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Peña Nieto: One hundred days waiting for real advances on human rights

As President Enrique Peña Nieto completes 100 days in office, the few measures his government has taken on human rights simply do not match the gravity of the situation that Mexico is experiencing.

“There are worrying signs that this government is failing to give sufficient priority to the protection of human rights. It must make a clear break with the previous administration’s empty human rights promises and deliver on ending impunity for abuses,” said Javier Zúñiga, Amnesty International special adviser.

In December, Amnesty International’s Secretary General wrote to the new president to ask for immediate action on a range of serious issues - to date there has not been a substantive response.

The organization called for a radical change to public security policy to ensure the end of grave abuses such as torture, ill-treatment and enforced disappearances and for perpetrators to face justice.

Peña Nieto made commitments to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee on Torture in November 2012, but so far there is little evidence of the actions needed.

To highlight these worrying signs, Amnesty International is today launching a campaign for justice for Miriam Lopez. Unlawfully detained, tortured and subjected to sexual violence by members of the army in 2011, her case is emblematic of those who have suffered grave abuses, yet are denied justice.

And while progress on a General Victim’s Law is important it cannot mask the fact that the many thousands of victims of crime and human rights violations over last six years, including the 1000s of disappeared and missing, still remain without access to justice and reparations.

The government is discussing reform of policing, but there is no evidence that prevention of and accountability for human rights violations are at the heart of these proposals. Discussions on eliminating detention without charge – arraigo - are positive, but as yet there have been no concrete steps to abolish this practice.

On military jurisdiction, neither the government or legislature have taken steps to reform the Code of Military Justice as required by the Inter American Court of Human Rights, leaving the rulings by the Supreme Court to limit military jurisdiction without legislative support.

On migrants, the appointment of former police chief to head the National Migration Service raises grave concern. There is no indication of new measures necessary to combat criminal gangs and officials committing grave abuses against migrants in transit.

When it comes to combating violence against women and upholding sexual and reproductive rights, the government is almost completely silent.

The government announced a programme to target socially excluded indigenous communities, but has yet to provide any detail, including on how indigenous communities themselves will be involved to ensure the protection of their rights.

On human rights defenders and journalists, a protection mechanism continues to be established with the participation of civil society in line with the law passed in 2012.

This is positive but the government must ensure that the mechanism provides effective protection. It is also vital that investigations into attacks result in perpetrators facing justice.

“It is time for this government to demonstrate it is putting protection of human rights at the heart of its political agenda and ensuring the full participation of civil society.”

Background

Amnesty International published a report October 2012, [Known abuses, but victims ignored](#) to highlight the alarming increase in torture and ongoing impunity. The organization has still not received a response to this report or information on the actions the government is taking.

[Amnesty International's action to support Miriam Lopez's struggle for justice](#) is an opportunity for this government to show that it is serious about combating torture and fulfilling its international human rights obligations.