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Mexico: Hopes of justice vanish

By their failure to hold those responsible to account for virtually any of the hundreds of disappearances, killings and cases of torture committed during Mexico's "dirty war" during the 60s, 70s and 80s, the Mexican authorities are effectively condoning the abuses, Amnesty International said today.

The statement came as a Mexican federal court upheld a ruling in favour of Luis Echeverria, a former Mexican President, which found there was insufficient evidence against him to continue his prosecution for genocide in relation to the 1968 massacre of students in Tlateloclo Square, Mexico City.

“The grave human rights violations committed in Mexico's recent past continue to haunt the present,” said Kerrie Howard, Americas Deputy Director at Amnesty International. “The denial of justice, truth and reparations to the victims is repeated every day as impunity for human rights violations continues to be the greatest obstacle to Mexico establishing credible justice institutions capable of upholding international human rights standards and protecting its citizens.”

The collapse of this latest case is a symptom of the failure of successive Mexican governments and legislatures, as well as the courts and prosecutors, to live up to and deliver on Mexico's international human rights commitments. The grave crimes of the past do not simply evaporate with the State's failure to effectively prosecute them, but leave a legacy of impunity and injustice which flourishes in today's climate of violent crime and insecurity. Mexico will not be able to move forward without addressing its past.

The government of President Calderon has failed to acknowledge or address the legacy of human rights violations. It is time for this to change and for a concerted effort by the powers of state to ensure truth, justice and reparations for the victims and their families.