

# ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



# AYOTZINAPA

Hope is in the truth. || La esperanza está en la verdad.



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September 2018, Second Edition

## TAKE ACTION

Join us in demanding **justice** for the 43 missing students and other victims of **human rights** violations in **Mexico**.



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## INTRODUCTION

On September 26, 2014, around 80 students from the Ayotzinapa teacher training college were ambushed by gunfire and intercepted by local police while traveling by bus through the small city of Iguala in the southern state of Guerrero in Mexico. Of these young men in their late teens and early twenties, three were killed and over 40 were badly injured. **Forty-three students were disappeared. To this day, none of their perpetrators have been convicted for enforced disappearances, and the students' whereabouts remain unknown.**

In reaction, Mexico has erupted in protest—with student groups, civil society organizations, families, and relatives of the missing 43 demonstrating against the lack of justice and the government's mishandling of the case for the past four years. The international community has also spoken up against these injustices.

**And that's where activists, *like you*, come in.**

Though far from an isolated incident, the Ayotzinapa case is emblematic of not only the over 37,000 cases of enforced disappearance, but also of the collusion between government authorities and organized crime and the crisis of impunity for these human rights violations. **This toolkit honors the fourth anniversary of the Ayotzinapa disappearances. It provides educational resources and updates on the case and broader issues of human rights violations in Mexico. It contains ideas for action that *you* can take to *stand for truth and justice* for the missing 43 as well as other victims of rights violations in Mexico.**



Downloadable image [here](#) or at [lawg.org/AyotzinapaLives18](http://lawg.org/AyotzinapaLives18).

## AYOTZINAPA CASE OVERVIEW: IN SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

**The past four years have been long and difficult for the families of the disappeared students.** Thanks to their tireless resistance and the work of civil society organizations and independent experts, it has become evident that the Mexican government obstructed justice and hid the truth, revealing deeper flaws in how the government investigates and prosecutes violations. **Approaching this fourth anniversary, the case stands at an important crossroads.** Although progress on the case has stalled, changes in Mexico offer a glimmer of hope—like a federal court order that reaffirmed flaws in the case that families of the students and civil society organizations previously pointed out. And like a new administration set to take office on December 1st that could positively respond to demands to push the case forward and bring truth and justice once and for all.

Meanwhile, pressure must continue on the current Peña Nieto Administration, which [clings](#) to its version of how the students disappeared—its “*verdad histórica*” (“[official history](#)”). To this day, they claim that local police abducted the students and handed them over to members of the Guerreros Unidos drug cartel—who allegedly massacred the students, incinerated their bodies in a trash dump, and disposed of their ashes in a river.

Yet, during their year-long mandate to assist the government with the case from 2015 to 2016, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)-backed Independent Group of Interdisciplinary Experts (GIEI) [disproved](#) the Mexican government’s theory and highlighted numerous irregularities in the case. In carrying out this work, they faced serious obstacles—like lack of access to case files and to interview military members implicated in the case, and even a defamation campaign intended to silence them. In their two major reports, **they highlighted coordination among various authorities—including local police and the military—in the disappearance of the students, manipulation of evidence by government officials, and the use of torture against detained suspects and witnesses.** They also stated that the government’s “*verdad histórica*” was **scientifically impossible.**

Instead of sanctioning then-head of the Criminal Investigation Agency, Tomas Zerón, for removing evidence from case files and accessing crime scenes without proper authorization, President Enrique Peña Nieto [promoted](#) him to another position. And when an investigation was opened into this mishandling, **the Mexican government denied its repeated misconduct in overseeing the inquiry.** In December 2016, the attorney general’s office [rejected](#) an internal report outlining government officials’ obstruction of justice and fired the author of the report in a further attempt to hide the truth and protect the officials involved.

Since the departure of the GIEI, an IACHR follow-up mechanism (MESA by its Spanish acronym) has [made](#) five official visits to Mexico to monitor the investigation. Yet too, time and time again, MESA has expressed [concern](#) about the government’s minimal progress in investigating the case. The [last](#) of MESA’s scheduled visits took place in September 2018, when they presented a [report](#) released in June. They will continue to monitor the case.

In the summer of 2017, a New York Times [report](#) revealed the extent of the government's efforts to silence those supporting the families, **suggesting that the government used advanced spyware against the GIEI as well as the lawyers representing the families of the 43.** The software is only sold directly to governments for combatting terrorism, yet the Mexican government allegedly used it against them, journalists, and other activists, attacking those who seek to fight injustice and to shed light on the truth.

**To date, the 43 students' whereabouts remain unknown.** Over 120 suspects have been arrested—but none have been prosecuted specifically for the crime of enforced disappearance. Besides the arrest of a lower level individual from Guerreros Unidos in April 2018, **no new arrests have been made** in connection to the case in the last two years. In fact, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a [report](#) in March 2018 concluding that at least 34 **individuals in the case were tortured by authorities** under the watch of the federal government.

What's more, in June 2018, a federal court [confirmed](#) the use of torture and affirmed that the Mexican government's investigation into **the case was not "prompt, effective, impartial, or independent," demanding they reopen the case and create an Investigatory Commission for Truth and Justice.** It mandates participation by families, civil society organizations, and Mexico's National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH). It also recommends United Nations participation and the return of the GIEI. **This order is binding and technically cannot be appealed. Yet the government tried to undermine the order**—arguing that the commission is "impossible" to [establish](#). Now, Mexico's Supreme Court will likely have to weigh in, and the timeline for such a decision is unclear. In the meantime, much can still be completed to advance the investigation and fill in gaps.

For instance, the Mexican government has still not clarified irregularities in investigating a fifth bus that was attacked, originally left out of the investigation by Mexico's Attorney General's Office. The GIEI suggested it could have been used to transport drugs to Chicago, yet [reconstruction](#) of that night's events has still not taken place. Four years later, **members of the military still haven't clarified their role, and no one has been sentenced for the three students killed that night.** Of those injured, one remains in a vegetative state, and another is still recovering from bullet wounds to his face. In neither of their cases have the perpetrators been brought to justice.

**The families of the 43 disappeared students and the civil society organizations that accompany them remain diligent.** The Mexican government has continued to stand by its "*verdad histórica*" theory over the last four years. The departing Mexican government should be held accountable for its mishandling of the case and obstruction of justice, and the incoming government should immediately implement the Investigatory Commission for Truth and Justice. **International support is crucial** to ensure that this case does not remain in impunity. **And that's where you come in.** Families of the disappeared and civil society organizations need *you* to hold the Mexican government accountable for ensuring justice.

# FOUR YEARS WITHOUT JUSTICE: TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

This timeline is translated from Centro Prodh's Spanish [version](#). The most recent events are drawn from LAWG [resources](#). Downloadable timeline [here](#) or at [lawg.org/AyotzinapaTimeline18](http://lawg.org/AyotzinapaTimeline18).

## 2014

SEPTEMBER 26-27, 2014

Iguala municipal police and an armed group fire against buses carrying students from the Ayotzinapa teachers training college in Iguala. The students were on their way to a protest in Mexico City. Three students and bystanders were killed that night, and 43 were disappeared.

OCTOBER 21, 2014

Mexico's attorney general's office and the Secretary of the Interior release their first report pinning the student disappearances on Iguala's local mayor, José Luis Abarca, his wife, and the former head of public security, Felipe Flores.

NOVEMBER 13, 2014

The Mexican government signs an agreement permitting the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to conduct an investigation into the student disappearances, establishing the arrival of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) for March 2015.

DECEMBER 4, 2014

Austrian forensic lab confirms that a bone fragment embedded in remains found at the Cocula River belongs to student Alexander Mora Venacio.

## 2015

JANUARY 27, 2015

The attorney general's office gives its "*verdad histórica*" ("official history") of the Ayotzinapa disappearances: "They were kidnapped, massacred, and burned" at the Cocula garbage dump. The families of the 43 rejected the government's explanation, and accused the attorney general's office of attempting to prematurely close the case.

FEBRUARY 8, 2015

Argentine forensic experts point to faults with the government's handling of the investigation.

MARCH 1, 2015

The GIEI meets with the families of the 43 and begins its investigation in Mexico.

MARCH 20, 2015

The GIEI releases its first round of observations, calling on the Mexican government to make progress in four areas of the case: the search process, investigation, attention to victims, and public policies to address enforced disappearances.

APRIL 20, 2015

The GIEI releases its second round of observations, opening new lines of inquiry and calling on the Mexican government to include the parents of the missing 43 in the investigation.

MAY 11, 2015

The GIEI releases its third round of observations.

JUNE 29, 2015

The GIEI releases its fourth round of observations.

JULY 23, 2015

Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) report highlights failures, omissions, and lack of attention to victims in the Mexican government's investigation of the case so far.

AUGUST 17, 2015

The GIEI releases its fifth round of observations.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

The GIEI presents its first comprehensive report, contradicting the trash dump hypothesis put forth by the attorney general's office as the explanation behind the student's disappearance.

OCTOBER 20, 2015

The IACHR and the Mexican government sign an agreement to extend the GIEI's mandate in Mexico for an additional six months.

DECEMBER 6, 2015

The GIEI presents its first observations on the second phase of its work.

## 2016

FEBRUARY 2016

A defamation campaign aims to discredit members of the GIEI.  
The Argentine forensic experts refute the Cocula trash dump theory.  
The GIEI presents obstacles they are facing in the investigation.

APRIL 1, 2016

The Mexican government breaks the agreement with the GIEI by publicizing a study on the Cocula trash dump without consultation.

APRIL 24, 2016

The GIEI presents its second and final report, reiterating that the burning of the students at the Cocula trash dump would have been scientifically impossible, and evidencing coordination among various authorities, tampering of crime scene by government officials, and evidence of torture among detained.

APRIL 30, 2016

Mexican government decides not to renew the GIEI's mandate to continue to support the Ayotzinapa investigation.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

The IACHR and the Mexican government sign an agreement to implement the follow-up mechanism to monitor progress of the investigation.

DECEMBER 2016

IACHR follow-up mechanism publishes findings on its first visit to Mexico in November. It requests more information from the Mexican government about progress on the investigation and the search for the missing students.  
The Mexican government rejects an internal report outlining government officials' obstruction of justice.

# 2017

FEBRUARY 10, 2017

The attorney general's office rejects an internal report outlining government officials' obstruction of justice in purposefully removing evidence from case files.

MARCH 2017

At an IACHR hearing on the case, the Mexican government reiterates that the Cocula trash dump theory should still be considered.

APRIL 21, 2017

IACHR follow-up mechanism conducts its second visit to Mexico, voicing concern over the government's lack of progress and slow pace on the investigations. The commission notes that not a single person has been prosecuted for the crime of forced disappearance in the case and that no new charges have been filed since since December 2015.

JULY 10, 2017

New York Times report suggests that the Mexican government deployed advanced spyware against the group of experts in March 2016.

AUGUST 30, 2017

IACHR follow-up mechanism makes its third official visit to Mexico.

OCTOBER 3, 2017

The former members of the GIEI returned to Mexico to present their book "Methodologies of research, search and attention to victims," which they wrote based on their experience in the Ayotzinapa case.

NOVEMBER 2017

IACHR follow-up mechanism makes its fourth official visit to Mexico.

# 2018

FEBRUARY 6, 2018

IACHR follow-up mechanism makes its fifth official visit to Mexico and chastised the federal government for not making substantial progress in the case.

MARCH 10 - 13, 2018

Federal Police arrest Erick Uriel Sandoval Rodríguez, "El Rana," mentioned in testimonies of members of Guerreros Unidos as one of the last people in contact with the students. Federal Police frame him as a decisive actor in the case, yet his arrest is really an attempt to return to their "*verdad histórica*."

MARCH 14, 2018

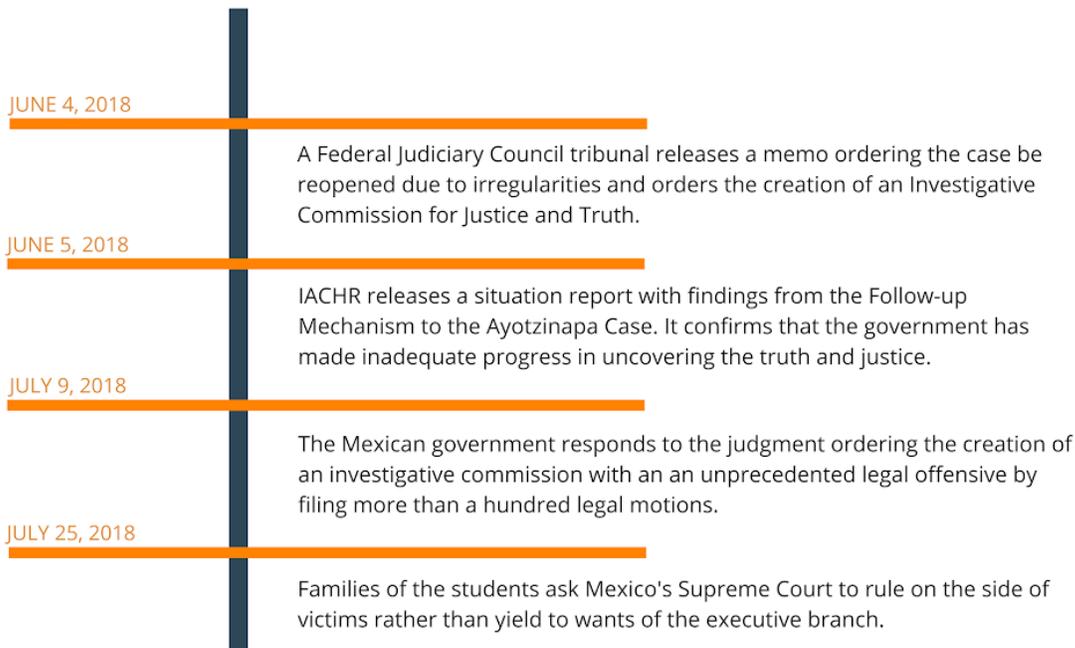
Nongovernmental organizations produce a report on the psychosocial impact of the case.

MARCH 16, 2018

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report concluding that, along with other findings, at least 34 prosecuted individuals were tortured under the watch of the federal government.

MAY 29, 2018

An experimental study by 23 international specialists on fire proves, once again, that the government's "*verdad histórica*" that the 43 bodies were incinerated in an open trash dump is impossible.



\*Timeline translated from Centro Prodh's [Spanish version](#) and from [LAWG resources](#).

## IMPUNITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN MEXICO

**The Ayotzinapa case is not an isolated one.** Mexico is plagued by thousands of disappearances and high levels of violence. Rather than reducing these instances, the Mexican government contributes, directly or indirectly violating human rights and exercising impunity. Although this case and toolkit focus on the 43 disappeared students, they also bring to light the broader crisis and show why actions taken for the students should also incorporate this wider context in Mexico.

**In this way, Ayotzinapa represents the injustices suffered by 37,435 disappeared** individuals in Mexico according to government [statistics](#) as of April 2018. In many instances, the perpetrators were state security forces or organized crime motivated by the war against drugs. The Mexican government did pass a new General Law on Disappearances that came into effect in January 2018. However, implementation of the law and various mechanisms it establishes remain [incipient](#), and consultations with civil society on its execution have lacked transparency and engagement as required under the law. In fact, disappearances at the hands of security forces remain pervasive—just this year, an ongoing [case](#) of an estimated 50 individuals forcibly disappeared by the Mexican navy in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas demonstrates it. Across the board, **families do the majority of the [work](#) to search for and identify their loved ones. And they face grave risks in doing so—without government support or protection.** They often become targets themselves, as the murder of [Miriam Rodríguez Martínez](#), a mother searching for her daughter, in May 2017 evidences.

**Ayotzinapa also highlights the use of torture by Mexican authorities**, which the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment called a “[widespread practice](#)” in 2015. The [GIEI](#), [OHCHR](#), and a Federal Judiciary Council [tribunal](#) all found evidence of the government

torturing various suspects in the Ayotzinapa case in order to obtain confessions. The General Law to Prohibit Torture, which came into effect in June 2017, is intended to prohibit these widespread practices. Since its passage, not only has complete implementation of the law [stalled](#), but also Mexico's executive and judicial branches have openly violated it. Full application of the law is crucial—the National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH) received over [11,500](#) complaints of torture and cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment over the past 17 years. Yet, the attorney general's office handed down sentences for torture in only five federal and ten local decisions, demonstrating **systematic impunity**.

As a part of the efforts to combat organized crime, Mexican authorities have **increased the role of the armed forces in public security operations**, such as joint operations between the armed forces and state and municipal security agencies. This has led to increased human rights violations by Mexico's armed forces, like excessive use of force and **increased numbers of civilian deaths** from confrontations between public forces and civilians. Yet now, the government is planning to ramp up the role of the military in public security—through the recently passed [Internal Security Law](#)—which would only expand a failed strategy that has already resulted in thousands of deaths.

In fact, the CNDH has received upwards of [10,000](#) complaints of abuse by the army since 2006. **At the same time, there has been [no progress](#) in investigating and prosecuting members of the military involved in extrajudicial executions.** In the case of [Tlatlaya](#) where over a dozen civilians were gunned down in 2014, all those charged in civilian jurisdiction were released and, in military jurisdiction, only one soldier was convicted of disobedience, sentenced to one year, and has already served and been released.

The likely use of government-purchased spyware on attorneys representing families of Ayotzinapa students embodies the **overall danger in Mexico for human rights defenders and journalists**. So far in 2018, at least six journalists have been killed in Mexico and last year totaled at least 12 killed—[ranking](#) the country among the deadliest for journalists in the world. Front Line Defenders [registered](#) the murder of 32 human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico in 2017. The murder of journalist Candido Rios Vazquez last year shows not only the danger associated with exposing the truth but also the **Mexican government's [inability to protect](#) defenders and journalists**. At the time of his murder, Rios Vazquez was enrolled in the government's Mechanism to Protect Journalists and Defenders. However, this program has not had the capacity to prevent violations and remains weak and underfunded.



This spike in attacks against defenders and journalists coincides with an **increase in homicides in Mexico**. Already, the first 7 months of 2018 have seen [more](#) homicides than the same period last year—and 2017 was ranked as the deadliest year since Mexico started [tracking](#) homicide cases in 1997.

Enforced disappearances, torture, extrajudicial killings, and violence continue unabated in Mexico and are not limited to Peña Nieto's Administration. Many go back to the administration of former President Felipe Calderón and to the launch of the war against drugs in 2006. The government is either complicit in these human rights violations or too institutionally weak to address them. **Mexico must strengthen its rule of law by expanding capacities to investigate and prosecute human rights violators and by taking steps to eliminate impunity and corruption.**

**Mexico held presidential, local, and congressional elections in early July 2018. This incoming government has the power to drastically alter the course of the country's human rights situation.** After a six-month transition period, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) will be inaugurated as president on December 1st, ending Peña Nieto's six years in office. Not only does AMLO represent a new political party in the executive branch, but his party will also have full control over Congress. It's up to activists, *like you*, civil society, and our government to put pressure on the new administration to put human rights and emblematic cases, like Ayotzinapa, at the top of its agenda. **And until the new government officially takes office, investigations and prosecutions into human rights violations should not remain stalled. Families and their loved ones have been waiting for justice for too long.**

## U.S. ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO

**U.S assistance and guns funneled to Mexico play an important role in its security crisis.** And foreign aid comes from *your* taxes which means what it goes towards is *your* impact. We need to make sure that U.S. money does not worsen human rights violations. In fact, **the U.S. government should not provide any assistance that encourages a military role in civilian law enforcement.**

**Much of U.S.' support to Mexico flows through the [Merida Initiative](#),** a bilateral partnership and security assistance package intended to “fight organized crime and associated violence while furthering respect for human rights and the rule of law.” Since it started in Fiscal Year 2008, Congress has appropriated nearly [\\$2.9 billion](#) to the program. The funds support four [pillars](#) of action: Disrupting the Operational Capacity of Organized Crime; Institutionalizing Reforms to Sustain the Rule of Law and respect for Human Rights in Mexico; Creating a “21st-Century Border”; and Building Strong and Resilient Communities. Through this aid, the United States provides training, equipment, and technical assistance to Mexican customs personnel, corrections staff, military actors, and federal, state, and local police.

As a part of this package, Congress has directed that 15% of the assistance provided to the Mexican military and police forces be subject to human rights conditions. **This stipulation requires that the United States withhold aid to the Mexican military unless Mexico has made progress to improve the human rights context.** These conditions are imperative, as the United States should not support armed forces that regularly commit abuses. Such aid would only worsen ongoing human rights violations.

Yet, despite the lack of progress on the Ayotzinapa case and broader issues of enforced disappearances, violence, and impunity that plague the country, **the United States has only [once withheld](#) a portion of the Merida funding in 2015.** The U.S. Congress should commit to withhold the funding tied to the conditions, encouraging the Mexican government to make progress in addressing human rights violations and impunity, including those committed by members of the armed forces.

What's more, the Merida Initiative has spurred large increases in gun exports to Mexico through sales from the private sector, making the United States the principle source of arms flowing legally into Mexico. But our government lacks regulation on where the guns exactly go and who uses them. Many end up in the hands of Mexican security forces that have committed human rights violations or colluded with organized crime groups. So instead of combating these crimes like the United States intends, the truth is that they're often used in those very crimes—including the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa students. Weapons [found](#) among the the local municipal police from Iguala who attacked the students were U.S.-produced and exported assault rifles. This isn't uncommon. A [recent report](#) documents the use of legally exported U.S. guns in many other human rights crimes, pointing to the need to step up U.S. regulations.

**An important step for Mexico to make progress and meet the human rights conditions attached to a portion of the Merida Initiative is to begin addressing outstanding concerns in the Ayotzinapa case.** The Mexican government should also implement the newly mandated investigatory commission, investigate and prosecute members of the armed forces implicated in human rights violation, support a well-funded and full implementation of the new General Laws on Torture and Disappearances, and protect human rights defenders on the ground.

**More specifically, the Mexican government should:**

1. **Follow the federal court's order** to redo the investigation into the case and allocate resources for the implementation of the Investigatory Commission for Truth and Justice with the participation of the families of the students, civil society organizations and supervision of international experts;
2. **Investigate and prosecute** the former Chief of the Criminal Investigation Agency and other state officials, federal, state, and municipal police, and members of the army responsible for obstruction of justice, enforced disappearance, and other human rights violations that night;
3. **Fully implement the General Law on Enforced Disappearances and the General Law to Prevent, Investigate, and Sanction Torture.** This includes establishing the federal and state specialized prosecutor's offices to act under both laws and establishing search and identification mechanisms under the disappearance law in consultations with the families of victims, independent experts, and nongovernmental organizations.

# IDEAS FOR ACTION: ORGANIZE A DISCUSSION OR VIGIL

**Your actions matter.** Create physical spaces for awareness and solidarity by organizing a discussion or vigil in your community. Here's a quick planning guide:

## 1. FIND A SPACE such as a park, classroom, gym, or church

- ◆ Ensure the location is...
  - Available (reserve, proper permits)
  - Appropriate (size, atmosphere, electricity and sound equipment)
  - Accessible (disabilities, parking, public transportation)

## 2. PLAN AN ACTIVITY

- ◆ Read out the name of each disappeared student, pausing for a moment of silence.
- ◆ Count to 43 and light a candle for each student.
- ◆ Print out and display a photo of each of the 43 students.
- ◆ Craft posters and display them in public spaces.
- ◆ Write letters to policymakers.
- ◆ Lead a discussion on the case and broader human rights violations in Mexico.

## 3. SPREAD THE WORD

- ◆ Design and distribute a flyer (sample flyer below).
- ◆ Create a Facebook event and livestream the event.
- ◆ Send out emails, evites, and texts.
- ◆ Invite local policymakers.
- ◆ Inform the local press (sample press release below).

## 4. FOLLOW-UP

- ◆ Post photos and videos on social media.
  - Use hashtags such as [#Ayotzinapa](#), [#AyotziEsEsperanza](#), [Ayotzinapa43](#), [#JusticiaParaAyotzinapa](#), [#Ayotzivive](#), [#Ayotzinapa4años](#), and [#JusticiaParaLos43](#).
  - Tag stakeholders so that they know about your actions such as organizations and international bodies like: [@LAWGaction](#), [@CentroProdh](#), [@Tlachinollan](#), [@GIEIAYOTZINAPA](#), and [@IACHumanRights](#) and government officials and agencies like: [@PGR](#), [@EPN](#), and [@lopezobrador\\_](#)
- ◆ Send photos and videos to the local press.
- ◆ Invite participants to stay in touch via Facebook groups or email lists. This one event can serve as the start for future events to raise awareness and solidarity.

## SAMPLE FLYER

Downloadable flyer [here](#) or at [lawg.org/AyotzinapaFlyer18](http://lawg.org/AyotzinapaFlyer18).

# SOLIDARITY AND ACTION EVENT FOR



# AYOTZINAPA



Hope is in the truth. | | La esperanza está en la verdad.

**WHEN:**

**TIME:**

**WHERE:**



[LAWG.ORG/AYOTZINAPA18](http://LAWG.ORG/AYOTZINAPA18)

## JOIN US...

in solidarity, as we remember and demand **justice** for the 43 **disappeared** students of the Ayotzinapa rural teacher college, for a discussion of the case and broader issues of **human rights** in **Mexico**.

**CONTACT:**



## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

**Press Release:** Local community gathers on fourth anniversary of disappearance of 43 Ayotzinapa students

**Contact:**

John Doe

(555) 555-5555 | JohnDoe@email.com

September X, 2018

**City, State**—On September X, 2018, community members will gather at [Event Location] in solidarity with the 43 disappeared students of the Ayotzinapa rural teacher college and other victims of human rights violations. Four years ago this month, these students were assaulted and abducted, and the Mexican government has still not taken sufficient measures to identify and prosecute the perpetrators.

Therefore, members of our community gather to stand with victims and families of the disappeared to condemn the lack of progress in this case and to call for justice. The event includes a discussion on the case and wider human rights situation in Mexico and a vigil for the 43 students.

We urge our policymakers here in the U.S. to encourage the Mexican government to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of these disappearances as well as those who abetted or covered them up and to address the systematic impunity and human rights abuses that plague the country.

Media attention is imperative in pressing our government and the Mexican government to act. Join us.

Date: September X, 2018

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Place: Event Location, 555 Main St. City, State Zip

## IDEAS FOR ACTIONS: SEND POSTCARDS & PETITIONS

**Your voice matters.** Write a letter or print and send our sample postcard to your member of Congress and relevant committees discussing your concerns around U.S. foreign assistance to Mexico and on the importance of highlighting the Ayotzinapa case as an example of impunity for rights violations in Mexico.

**Some of our leaders and policymakers have already spoken out!** In 2018, members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed a [letter](#) calling for an evaluation of security assistance and arms sales to Mexico. In 2017, they [called](#) for pressure on the Mexican government to fully investigate the improper use of spyware. In 2016, 69 representatives [sent a letter](#) urging the prioritization of rule of law and human rights in the U.S.' bilateral agenda with Mexico. A group of U.S. senators made a [statement](#) on the two-year anniversary of the case. Representatives [reacted](#) to the release of the GIEI's report in April 2016. And in 2015, 82 representatives sent a [letter](#) again highlighting the importance of a focus on the rule of law and

human rights in the U.S.' relationship with Mexico. **We must encourage them to keep making these types of statements and pressing for progress in the investigation and human rights in Mexico.**

**Write your own letter or send our sample postcard to the following offices:**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,  
WESTERN HEMISPHERE SUBCOMMITTEE**

<b>Rep. Paul Cook</b> R, CA-8, Chairman	1222 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-5861	<b>Rep. Ron DeSantis</b> R, FL-6	1524 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-2706
<b>Rep. Albio Sires</b> D, NJ-8, Ranking Member	2342 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-7919	<b>Rep. Ted Yoho</b> R, FL-3	511 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-5744
<b>Rep. Christopher Smith</b> R, NJ-4	2373 Rayburn HOB Washington, D.C. 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3765	<b>Rep. Francis Rooney</b> R, FL-19	20 Cannon HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-2536
<b>Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen</b> R, FL-27	2206 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3931	<b>Rep. Joaquin Castro</b> D, TX-2	1221 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3236
<b>Rep. Michael McCaul</b> R, TX-10	2001 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-2401	<b>Rep. Robin Kelly</b> D, IL-2	1239 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-0773
<b>Rep. Mo Brooks</b> R, AL-5	2400 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-4801	<b>Rep. Norma Torres</b> D, CA-35	1713 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-6161
<b>Rep. Adriano Espaillat</b> D, NY-13	1630 Longworth HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-4365	<b>Rep. Gregory Meeks</b> D, NY-5	2234 Rayburn HOB Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3461

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

<b>Marco Rubio</b> R, FL, Chairman	284 Russell SOB Washington DC, 20510 Phone:(202) 224-3041	<b>Johnny Isakson</b> R, GA	131 Russell SOB Washington DC 20510 Phone: (202) 224-3643
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SAMPLE POSTCARD (PRINT OR ADAPT)

Downloadable postcard [here](http://lawg.org/AyotzinapaPostcard18) or at [lawg.org/AyotzinapaPostcard18](http://lawg.org/AyotzinapaPostcard18).

43 STUDENTS  
**FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED.**  
37,435+ ACROSS MEXICO.



LATIN AMERICA  
WORKING GROUP



**AYOTZINAPA**

Hope is in the truth. || La esperanza está en la verdad.

WWW.LAWG.ORG/AYOTZINAPA18

On the fourth anniversary of their disappearance, I call on you to support the halting of security funding under the Merida Initiative until the Mexican government:

- 1. Follows the federal court's order** to redo the investigation into the case and allocate resources for the implementation of the Investigatory Commission for Truth and Justice;
- 2. Investigates and prosecutes** the former Chief of the Criminal Investigation Agency and other state officials, federal, state, and municipal police, and members of the army responsible for **obstruction of justice, enforced disappearance, and other human rights violations that night;**
- 3. Fully funds and implements the General Law on Enforced Disappearances and the General Law to Prevent, Investigate, and Sanction Torture.**

I support this action,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name                      Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

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## SOCIAL MEDIA KIT

**Your network matters.** In order to get the Mexican government to change its ways, we need to create international pressure. Social media platforms are a quick and easy way to do just that. Share information and graphics with your friends and followers, encouraging them to take action and raise greater awareness.

### SAMPLE TWEETS

- **#AyotziEsEsperanza:** Hope is in the truth! 4 years since the disappearance of 43 **#Ayotzinapa** students and STILL no justice. TAKE ACTION: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18)
- In 2014, around 80 **#Ayotzinapa** students were attacked. Some were killed. Some were severely injured. And 43 remain missing. 4 years have passed. And the Mexican government has failed to deliver **#JusticiaParaLos43**.
- 4 yrs since **#Ayotzinapa43** disappeared & **@PGR\_mx** continues to drag its feet on investigations. “Quisieron enterrarnos, pero no sabían que éramos semillas.” [They wanted to bury us, but they didn’t know that we were seeds.] Until justice is served: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18)
- Enforced Disappearances. Torture. Impunity. Corruption. On 4th anniversary of **#Ayotzinapa** 43, we remember those students and the 37,000+ disappeared persons across **#Mexico**. DEMAND TRUTH and JUSTICE for all. **#VerdadParaAyotzi**

### *En español:*

- Desapariciones forzadas. Tortura. Impunidad. Corrupción. Este cuarto aniversario de **#Ayotzinapa** 43, recordamos a esos estudiantes y las más de 37,000 personas desaparecidas en México. DEMANDA VERDAD y JUSTICIA para todos.
- **#AyotziEsEsperanza:** ¡La esperanza está en la verdad! 4 años desde la desaparición de 43 estudiantes **#Ayotzinapa** y todavía no hay justicia. TOMA ACCIÓN: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18)

### *Use this image:*

Downloadable image [here](#) or at [lawg.org/AyotzinapaSocial18](http://lawg.org/AyotzinapaSocial18).

### SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS

- La esperanza está en la verdad. Four years ago, 43 students from the **#Ayotzinapa** teacher training college were forcibly disappeared. Still **#JusticiaParaLos43** has NOT been served. Enough is enough. The international community demands a proper investigation into their disappearance and prosecution of the perpetrators. We will not allow this case to be forgotten. **#AyotziEsEsperanza**

Today, I’m taking action for these students and all those who have been disappeared or have been victims of human rights violations across Mexico. Will you join me? Take action: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18)

- Enforced disappearances and torture. Government collusion and corruption. No accountability but systemic impunity. **#TodosSomosAyotzinapa**. Justice for the 43 students is a step to justice for all victims of human rights violations in Mexico. SPEAK UP with me: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa)

**En español:**

• La espera está en la verdad. Hace cuatro años, 43 estudiantes de la Escuela Normal Rural de [#Ayotzinapa](#) fueron desaparecidos forzosamente. Todavía no existe [#JusticiaParaLos43](#). ¡Basta! La comunidad internacional exige una investigación exhaustiva y la sanción a todos los responsables. No dejaremos que este caso se queda en la impunidad. [#AyotziEsEsperanza](#)

Hoy, estoy tomando acción para estos estudiantes y todos aquellos que han sido desaparecidos o han sido víctimas de violaciones de derechos humanos en México. Toma acción: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa18)

• Desapariciones forzadas y tortura. Colusión y corrupción del gobierno. Sin responsabilidad y con impunidad sistémica. [#TodosSomosAyotzinapa](#). Justicia para los 43 estudiantes es un paso hacia la justicia para todas las víctimas de violaciones de derechos humanos en México. DEFENDE CONMIGO: [lawg.org/Ayotzinapa](http://lawg.org/Ayotzinapa)

**Use this image:**

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# 4 YEARS AYOTZINAPA

"La esperanza está en la verdad."  
Hope is in the truth.

**43** STUDENTS DISAPPEARED    **120+** ARRESTED    **0** CONVICTED OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

 LATIN AMERICA WORKING GROUP    TAKE ACTION: [LAWG.ORG/AYOTZINAPA18](http://LAWG.ORG/AYOTZINAPA18)

## RESOURCES

### INTERDISCIPLINARY GROUP OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS (GIEI)

#### General [Webpage](#)

#### **Ayotzinapa Report: Research and Initial Conclusions of the Disappearances and Homicides of the Normalistas from Ayotzinapa, September 2015**

- English-language [summary](#)
- Full Spanish-language [report](#)

#### **Ayotzinapa Informe II: Avances y nuevas conclusiones sobre la investigación, búsqueda y atención a las víctimas, April 2016**

- Full Spanish-language [report](#)

### INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (IACHR)

#### **Ayotzinapa Follow-up Mechanism (MESA)**

- [Workplan](#), November 2016
- Statements following official visits, 2016-2018: [First](#) visit, [second](#) visit, [third](#) visit, [fourth](#) visit, [fifth](#) visit & [last](#) visit

#### **2016 Report: [Situation of Human Rights in Mexico](#)**

#### **2018 Report: [Special Follow-up Mechanism to the Ayotzinapa Case of the IACHR](#)**

### UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (OHCHR)

#### **Double Injustice – Human rights violations in the investigation of the Ayotzinapa case, March 2018**

- English-language [summary](#) and full Spanish-language [report](#)

### MEXICAN ORGANIZATIONS (SPANISH)

#### **Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (Centro Prodh)**

- [Interactive Timeline](#)
- [Case background and videos](#)
- Plataforma digital: [El caso Ayotzinapa: Cartografía de la violencia](#) (Forensic Architecture, Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF) y el Centro Prodh)
- [4th Year Anniversary Campaign: Ayotzinap4](#)

#### **Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan**

- [XXIII Informe de Actividades, Guerrero: Mar de luchas, Montaña de ilusiones](#), August 2017
- [XXXV Acción Global por Ayotzinapa y México](#)

#### **Movimiento por Nuestros Desaparecidos en México [Webpage](#)**

#### **Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación A.C., SERAPAZ, Tlachinollan y Centro Prodh**

Informe: [Yo solo quería que amaneciera. Impacto psicosociales del caso de Ayotzinapa](#), March 2018

### LATIN AMERICA WORKING GROUP (LAWG)

#### **Update on the Human Rights Situation in Mexico**

- Memos by Daniella Burgi-Palomino, [April 2018](#), [December 2017](#)

## **CONTACT THE CREATORS OF THIS TOOLKIT**

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This toolkit was written and designed by  
**Lily Folkerts, Caroline Kuritzkes, and  
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