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Mexico: Torture techniques used in police training raise serious concerns

Amnesty International is concerned at the video footage of police training in León, Guanajuato State involving the use of torture.

The authorities of León municipality have argued that the training was aimed at teaching police to cope with a high stress environment and not to promote the use of torture techniques to gather information.

Nevertheless, by encouraging police to be familiar with such techniques as holding a detainee down in a pit full of excrement and rats and forcing water up the nostrils of the detainee in order to secure information raises concern that such methods may be used against criminal suspects detained in real life situations.

Amnesty International's annual report highlighted that torture and other ill-treatment remain a serious problem in Mexico. This video suggests that public security institutions are continuing to fail to take seriously the responsibility to eradicate torture and other ill-treatment in the performance of their duties.

An enquiry should be conducted immediately into the circumstances in which the training programme was designed and carried out and the nature of police training across the country. A number of questions should be answered:

- By what process did the police officer "volunteer" for the training exercise and was he fully informed of what treatment he would be subject to?
- What medical care and treatment was provided for the volunteers after the exercise?
- How were police trained in the torture techniques and were they informed that the use of such techniques violated national and international law and constituted serious criminal offences?
- Were officials provided with information on methods of how to avoid torture and ill-treatment of criminal suspects and the appropriate treatment of detainees in line with international human rights standards?
- Who were the private contractors providing the training and on what basis?
- Which other police forces are provided training of this nature?
- What steps are being taken to ensure training of police forces guarantee that full respect for human rights are integrated into all procedures and practices?

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