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Mexico: UN recommendations to stop enforced disappearances face official contempt

The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED), in its conclusive report on Mexico, determined that disappearances are widespread in the country, and urged the government to take measures to prevent them and to solve the pending cases. The CED also, provided specific recommendations to the government. Shockingly, just hours after the CED published its conclusions and recommendations, the Mexican government disregard them as “not contributing additional elements” (*no aportan elementos adicionales*) to address the problem.

“The Mexican government seems unwilling to acknowledge the severity of the crisis, and its position in relation to these recommendations may signify that it will ignore any criticism of its failed strategies on public security. This decision is extremely alarming in the fragile human rights context facing the country”, said Amnesty International today.

Amnesty International is deeply worried that the government’s statement implies a rejection of CED’s recommendations. With more than 23,000 unsolved cases of disappearances, many of them are cases of enforced disappearances committed by police and military forces, the authorities should welcome the specialized and constructive assistance provided by the UN experts.

CED’s recommendations are included in its “Concluding observations”, a document resulting from its in-depth review of the country during its 8th session. In its analysis of the situation, the Committee took into consideration all the relevant information put forward by the government itself and by other relevant stakeholders such as victims and NGOs working on this issue. The Committee’s assessment of the situation comprised positive aspects as well as concerns on the measures –or lack of them- so far taken by the government.

The Committee recommends, among others, to prevent acts of intimidation and harassment towards the families of the disappeared and human rights defenders; to pass a general law on enforced disappearance that complies with international law; a DNA databases of missing people and a registry of disappearances, which specifically identify cases that constitute enforced disappearance; a reliable registry of detainees; and guarantees on the immediate search of reported missing persons. Currently, all these aspects face serious flaws that hinder the investigation and perpetuate the almost complete impunity of these crimes.

Amnesty International urges the Mexican government to publicly and officially accept all the recommendations made by CED and to take all necessary steps to fully implement them. The implementation phase can only be successful with the full participation of the victims and the civil society organizations working alongside with them.

Amnesty International welcomes the Committee’s request to visit Mexico to further assess the situation. The organization urges the Mexican authorities to promptly agree on the request and to give the Committee’s members all the necessary guarantees to successfully perform their task.