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Mexico: Still no response to the abuses committed in Guadalajara

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The Jalisco authorities' persistence in ignoring complaints of human rights violations is undermining justice, said Amnesty International today, one year on from the Guadalajara demonstrations that took place during the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.

More than one hundred people were arrested between 28 and 29 May for alleged involvement in the violent incidents that took place during the protests.

According to information obtained by Amnesty International, a significant number of those arrested were forced to endure threats, ill treatment and torture with the aim of obtaining confessions from them or information on those allegedly responsible. Several women were made to go two by two into rooms at the General Directorate for Public Security, strip naked and do squats in full view of several officers.

"It is deplorable that the authorities are failing to take such complaints of abuse seriously and are, on the contrary, focusing on discrediting the demonstrators, with the apparent aim of circumventing complaints of abuses committed in the context of the security operations around the Summit," said Amnesty International.

"All complaints of torture must be impartially and legally investigated."

To date, 10 people have been released following sentencing for minor charges, another 31 have been released on bail and four remain in custody. They are accused of various crimes including riot, attacks on the transport network, resisting authority, bodily harm, damaging private property and aggravated robbery.

Amnesty International has received information that various confessions obtained under torture or coercion have been admitted as evidence in these cases, in clear violation of the many international treaties ratified by Mexico and of the country's domestic legislation.

"The use of torture to obtain confessions, and their acceptance as evidence, not only encourages an illegal practice, it also calls the legal process into question."

Amnesty International is calling upon the Mexican authorities to ensure that members of social and human rights organizations are able to carry out their legitimate work on behalf of those being tried without fear of reprisals. The organization urges the authorities to investigate the threats received last January by Patricia Barragán Reyes, a member of the Coordinadora 28 de Mayo (28 May Coordinating Body) without delay and bring those responsible to justice.

"The Mexican government must ensure that the Jalisco authorities respect human rights and do not permit impunity," stated Amnesty International. "It is time that the federal and state authorities took this responsibility seriously and commenced investigations by which to punish those responsible," Amnesty International concluded.

Background information

Around three thousand people participated in the Guadalajara protests on 28 May 2004. During these demonstrations, violent incidents occurred against the security forces and property.

Charges were brought against 45 people for alleged involvement in these acts of violence. Eight foreigners were expelled to their countries of origin with a three-year ban on returning to Mexico.

Amnesty International condemned the violence during the demonstrations but reminded the authorities that police action must always comply fully with international human rights standards.

**For more information, see the report published by Amnesty International in December 2004:
"Mexico: Allegations of abuse dismissed in Guadalajara: reluctance to investigate human rights violations perpetuates impunity"**

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR410342004>

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