mexico is a common reality in the whole country. The PGR lies when affirms that the disappearance of young people and narco-governments are rare, on the contrary, today's situation is the wounded face of our nation. At the end of the last year, the National Missing Persons Bureau registered up to 26,000 people; those people are families like us, living in pain and uncertainty. Therefore, we will keep fighting for justice and truth until we have certainty of the whereabouts of our children, and until we transform Mexico for a place where not a single family will go again through the pain that we are experiencing now.

Alive they took them, alive we want them back!

Ayotzinapa lives!