

# Ayotzinapa: Update

by Itza Carbajal, staff

Three months have passed since Roberto Lovato wrote his article calling for a public awakening in the wake of the Ayotzinapa student disappearances. September 26, 2014 marks the date of the forced disappearance of 43 student teachers from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Normal School in Ayotzinapa, a school dedicated to the training of teachers-to-be. The Ayotzinapa Normal School focused its enrollment on students coming from rural and indigenous communities. On that fateful day, the Ayotzinapa students went to the city of Iguala to protest the lack of funds for their school. After a student was murdered while protesting, the remaining students rushed into two vans in hopes that they would be able to return in one piece. They did not.



Investigations now prove that the federal and state authorities knew of the altercation between the students and the municipal police. For many, the term “FUE EL ESTADO” resounds the idea that despite all the systems set in place to protect the people, nothing worked and all that could go wrong, did. Now, the world looks on in awe as countless protests demanding the return of the students rages in cities such as Acapulco, Veracruz, Iguala, Mexico, and many more. The surviving parents and fellow classmates of the 43 have joined forces with other oppressed groups such as the Zapatistas in Chiapas and the surviving activists from the Acteal massacre. In addition, countries from around the world such as Bolivia, Cuba, Germany, France, England, China, Spain, and the U.S also have held protests reminding the Mexico government that the people demand answers.

A month ago, on December 6th, forensic teams found the charred remains of Alexander Mora, one of the 43 disappeared students. After weeks of run-around with the federal investigation team and the discovery of other mass graves, Mora’s confirmed death accelerated the movement’s search for the truth. Family members and friends gathered together to mourn his death, a reminder of the uncertainty that the lives of the other students face. Directly, the Mexican government under the leadership of President Enrique Peña Nieto refuses to provide concrete answers. In fact, the Mexican government along with national media sources have begun a relentless campaign to criminalize the disappeared students, their parents, and the countless other protesters who demand answers and accountability from government officials. Exhausting local and national measures, the movement of Ayotzinapa looks to the community for help. This past week (early January) the supporting U.S. based groups gathered outside the White House as President Nieto met with President Obama. Some hoped that President Obama

would hold Nieto accountable to the growing dissent in his country and require a response to the students’ disappearance, but as many non-mainstream media and activists groups reported, the meeting lacked substance and any decisive agreement. As a result of Nieto and his governing body’s reluctance to act, anger continues to intensify and the Mexican people look for alternatives.

As Lovato notes, the energy and drive behind the movement comes from students, their parents, and the numerous faculty members involved with the normal school. Throughout Mexico, other student groups have latched on to the struggle of Ayotzinapa as a way to contextualize their own frustrations. Through the case of Ayotzinapa, groups strive to force their government to address the growing violence from organized crime and the countless officials conspiring with them. Then there’s the profit-driven agenda to open up Mexico’s precious natural resources to foreign firms such as China and the U.S. All of which affect the working and peasant classes the most. Students such as those studying at Ayotzinapa reflect the most disenfranchised groups in Mexico – an underprivileged, rural, indigenous student population forced to fight for better conditions not just for themselves but also for those whom they live and work with. Today, the uncertainty of the students’ whereabouts and the inaction by government officials forces the world to continue to ask questions. At the same moment,

the Ayotzinapa movement,  
like the #BlackLivesMatter movement,  
races against the clock as the media  
continues to trivialize the need for  
ongoing coverage,

as is common with large corporate media who always looks to the next big story (now Je suis Charlie). The danger of forgetting is the real struggle for the movement at this moment. Ayotzinapa understands this and will stop at nothing to break the wall of silence. As part of that effort, a group of 11 individuals composed of parents, students, and faculty from the Ayotzinapa Normal House plan to tour the United States in the early part of 2015. The tour will stop at numerous cities including Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Seattle, Washington Dc, New York City and other stops totaling about 25 cities. The group will meet with communities around the country in an effort to make connections between struggles against police brutality, police impunity, and state violence against those seen as disposable and troublesome. No matter the time, the days, the months, and even the years it takes, the people will continue to fight for an answer — for it is our right to know.

As famed Italian born Argentinian musician Piero writes:

<i>Para el pueblo Lo que es del pueblo</i>	For the people what is of the people
<i>Porque el pueblo se lo ganó</i>	Because the people have won it
<i>Para el pueblo lo que es del pueblo</i>	For the people what is of the people
<i>Para el pueblo liberación.</i>	For the people liberation

<i>Estudiar era un pecado</i>	To study was a great sin
<i>Clandestino era saber</i>	It was clandestine to be knowledgable
<i>Porque cuando el pueblo sabe</i>	Because when the people know
<i>No lo engaña un brigadier</i>	A brigadier will not fool them ◆