

Violence against Women, a Severe Violation of Women's Human Rights

Civil society organizations based in the boarder city of Juarez have registered and denounced, since 1993, the discriminatory treatment, the negligence and the acquiescence of local and federal authorities related to the forced disappearance and murder of hundreds of women.

The call for justice has crossed Ciudad Juárez's borders. In the following days, Mexico will be standing trial at the Inter-American Human Rights Court for violating the right of women to live free from violence, specifically for the disappearance, torture and assassination of three women, two of them adolescents. The bodies of Esmeralda Herrera Monreal, Claudia Ivette González and Laura Berenice Ramos Monárrez, were found with the bodies of five other women in a cotton field in Ciudad Juárez.

Eight years have passed since these crimes were committed, yet they still remain unpunished. At last, the mothers of Esmeralda Herrera, Claudia Ivette and Laura Berenice will be heard by an impartial court in Santiago de Chile, where the public hearing of the Case of Campo Algodonero will take place. During all these years, the mothers of Irma, Josefina and Claudia, as well as their defenders, have been harassed, threatened and targeted in smear campaigns directed by Mexican authorities.

The Inter-American Court is at a crucial moment, facing the challenge of hearing a case that entails serious and continued violations to women's human rights committed by the Mexican State. The time has come for the Court to clearly define State responsibilities regarding violence against women, which is sustained on historically unequal power relationships between women and men, and affects a broader group of women, as well as all of them as a gender. Knowing what happened and accessing justice in these cases are essential requirements for social reconstruction. While being a woman represents a mortal danger, none of us will be able to exercise our rights and liberties.

We express our concern for the physical integrity of women's human rights defenders whose life and families have been in danger as a consequence of their declarations in the media, the legal representation of specific cases in local, federal and international Courts, as well as their demands for real, categorical and effective public policies and governmental actions to stop violence against women in Ciudad Juárez. These women fear that the risk will increase as a result of the case being heard at the Inter-American Court.

We urge the Inter-American Court to categorically pronounce itself on the severe and permanent violations to women's human rights perpetrated by the Mexican State, and to point out clear mechanisms for the reparation of the damage inflicted to the families of Esmeralda Herrera, Claudia Ivette and Laura Berenice.

**Stop impunity! Stop murders against women!
Stop violence against women in the Americas!**