

Joint Statement
February 5, 2016

International Organizations Denounce Defamation Campaign against the International Group of Experts Investigating the Enforced Disappearance of the 43 Students in Mexico

Campaign is an Attempt to Hide the Truth and Obstruct Justice

There is a coordinated defamation campaign gaining greater coverage in the Mexican media against the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI, by its acronym in Spanish). Through an agreement between the Mexican government, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the legal representatives of the families of the students, these experts are providing crucial technical assistance in the investigation of the 43 forcibly disappeared students from Ayotzinapa.

As international human rights organizations, we [reiterate](#) our full support for the GIEI and its preliminary [findings and recommendations](#). We stand with the five independent experts of the GIEI—Carlos Martín Beristain, Angela Buitrago, Francisco Cox Vial, Claudia Paz y Paz, and Alejandro Valencia Villa—all of whom are [internationally recognized](#) for their exemplary work in the areas of criminal investigations, human rights, and attention to victims.

The defamation campaign shows that the GIEI is getting closer to finding the truth about what happened to the students. One of the most important contributions of the GIEI's work on the case has been to [scientifically disprove](#) the Mexican government's original theory that the students' remains were burned in a trash dump in Cocula and, in its place, propose new lines of investigation.

In order for this work to move forward, the Mexican government must move beyond the trash dump theory and pursue the new lines of investigation proposed by the GIEI, including investigating the use of buses in Iguala to traffic drugs to the United States as a possible motive for the attacks. The Mexican government should also find a solution to allow the GIEI to be present during the Mexican authorities' interviews with the Mexican soldiers in Iguala, many of whom were present during the attacks on the students.

We are concerned about the silence from the Mexican government in the face of the ongoing defamation attacks in the media. We call on the Mexican government to publicly acknowledge the important work of the GIEI and expend maximum effort to determine the whereabouts of the students. With only three months remaining in the GIEI's mandate, timing is crucial. The GIEI needs to have the full support of the Mexican government so that it can pursue, together with the team at the Attorney General's Office, the proposed lines of investigation and contribute essential information regarding what happened to the 43 forcibly disappeared students.

The Mexican government has an important opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to human rights with this case; the failure to do so would show, yet again, that in Mexico impunity prevails for grave human rights violations.

Amnesty International

Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad (Dejusticia)

Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS)

Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)

Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)

Latin America Working Group (LAWGEF)

Open Society Justice Initiative

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)