

---

### Nationwide Protests to be Held in Mexico

06/10/2014



Students from the Teacher Training College of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, alongside family members of the 43 disappeared students, have issued a call for nation-wide protests and demonstrations for October 8 organized under the hashtag #compartimoseldolor or “we share your pain.” In the Mexican capital organizers are calling for the public to gather at the Angel of Independence at 4 PM. National Coordination of Education Workers has declared its support for the protests, students from several rural schools have also declared an indefinite strike.

It is alleged that the students were disappeared by local police officials, in collusion with organized crime, on September 26. The students were attacked by police as they were attempting to return to their homes after a protest in the city of Iguala. At least 6 clandestine graves have been located and it is suspected that the bodies found in mass graves are those of the students. Although fellow students are holding out hope that they are not the bodies of their colleagues. Officials in Guerrero have indicated there are at least 34 bodies buried at the sites, so far 28 have been recovered, some the charred corpses were found dismembered.

Guerrero state Attorney General Inaky Blanco stated that 29 suspects have been arrested, including the head of security for Iguala, Felipe Flores. He also stated that Flores conspired with a local gang known as Warriors United, his deputy Francisco Salgado is suspected of ordering the detention of the students. The students were then turned over to gang members who conducted the executions. Salgado has gone missing, as has the mayor of Iguala, Jose Luis Abarca.

The colleagues and family members of the disappeared students have directed much of their anger at the state and federal government. A Facebook page associated with the school that the disappeared students belonged to posted the comment "In these times, it is more dangerous to be a student than a criminal, ask the governor if the truth is to the contrary." Officials admit that many local police agencies have been infiltrated by organized crime, meanwhile violence has been endemic in Mexico, with approximately 100,000 killed since 2007.

The previous administration of Felipe Calderon launched an ill-fated war on the drugs cartels operating within Mexico. Current President Enrique Peña Nieto pledged to stem the violence but has largely continued with the same policies of his predecessor. The disappearance of the students has created a huge ripples in Mexican society. The suspected killings of these students is reminiscent of the massacre of students in 1968, who were gunned down in the Three Cultures Plaza by government troops on October 2 that year in the Tlateloco neighborhood of Mexico City. Should the bodies found in the mass graves be confirmed to be those of the disappeared students, there will likely be significant fallout for the governor of Guerrero and Peña Nieto.

---