

F HUMAN RIGHTS IN MEXICO FOCUS

Quarterly magazine on Human Rights culture
Published by Center Prodh • centroprodh.org.mx • sididh.info



VIDULFO ROSALES
GUARDIAN OF THE MOUNTAIN



LANDMARK DECISIONS:

Court restricts military jurisdiction and allows victims' family members to file a writ of amparo against it.

**New era
Issue 01**



**Fall
2012**

sididh.info

Vidulfo Rosales: Guardian of the Mountain • The Right to Land and Territory • The Still Forgotten Border • Landmark Decisions • Israel Arzáte Meléndez • UN CEDAW Committee calls on México to end impunity in Atenco Case • Three years later, parents of the ABC Daycare Center case continue and strengthen their fight for justice and protection for Mexico's children • Update on the implementation of the protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalist • International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples • Tarejero: Mexico's dirty war heritage • Unsafe mining activity in Mexico continues to claim lives • Migrants and Human Rights Defenders Continue to Face Abuse • Seminar: Alternatives to the Extractive Mining Model



▲ **PHOTO** A mining worker in Coahuila starts descending in a vertical mine shaft, a symbol of unsafe mining activities. Photo: Miguel Sierra / CEREAL

EDITORIAL

Mexico is currently facing a change that will mark the country, at least for the next six years. As readers may know, presidential elections took place last July 1st and the announced winner is Enrique Peña Nieto, candidate of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). In a context where none of the presidential candidates defined a concrete proposal in terms of human rights, Peña Nieto's virtual victory marks the return of the party that controlled Mexico for over 70 years using authoritarian tactics. In view of this situation, Center Prodh and other human rights organizations continue to support the strengthening of citizen participation and the demand for justice. As we prepare for new challenges ahead, of course, the pending human rights issues of the country remain.

Esperanza, on the border of Mexico and Guatemala, whose members are living in a critical condition. We also provide updates on some of our paradigmatic cases, such as that of Israel Arzate Méendez, a scapegoat for a crime that he did not commit and whose family has been subjected to threats and harassment by local authorities in Ciudad Juárez; as well as the case of the women of Atenco, which was reviewed by the UN's CEDAW Committee during its examination of Mexico's level of compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The issue also includes the case of Vidulfo Rosales, a human rights defender from Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, Guerrero state, who received threats to his life and had to leave the country for a time because of the lack of security to continue his work.

Director:

José Rosario Marroquín

Editors:

Itza Varela-Huerta

José René Paz

Editor in chief:

Quetzalcoatl g. Fontanot

web editor:

Miguel Maestro Jiménez

Editorial board:

Andrés Díaz Fernández

Araceli M. Olivos

Víctor Hugo Carlos

Fernando Ríos

Alexandra Jiménez

Contributors to this issue:

Stephanie Erin Brewer,

Andrés Díaz Fernández,

Denise González Nuñez,

Leopoldo Maldonado, Araceli

M. Olivos, José René Paz, Jaque-

line Saenz, Itza Varela-Huerta,

Roberto Stefani, Pilar Arrese.

For instance, the first issue of our redesigned Focus newsletter reminded our readers of the systematic injustices suffered by Mexicans through the use of military jurisdiction to investigate human rights crimes, in particular since the launch of the so-called "war against drugs" by President Felipe Calderón in 2006. The National Supreme Court is currently discussing cases involving the use of military jurisdiction and the legal limits applicable to it, as will be discussed in this issue.

This publication also discusses the situation of the forcibly displaced community of Nueva

This edition also traces the search for justice in the cases of an indigenous Ch'ol community from northern Chiapas that is fighting for its right to its land and territory, and the case of the parents who are fighting for justice for their children who perished in the fire at the ABC Daycare Center in Hermosillo, Sonora state. Despite the grave situation illustrated by the cases mentioned in these pages, the struggle for justice sustained by collectives such as these is a guiding light for the defense of human rights in Mexico.✧

VIDULFO ROSALES

GUARDIAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

Vidulfo Rosales Sierra is originally from Tlacoapa, Guerrero. After spending his formative years in the countryside, in 1995 he became involved with the student movements at the Autonomous University of Guerrero, supporting students facing the loss of their homes and campesino (farmer) victims of repression.

As a member of the legal team at Tlachinollan Human Rights Center (known as the Human Rights Center of the Mountain), he has documented and denounced atrocities committed by the Mexican armed forces in Guerrero, as well as defending the lands of communities against abuses by developers and political bosses. In addition, he has participated in the defense of students at the Escuela Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa, victims of grave violations committed this past December. Like other human rights defenders in the region, he has been forced to carry out his work without guarantees of safety.

On May 4th, Vidulfo received a written death threat: "Vidulfo... stop f--- around, shut your mouth or we'll send you back home in pieces.

We are not playing, stop talking s--- or you will die. You think you are a big deal? S--- lawyer, stop defaming the authorities, you already owe us many times over, you get involved in everything... the so-called raped women, and now the Ayotzinapa vandals. Shut up or start getting your flowers together because now we are following you, we know what you do and where you go. You are going to die you are going to die you are going to die... Yours, The Law."

Even though Vidulfo Rosales had been granted temporary protective measures, the Mexican State did not have strategies to guarantee his life and his integrity; thus, Vidulfo was forced to leave the country for a time. A few days ago, Vidulfo returned to Guerrero to continue his fight for the safety of the state's human rights defenders. For our part, we will remain vigilant. We have seen – with deep concern – the reports of attacks on the work of human rights defenders, not only in the state of Guerrero but in many parts of the country. Vidulfo is not alone. As the members of the Tlachinollan human rights center and the peoples they defend remind us with their work every day, the Mountain will flourish once justice exists for all peoples of the region.✕

▲ **PHOTO** Vidulfo Rosales Sierra, human rights defender at Tlachinollan Human Rights Center.



The Right to Land and Territory:

An unfulfilled promise for the Ch'ol indigenous people

The inhabitants of the ejido (communally-owned land) of Tila, located in northern Chiapas, are members of the Ch'ol indigenous people. For decades, the Ch'ol people have seen their lands plundered, and they have fought tirelessly to see them restored.

After years of struggle, in 1924 the Ch'ol achieved recognition of their ejido by presidential decree. Nevertheless, because of distinct political and economic interests, they have not been able to fully enjoy their lands. Municipal and state governments alike have, through various means, continued to violate the rights of the Ch'ol.

Thus, for more than 50 years, generation upon generation has fought to defend the lands of their forefathers, with the hope that one day they will

find justice and see their lands and territory free. Of greatest concern, authorities have illegally expropriated Ch'ol lands, dividing them up and, as a result, splintering their social fabric. The Ch'ol have filed formal complaints and judicial authorities have issued judgments recognizing the legitimacy of the arguments and upholding the Ch'ol's right to their lands. Nevertheless, the executive authorities responsible for the violations have not complied with these judicial rulings.

Given the authorities' lack of compliance and will, the case has been taken up by the National Supreme Court, the only remaining domestic body that may be able to offer a resolution. The members of the Court hold a historic opportunity: to provide justice, to restore peace and land to their rightful owners and to respect and validate the rights of the Ch'ol indigenous people.✧

▲ **PHOTO** Residents of the Tila "ejido" in Chiapas who arrived in Mexico City to call on the National Supreme Court to enforce a legal order mandating the restitution of their territory.

The still forgotten

The humanitarian crisis of

Center Prodh participated in a civilian observation mission last August 3rd, to compile and update information and to document human rights violations suffered by the forcibly displaced community of Nueva Esperanza, on the borderline of Mexico and Guatemala. The community is fighting for its right to land and territory after having been evicted by both governments. The mission compiled first-hand information from the affected community, which has named itself “Campesino Resistance Camp of Nueva Esperanza”. The mission focused on updating the chapter on the situation of the community of the report “The Forgotten Border”, published last October 2011 (available at http://centroprodh.org.mx/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=106&Itemid=28&lang=es).

After being violently evicted from its land (for a third time) by Guatemala on August 23, 2011, the community crossed the borderline into Mexico where it settled in Tabasco state while awaiting a solution to its critical situation. According to members, the day of the eviction, a joint operation of members of the Guatemalan Army, the National Police, the Protected Area National Council (CONAP), and other authorities, had arrived to execute the eviction order, of which the community had no knowledge, arguing that the community was settled in a protected natural area. From Tabasco, the community entered into negotiations with the Guatemalan government to be able to return and settle in Guatemalan territory.

Last January 9th, without having yet reached a settlement with the Guatemalan government, the community was once again the victim of

a forced eviction, this time by the Mexican government which qualified its action as a “voluntary repatriation”. Prior to the eviction, human rights organizations including the “72” Migrants Shelter and the Usumacinta Human Rights Center in Tabasco, as well as Center Prodh and the Mesoamerican Migrants’ Movement, had been participating in an inter-institutional dialogue with different Mexican authorities (the National Migration Institute, the Undersecretary’s office for Population, Migration, and Religious Issues, and the Mexican Commission for Refugees) to try to prevent the eviction of the community. However, there had been signs that the dialogue was not advancing. Mr. Salvador Beltrán del Río, Commissioner of the National Migration Institute, criticized the parents of the community stating that they were failing to watch over their children’s health and care by living in the camp in Mexico and affirming that the best thing for them to do would be to return to Guatemala; however, this argument denotes a lack of understanding of the community’s fight for its right to land and territory, essential for the long-term well-being of its children.

At the moment of the eviction, Mexican authorities used the children by detaining them so their parents would not be able to escape, even when they entered Guatemalan territory. Likewise, even those community members who held valid Mexican migration documents had these taken away from them. Seventy individuals (45 children, 14 men and 11 women) were sent in deplorable conditions to Tapachula, Chiapas state, to then be deported to Guatemala.

border:

Nueva Esperanza

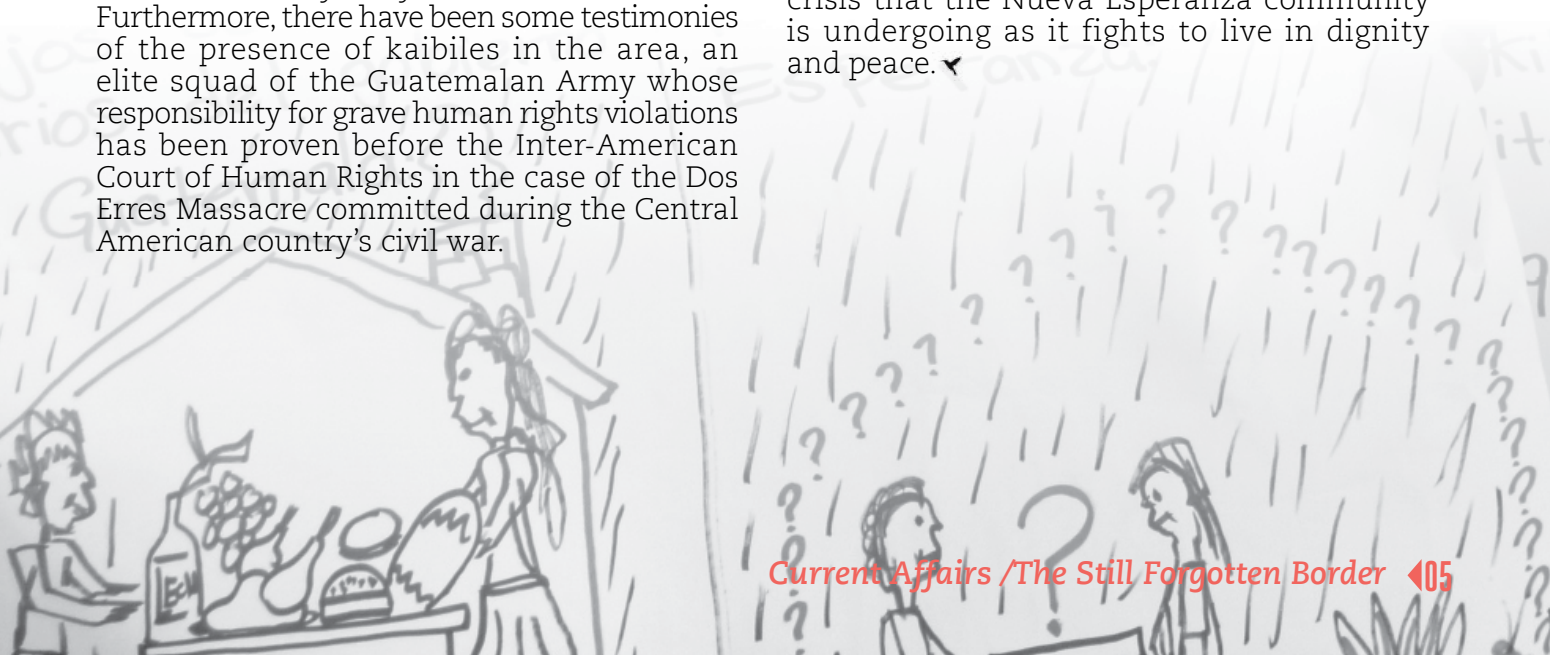


Nowadays, the camp is composed by almost 185 persons – of which half are children – and has returned to settle nearby the borderline between the department of El Petén and the state of Tabasco, living close to its former location but just over the border in Guatemala. Conditions are inhumane and they lack basic services such as health, food, housing, and education. An example of this situation is the recent death due to the lack of health care services and attention of a 5-month-old baby Mexican girl, Yorleni Yolet Zacarías Escobar (born in Tenosique, Tabasco and who lived with her Guatemalan parents in the camp). Besides this, there are few to no jobs in the area, and those men who find employment are forced to work long shifts in the fields. Meanwhile, the women go with escorts when they look for water, for fear of the members of the Guatemalan Army deployed recently in the area; for the same reason, the children are not allowed to stray from the camp to play or exercise.

The government of Guatemala has sent the Army to patrol the zone and to watch that the community stays out of their lands. Furthermore, there have been some testimonies of the presence of kaibiles in the area, an elite squad of the Guatemalan Army whose responsibility for grave human rights violations has been proven before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of the Dos Erres Massacre committed during the Central American country's civil war.

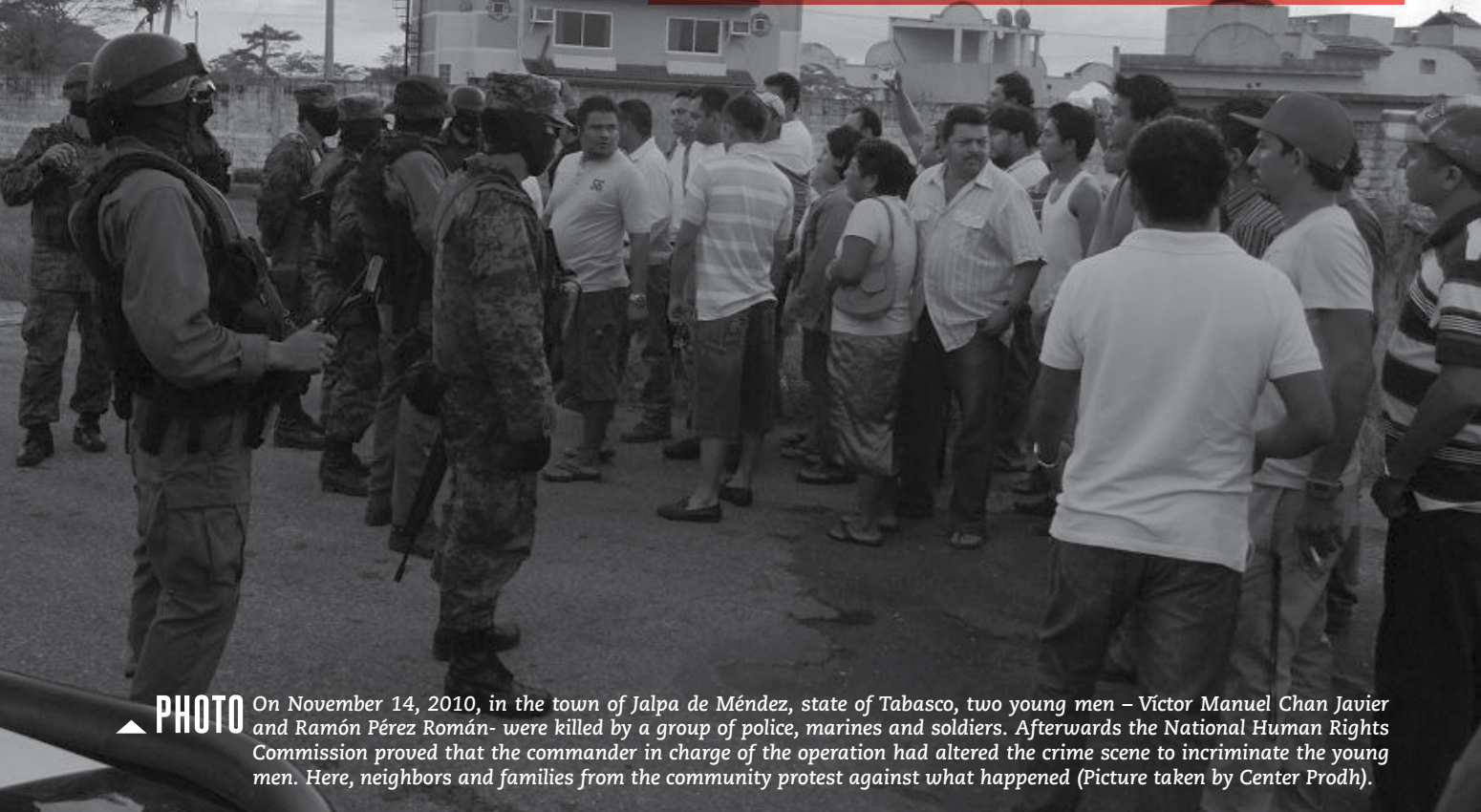
▲ **PHOTO** Displaced children living in the “Nueva Esperanza” Camp (located in the Guatemala-Mexico border) denounce the humanitarian emergency that characterizes their situation (Photo by Alexandra Jiménez).

The Nueva Esperanza community is still in negotiations with the government of Guatemala, but delays mean that these are not close to conclusion, while the situation continues to be alarmingly precarious. For now, the only certain thing is that the community – fully autonomous and independent before the evictions – will not be able to return to its original lands in Guatemala. Given this unjust situation, the governments of Mexico and Guatemala must seek a prompt solution to the humanitarian crisis that the Nueva Esperanza community is undergoing as it fights to live in dignity and peace. ▼



LANDMARK DECISIONS:

Court restricts military jurisdiction and allows victims' family members to file a writ of amparo against it.



▲ PHOTO On November 14, 2010, in the town of Jalpa de Méndez, state of Tabasco, two young men – Víctor Manuel Chan Javier and Ramón Pérez Román- were killed by a group of police, marines and soldiers. Afterwards the National Human Rights Commission proved that the commander in charge of the operation had altered the crime scene to incriminate the young men. Here, neighbors and families from the community protest against what happened (Picture taken by Center Prodh).

As readers know, for many years, the human rights movement in Mexico has demanded that the State comply with international law by investigating in civilian jurisdiction all human rights violations committed by soldiers, as opposed to investigating these crimes in military jurisdiction. In recent days, the Supreme Court has taken important steps toward this goal, with more discussions ongoing at the time this issue goes to press.

This demand to restrict military jurisdiction has become more urgent in recent years, given the escalating military operations in the context

of the so-called “war against organized crime”, and the accompanying increase in human rights violations, with devastating effects for the civilian population. In this context, and historically, civilian control over the military is weak and the investigations carried about by military authorities are questionable due to their lack of structural independence and lack of results in terms of justice.

In the cases of Rosendo Radilla, Inés Fernández, Valentina Rosendo, and the “Ecologists Case” of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found Mexico responsible for multiple human rights violations including the extensive -instead

of limited- use of military jurisdiction; as well as the lack of an adequate and effective legal remedy for the victims of the unjustified application of military jurisdiction. The Court ordered Mexico to reform its Code of Military Justice and to provide such a legal remedy to victims. Efforts to restrict military jurisdiction gained more momentum when in June 2011, article 1 of the Constitution was amended to include all human rights that are recognized in international treaties. Additionally, in July of that year, the National Supreme Court issued its resolution in the case known as Various 912/2010, recognizing that Mexico is obligated to comply with inter-American law regarding military jurisdiction.

Now, discussions regarding some 30 cases having to do with military jurisdiction -some of which derive from jurisdictional conflicts, others from human rights violations and others from other matters – are underway in the plenary of the Supreme Court, having started on August 6, 2012. In the first two cases resolved, the Court appeared to endorse the rule that whenever a civilian victim is involved, the case falls within civilian jurisdiction, a positive step.

The third case, that of Bonfilio Rubio Villegas, a Nua indigenous man who was arbitrarily executed by military officers in a checkpoint in Guerrero in 2009 (a case defended by the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center), gave the Supreme Court the opportunity to rule on the right to an effective legal remedy against the use of military jurisdiction. In this case, the Supreme Court recognized the right of family members of victims of military abuses to challenge the use of military jurisdiction through an amparo le action (used to defend against violations of constitutional rights).

This represents an important step forward since up until now, family members were not considered to have legal standing and thus their right to a legal remedy was denied due to formalistic procedural rules. Indeed, this was the reason that Reynalda Morales, wife of an arbitrarily executed victim whose case we co-litigated before the Supreme Court in 2009, was denied standing to challenge the use of military jurisdiction to investigate her husband's killing.

Center Prodh welcomes these advances, especially recalling that several of the paradigmatic cases we defend are precisely cases of military abuses. In this regard, the Ecologists case, litigated by our Center together with the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) was one of the precedents cited by the Supreme Court in its discussions of this topic in recent days. At the same time, the Supreme Court has to reiterate its ruling in several more cases before it becomes binding jurisprudence in the country.

In addition, the task of implementing the Inter-American Court's rulings is not over: while the Supreme Court can give victims a clear cause of action when their rights are violated, the root of the problem remains in the Code of Military Justice, which should be reformed in accordance with the regional Court's orders to ensure that no human rights violation, no matter who the victim, is investigated or judged in military jurisdiction.

We will keep our readers informed on the outcome of the ongoing Supreme Court discussions. ✎

**We will keep our readers informed
on the outcome of the ongoing
Supreme Court discussions.**

UPDATE on the case

ISRAEL ARZATE MELÉNDEZ

**Victim of torture by
military officers**



As readers will remember, in past issues we presented the case of Israel Arzate Meléndez, a young man from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, who was arbitrarily detained and tortured by the army in February of 2010. Suffering solitary confinement and physical and psychological torture, Israel was forced to confess falsely to the murder of 15 people in the massacre of Villas de Salvárcar. This has resulted in two years of unjust incarceration, the product of a trial filled with irregularities. Here, we present the most recent advances in the fight to free Israel.

On May 25th, the United States Department of State included Israel's case in its annual human rights report on Mexico. The State Department recounts the human rights violations to which Israel was subjected, as an example of the use of torture by armed forces. In addition, a letter sent on July 5th by over 30 members of the US Congress to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton takes up Israel's case as paradigmatic of the alarming use of torture to coerce confessions that are then admitted as prosecution evidence in Mexican trials.

On an alarming note, on the afternoon of May 31st, agents of the state Attorney General's Office of Chihuahua arbitrarily detained Ignacio Zaid Rosales, the younger brother of Israel Arzate, and they committed acts of intimidation against Ms. Guadalupe Meléndez, Israel's mother. On that afternoon, Guadalupe Meléndez was sitting on her front porch when she noticed that three ministerial agents had trespassed onto her property and were displaying firearms. The agents asked for another one of her sons, Ismael, to which she responded that her son no longer lived there. After persistent interrogation, Guadalupe stated that the agents should speak with her bodyguard (assigned by the federal Attorney General's Office in March of 2010).

Upon leaving to call her guard, Guadalupe Meléndez noticed that three police vans were parked in the street, and next to one stood her youngest son, Ignacio Zaid Rosales, in custody and yelling "Mamá, mamá!" The agents then put Ignacio in a van and drove away. Thereafter, Ms. Meléndez called her daughter, who informed her that several ministerial agents – wearing

hoods, even though they could be recognized by their vans – had arrested Ignacio and another person about an hour earlier.

Guadalupe Meléndez, along with her guard, took it upon herself to search for the agents that had detained her youngest son. Upon finding them, the agents assured her that they had taken her son to the Attorney General’s Office. After an exhaustive search, another ministerial agent remembered Ignacio’s detention and informed Ms. Meléndez that he had been set free. After his release, Mr. Zaid – displaying symptoms of abuse and intimidation – declared that ministerial agents were searching for his brother Ismael

and that they had made him sign a piece of paper. Center Prodh considers these acts as a reprisal by the State against Israel and his family in their search for justice and freedom.

In view of the acts of harassment against Guadalupe and her son, they filed a complaint and an investigation was opened, but as of today there has been no advance. The same is true of the investigation for torture undertaken by the Federal Attorney General’s office in the case of Israel Arzate, which has shown no progress for a year. We will thus keep readers informed of how the case progresses for Israel and his family. ▼



UN CEDAW COMMITTEE CALLS ON MEXICO TO END IMPUNITY IN ATENCO CASE

Victims face threats and a lack of transparency in the investigation.

Last July 17, 2012, in UN headquarters in New York, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) examined the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the Mexican government on its implementation of the corresponding Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, a binding treaty ratified by Mexico in 1981. The Committee is made up of more than twenty independent experts who examine each State party's compliance with the Convention and then issue concluding observations and recommendations.

One case that was of particular interest for the Committee was that of the women who suffered sexual torture including rape at the hands of police in San Salvador Atenco, Mexico State, during an operation carried out by more than 2000 state, federal, and municipal agents in May of 2006.

This case was already well known to the CEDAW Committee, which in 2006 directed clear recommendations to the Mexican government regarding the obligation to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of sexual violence in Atenco, and calling on the State "to ensure that the [federal] Special Prosecutor [on Violence against Women] is given jurisdiction over the case of crimes in San Salvador Atenco", a recommendation that was not fulfilled by the State.

As readers will recall, a group of 11 of the women who survived sexual torture in Atenco have fought for justice in the most adverse of conditions over the past six years. Both the National Human Rights Commission and Mexico's national Supreme Court have confirmed the commission of the grave human rights violations in Atenco. However, despite the seriousness of the violations and their detailed documentation, not one perpetrator has been punished, leading the women to take their case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

During the State's presentation to the CEDAW Committee, a representative of Mexico State referenced the existence of arrest warrants against some of the police implicated in the acts



of torture, and that very same day, after six years of impunity, two police agents were arrested. However, rather than necessarily signaling an advance for justice in the case, this news raises serious questions about the procedures being followed, given that the women and their representatives were unaware of any arrest warrants pending. In subsequent days, Center Prodh was told that Mexico State prosecutorial agents had supposedly been trying to indict police in the case since 2011, meaning that for all of 2012, authorities have been denying the victims and their representatives access to this information. In past weeks, we have been denied access to the investigation file when we tried to view it to corroborate these data (as is our legal right as representatives of the victims).

What is certain is that the impunity in the Atenco case is an ongoing mark of shame for the Mexican government and reversing it must be a priority for the country. The need to provide justice in this case and send a strong message of condemnation of sexual torture is even more urgent in light of the fact that on July 2, 2012, Valentina Palma, a Chilean student and one of women who suffered sexual torture in Atenco, received an anonymous email in which she was threatened with rape if she returned to Mexico. Using extremely graphic language, an anonymous sender who said he was a police agent referenced details of the sexual torture to which Valentina and other women were subjected in police buses in the State of Mexico.

In its concluding observations, the CEDAW Committee once again called attention to the Atenco case, recommending that Mexico: "Expedite the detentions related to violence against women offenses and provide information about the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators in its next periodic report, including those related to the Atenco case." We will be monitoring the State's actions and will keep readers informed of updates in this paradigmatic case of the use of sexual torture as a tool of State repression against women. ▼

Newsbriefs

Three years later, parents of the ABC Daycare Center case continue and strengthen their fight for justice and protection for Mexico's children



After more than three years of fighting for justice, parents of the children who perished in the ABC Daycare Center fire continue to confront bureaucratic and political hurdles in their campaign for daycare safety in Mexico. The parents of the June 5th Citizens Movement for Justice (M5J) are advocating for regulations that would implement throughout the entire country the “June 5th Law”, a piece of legislation that the parents pushed for in the wake of the tragedy that claimed the lives of their own children in a preventable fire on June 5, 2009. The law was passed and on July 20th, the parents of M5J received a draft of its implementing regulations, which, unfortunately, contained inadequate measures relating to civil protection, and would not guarantee the comprehensive development needs of children. To be a holistic plan, the text should include measures on educational, safety, health, and recreational necessities, all essential to children’s development. Thus, the parents demand that the plan be all-inclusive for the benefit of all of Mexico’s children.

On a related note, on May 23rd, M5J presented a letter to UNICEF denouncing the UN’s awarding of its Public Service Prize to Mexico for the Social Development Ministry’s daycare program. The international body has yet to respond. After nearly three months, the formal complaint for the abuse of authority (arbitrary detentions) committed against ABC parents in the days leading up to the third anniversary – currently idling at the Sonora State Commission on Human Rights – has also not seen progress. ❖

Update on the implementation of the protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists

As readers will recall from our previous issue, Mexico has recently seen legislative advances toward the protection of human rights defenders and journalists in the form of a law passed to establish a Protection Mechanism for this population. We urged President Calderón to promulgate the law as quickly as possible, which was finally done last June 22nd.

Center Prodh and other civil society organizations have now been participating in different meetings with the Ministry of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación or “Segob”) in order to draft the regulations of the law, manuals, and protocols to guarantee its effective implementation. Discussions are still ongoing.

Furthermore, Segob has called for elections of members of the law’s Advisory Council, which is the civil society body within the Protection Mechanism composed of 9 members: 4 representatives from human rights organizations, 4 journalists or persons working on freedom of expression related issues and one person from the academic sector. The election will be held this September and according to the provisions of the law, the process of election should be decided by civil society itself, although the official election announcement has been subject to criticism by diverse organizations because of the requirements it imposes for organizations to register and to vote. Center Prodh will continue following this process and inform our readers of its outcome. ❖



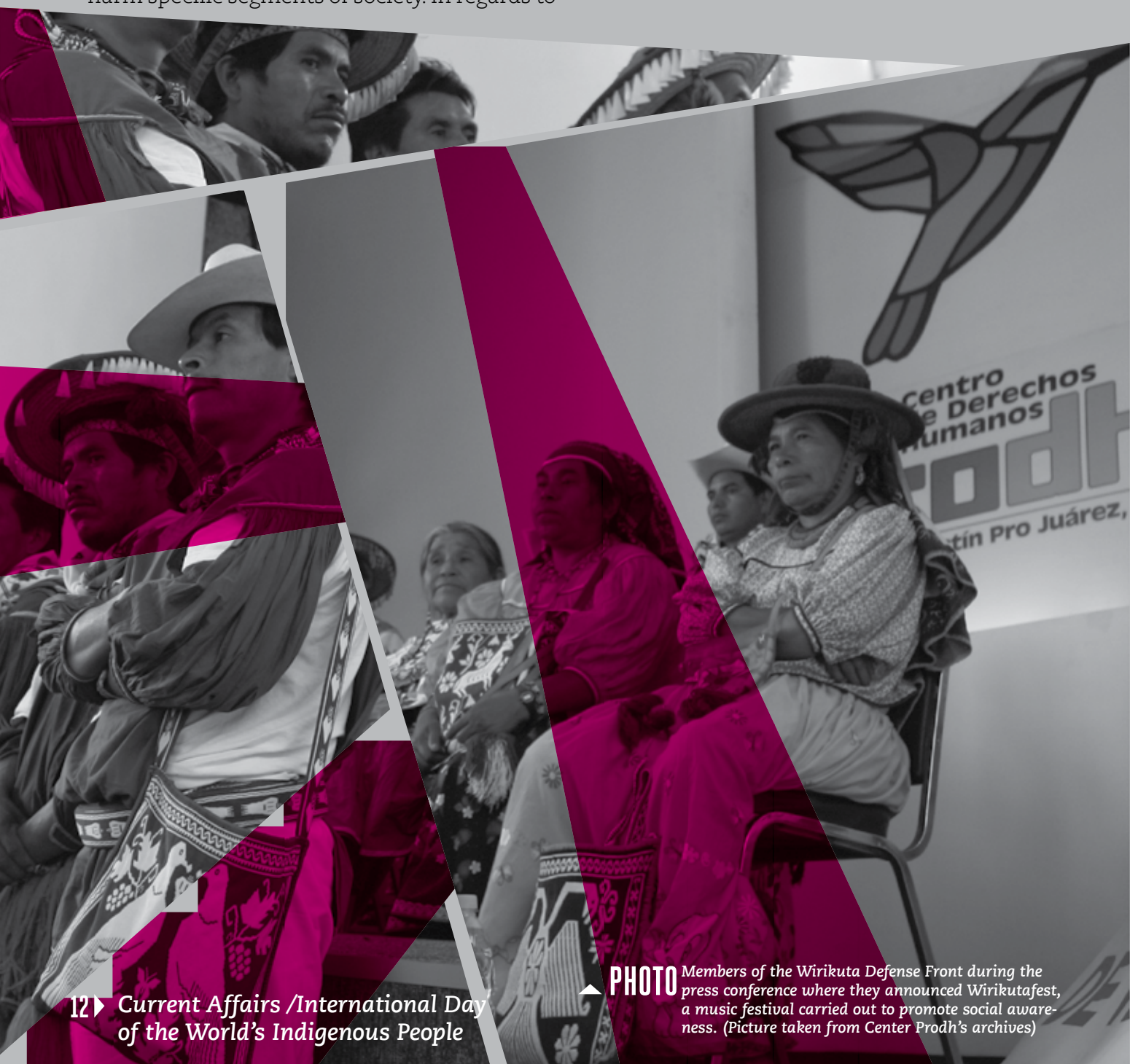
International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

On August 9th, we commemorated the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Here at Center Prodh, we honored this day by calling on the justices of the National Supreme Court to resolve the case of Hugo Sánchez, a young mazahua indigenous man who has been unjustly imprisoned for five years for a crime he did not commit.

Center Prodh has denounced the ways in which structural problems in the Mexican penal system harm specific segments of society. In regards to

indigenous peoples, these harms are especially grave, resulting from the discrimination exercised by Mexican state officials.

This past February, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) reminded Mexico – referencing the case of Hugo – of its obligation to prevent arbitrary detentions against vulnerable populations, as well as its duty to prevent the victimization of innocent persons in the name of national security. In addition, the CERD Committee urged authorities to provide indigenous peoples with effective access to justice, particularly by providing interpreters.▼



Tarejero: Mexico's dirty war heritage

For nearly forty years, five members of the Guzmán family have been victims of forced disappearance perpetrated by state agents, allegedly for belonging to guerrilla organizations. In reality, they were purhépecha indigenous campesinos.

For the past 11 years, the community of Tarejero, Michoacán; the Diego Lucero Foundation; and Center Prodh have honored the memory of the Guzmán family and the hundreds of persons disappeared during Mexico's dirty war of the 1960s and '70s. This year, on July 28th, community members, representatives of organizations and others gathered to mark this tragic event and to renew their commitment to seek justice for the Guzmán family, whose case is currently before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. At the same time, forced disappearance continues to be a common occurrence in Mexico, reminding us that the obligation to provide justice for crimes of the past extends as well to the present.✕

Migrants and Human Rights Defenders Continue to Face Abuse

On July 21st, a group of armed men opened fired on the San Jose "soup kitchen for migrants" in the municipality of Huehuetoca, Mexico State. This center was created on July 1st of this year, and officially opened on July 9, in response to the closing of the San Juan Diego Migrants Shelter in Lechería, also in the State of Mexico.

The closing of the shelter –the only refuge for migrants in the area– was in reaction to a widespread climate of discrimination and xenophobia against migrants that cross this region. Given the absence of effective protection by the State, the number of cases of extortion and assault against migrant persons has increased, vividly demonstrating the level of vulnerability that migrants face while crossing through Mexico.✕

Unsafe mining activity in Mexico continues to claim lives

Coal mining in Mexico is still a high-risk activity. The coal region continues to be a deadly zone for miners because of the accidents provoked by illegal mining, most of all in the so-called "pocitos" [holes in the ground used to go down into a mine to extract minerals] which is a type of mining prohibited in many parts of the world.

In the two weeks between the end of July and beginning of August, 15 miners died in four work places. The toll of dead miners has now reached 100 since the explosion at the Pasta de Conchos mining site in 2006, where 65 miners were killed and whose case is now pending before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In the face of this devastating panorama, we recall that the Mexican government is responsible for ensuring that mining companies comply with security guarantees.✕

Seminar: Alternatives to the Extractive Mining Model



Mining practices in this country have caused severe and irreparable damage to large swathes of territory, for which they are a primary threat to the health and life of communities, their territories, and their rights. For this reason, REMA (Mexican Network of People Affected by Mining), of which Center Prodh is member, organized the seminar "Alternatives to the Extractive Mining Model". The seminar will be held at Center Prodh between July and November of this year. The first session took place on July 20 to 22.✕



ISRAEL ARZATE MELÉNDEZ

Victim of Torture by military officers

Index:

-
- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|----|--|----|--|
| 2 | Vidulfo Rosales | 10 | UN CEDAW Committee calls on México to end impunity in Atenco case | 11 | Three years later, parents of the ABC Daycare Center case continue and strengthen their fight for justice and protection for Mexico's children |
| 3 | The Right to Land and Territory | 11 | Update on the implementation of the protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalist | 12 | International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples |
| 4 | The Still Forgotten Border | | | | |
| 6 | Landmark Decisions | | | | |
| 8 | Israel Arzate Meléndez | | | | |
-

