

GIEI-Ayotzinapa

# Progress and Remainings

In its fourth report, the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI, “the Group” from now on) for the Ayotzinapa case made a balance on the requests and inquiries which have been done, the level of compliance and what is still pending.

Among the issues mentioned are: the authorities are still assessing the request for conducting direct interviews to the 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Regarding the recommendations and requests made to the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR, Attorney General’s Office) 30% have been completed of the information given to the Group, and 24% have been partially completed.

The Group highlights the commitment of the Attorney General’s Office to take the necessary steps in order to unify the investigation. Another aspect that Group would like to inform is that a health unit for the parents of the Normal of Ayotzinapa has been installed near the School. As well it is important to praise the will of the family members and the normalistas survivors to collaborate with the authorities in order to continue the investigation, and enrich with their testimony the criminal file.

Due to the fact that it has been said in various occasions throughout these nine months, with regard to the events of September 26<sup>th</sup>, the Group points out that the original intention of the normalistas was not to go to Iguala’s downtown. It was because of other circumstances that they ended up there.

During the press conference, Alejandro Valencia, Ángela Buitrago, Carlos Beristain, Claudia Paz and Francisco Cox read the following report:

On this occasion, the Group presents an evaluation of the work done in its last visit. After nearly four months since its mandate began, the Group continues to facilitate the contact between the authorities and the family members, as well as with the normalistas who survived the attacks.

Nine months after the events, the relatives of the missing normalistas are still waiting for answers and new efforts in the search for their sons.

The Group has made progress in the analysis of the criminal file, as well as in collecting testimonies, contrasting different versions, gathering statements and evidence, as well as drafting its report.

The Group appreciates the State’s material and logistical support in order to fulfill its mandate.

The key points of the work done during this period, which the Group considers important to publicize, are:

*1. Decision to go to the Iguala's bus station.* In order to contribute to a better understanding of the events, the Group considers relevant to point out that despite the widespread information on the arrival of the normalistas on September 26<sup>th</sup> to the Central Bus Station of Iguala, according to the research that has been done, such action was not previously planned in order to go to the City's downtown. The Group received questions on numerous occasions on this fact, by what it considers important to make this clear before giving their final conclusions.

The normalistas of Ayotzinapa came out to collect money and buses on September 26<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 5 p.m. for the demonstration of October 2<sup>nd</sup> to Tlatelolco. Since they found difficulties in the previous days to obtain buses in Chilpancingo, the normalistas went to a place known as "Casa del Cura"—priest's house—, or the junction of the entrance to Huitzuco and the Iguala's tollbooth. As the Group already said, the subsequent decision to go to the bus station in Iguala was due to circumstances of the moment, therefore not planned.

*2. Commitment to open new search plans.* As part of the commitment to contribute to the rapprochement between the Federal Police and the normalistas' families for the creation of new search plans, the Federal Police carried out, in the presence of members of the Group, a new series of interviews to the relatives. The purpose was to complete the existing information concerning the location of the missing students. With that information, the Federal Police has stated its commitment in presenting to the family new search hypotheses, as well as to respond the questions that the families still have. It should be noticed that the parties agreed upon minimum standards. The Group notes the willingness of the family members to provide, once again, information related to the normalistas who have disappeared, despite the emotional impact that poses to them to deliver new testimonies.

The Group itself, after reviewing the information in the criminal file, has made several requests that it expects to be taken into account by the authorities.

*3. Response to the accumulation and legal characterization of the criminal investigation.* The Attorney General informed the Group that it had accepted its recommendation in order to request to the judge the unification of the different judicial investigations opened in different courts. She told the Group that in coordination with us the Attorney General's Office would reconsider the legal characterization of the facts in the Ayotzinapa case, in order to include crimes that have not been investigated and the precise legal characterization of the facts. This decision is a step forward for such serious events that can be investigated in a holistic manner and tried in accordance with international standards for this type of cases.

*4. Response to the request to interview members of 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion.* Yesterday (June 28<sup>th</sup>) the Group received written response saying that "the State continues to analyze the applicability of the request", as well as it reiterates that "in its character of adjuvant, the Group is entitled at any time to suggest to the Public Ministry to expand the statements that the 36 members (sic) of the 27 Battalion made in quality of witnesses".

More than three months after the request to the authorities to directly interview to military personnel

of the 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion, including those testimonies, which have not been taken, the Group notes with concern the delay on this decision. It should be borne in mind that 9 months have passed since the events, in addition to the urgency that these actions have for the families of the victims, as well as the restricted time of six months that the Group has in order to carry out its mandate. In the Group's opinion, this delay could be detrimental for the efforts to move forward in the criminal investigation and the new search plans for the missing normalistas.

*5. New investigations carried out directly by the Group or suggested to the Attorney General's Office.*

During the past month, several inquiries in relevant places related to the investigation were made, the Group visited police establishments in the state of Guerrero, the Cocula's dump, the San Juan's river and a safe house, among others. The GIEI inspected once again, but this time in the company of crime scene and planimetric expert, the places in Iguala where the attacks occurred. The Group considers that these measures will contribute to the assessment of the different proofs and evidence gathered so far, as well as for new proposals and recommendations.

In addition, the Group made new visits to the Federal Centers for Social Rehabilitation in order to interview some of the defendants, incarcerated in the State of Mexico, Jalisco and Nayarit. Among those interviewed by the Group were Abarca and his wife Pineda.

Finally, having finished the analysis of the Prosecutor's criminal file, the Group has started the review of the judicial files, to which the Group expects to have full access.

*6. New normalistas' statements.* Due to the interest of the authorities of the Attorney General's Office to have the surviving normalistas giving a new testimony who are victims and witnesses of the events, a mechanism has been arranged to carry out this request. The Group has helped to facilitate such diligence. It should be noted that the students have shown their readiness to comply with the request; hence it will be done soon.

*7. Meeting of the Attorney General's Office with the families of the disappeared normalistas.* As part of the process of building trust and specific actions of rapprochement between the entities of the State and the family, the Group picked up the request of the families to be received by the new Attorney General. The Attorney General has received this request positively, and in the next few days the date of such meeting will be defined.

*8. Verification of requests for information and inquiries.* Since the beginning of its mandate, the Group has made more than one hundred petitions either for relevant information in the criminal file or suggesting concrete steps that the prosecutors should take. Given the complexity and breadth of such requests, in agreement with the Attorney General, a system has been established in order to verify the level of compliance with those requests. According to the joint revision made by the Group and the Attorney General's Office until now, from the 100% of the petitions made, a 30% has been delivered in a complete manner, 24% partially, and 47% are still pending. The streamlining of the responses to these requests is very important in order to comply with the Group's mandate within the time limit. The next few days the Group will be making new requests, which are important for the case.

The Group also highlights the relationship of collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission for the exchange of information related to the investigation.

*9. Health Care and Treatment of the Victims of the case.* Due to the efforts made with the Ministry of the Interior—SEGOB—, a mobile health unit was installed at the entrance of the normal Ayotzinapa. The Group considers this as a step forward to ensure adequate attention to the health problems affecting family members. On the other hand, the Group has also picked up new health needs of some wounded normalistas after being treated at the hospital during the first days, who suffer consequences that need a specific assessment and an appropriate treatment to improve the functionality of the affected extremities.

The Group has received information from the relatives of Aldo Gutiérrez on a second opinion issued by a Mexican expert, and is attentive to assessment that must be carried out on the conditions that are necessary for a prolonged treatment and appropriate to the circumstances of the family, as well as the possible assessments on other options for his treatment.

Finally, SEGOB sent the Group an initial draft document for information on the rights of the victims in the Ayotzinapa case, which is being evaluated by the Group.

*10. General policies about the disappearance of persons.* After the entry into force of the constitutional reform and the new political configuration after the elections, the Group is waiting to hear about the government's bill while its evaluating the other initiatives presented by legislators that will be discussed in the next few months, in order to give its opinion as to the criteria that should be included in future legislation, as to meet international standards in the field. The Group expects the Act to be approved following a rapid and appropriate processing, given the importance of this problem in Mexico.

Briefly, these is the progress and the outstanding work of the Group to almost four months since the beginning of its mandate entrusted by the petitioners and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

As always, we appreciate the interest of the media and society on our work.

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