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Mexico must address dire human rights situation with concrete action not rhetoric

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Mexico

The human rights situation in Mexico is critical with ongoing patterns of enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention as well as routine attacks on women, migrants, human rights defenders and journalists. Despite some important human rights constitutional reforms in 2011, impunity for the vast majority of human rights violations remains the norm.

Amnesty International acknowledges that the government of Mexico often plays an important role in promoting international human rights initiatives and facilitating access in Mexico to international human rights organizations. However, this commitment must be matched by action at the national level to protect and promote human rights and to hold those responsible for human rights violations to account.

Amnesty International welcomes Mexico's acceptance of an extensive range of recommendations as well as its decision to reject two recommendations that are incompatible with international human rights standards including by violating women's sexual and reproductive rights.¹

Arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, and excessive use of force are routinely used by the security forces and the police. Amnesty International therefore urges Mexico to act on the recommendations made to ensure prompt, full and impartial investigation and prosecution of all such human rights violations and to reform the Code of Military Justice to ensure prosecution in the civilian justice system.²

The government has acknowledged that more than 26,000 people went missing or disappeared between 2006 and 2012. The government must therefore strengthen measures to investigate abductions and enforced disappearances, including measures to locate victims and hold perpetrators to account, as recommended in the review.³

Threats, harassment and killings of human rights defenders and journalists remain the norm. Mexico must act swiftly on recommendations to strengthen the protection mechanisms and ensure those responsible are brought to justice.⁴ Equally important are the recommendations

¹ A/HRC/25/7, Recommendations, 148.48 (Holy See), 148.114 (Holy See)

² Recommendation 148.109 (Sierra Leone, Italy, Czech Republic, Australia, Brazil, Peru)

³ Recommendation 148.49-59 (Sweden, Portugal, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Argentina, Spain)

⁴ Recommendations 148.116-137 (Canada, Austria, Colombia, Netherlands, Britain, USA, Australia, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Hungary, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Japan, Ireland)

to punish all violence against women and the migrant population,⁵ including in light of longstanding impunity for abductions and killings of women in Chihuahua.

Amnesty International believes the government must urgently implement these recommendations to which it has agreed and progress should be measured against benchmarks, including concrete advances for rights holders.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the UPR recommendations, the government must agree a programme of urgent action by all level of the federal state, in consultation with national non-governmental human rights organizations, underpinned with financial resources and high-level political support. All levels of the federal state must comply.

Finally, Amnesty International regrets Mexico's decision not to abolish *arraigo* detention and calls on the government to take early steps to eliminate its use by federal authorities.⁶ It also calls on Mexico to recognise the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, as recommended in the review.⁷

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Mexico on 20 March 2014 during its 25th session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Mexico: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR41/019/2013/en/ebaf7242-0583-47d8-8121-c1f68379ea69/amr410192013en.pdf>

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⁵ A/HRC/25, recommendations 148.71 (Maldives), 148.72 (Austria), 148.73 (Chile), 148.75 (Denmark), 148. 173 (Bolivia), 148.146 (Viet Nam), 148.89 (Algeria)

⁶ Recommendation 148.60 (France , Germany, 148.61 (Austria), 148.62 and 163 (Belgium)

⁷ Recommendation 148.5 (France, Spain, Uruguay)