Ayotzinapa Organizing Guide

2 years since the disappearances of the 43 September 26th
Why are we organizing?

September 26th will mark 2 years since the disappearances of 43 normalista students from Escuela Normal Rural Raúl Isidro Burgos, who were studying to be rural teachers to serve in their pueblos, where education is neglected by state resources.

In July, the families of Ayotzinapa and their allies held a strike in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These were their demands:

1. The firing and imprisonment of Tomás Zerón of the Agencia de Investigación Criminal (Federal Investigation Agency) of the Procuraduría General de la República (Attorney General of the Republic). Zerón was the material and intellectual author of the fabricated Mexican state’s official account of the disappearances of the 43 students.

2. Definition and concretion of the function of the Especial de Seguimiento. 

Update: Friday, July 31st, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights approved the special monitoring mechanism for the case of Ayotzinapa and urged the Mexican government to significantly increase its investigating efforts. Telesur, Especial de Seguimiento.

War on Drugs

The families and many civil society organizations in Mexico and the U.S. are also calling for an end to Plan Mérida, the U.S. policy of militarization and funding to the Mexican state in a plan to continue its own War on Drugs. Plan Mérida is the cause of increased repression, violence, displacement, disappearance, and death in Mexico.

To this day there is no one charged with the murder of the 6 Ayotzinapa students killed that night in Iguala. Despite evidence that the mayor of Iguala was involved, the fact that days later he resigned from his post as he and his wife went into hiding in Mexico City, and despite being discovered and arrested, they have still not been charged in the case of Ayotzinapa.

Now that the independent Argentine forensic team has been allowed to perform a second autopsy on one of the students who lost their life that night, Julio Cesar Mondragón, where they found evidence of torture, the case should be taken up by federal prosecutors rather than remaining stagnant for longer in the local court where it currently stands. The independent, expert Argentine forensic team’s detected signs of cutting on Mondragón’s face, directly contradict the official declaration by the CNDH (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos/National Human Rights Commission) that the absence of skin on his face and neck were from a fauna and that there was no human action.

These continued false official reports, the expulsion of the original independent investigative team, the torturing of witnesses, the absence of trials, the obstruction of the investigation by the Mexican government, and the involvement of federal, state, and several municipal and local police forces along with the presence of the military on the night of September 24th, 2016 are all reasons why we must continue standing in solidarity with these families in their search for truth and justice and demand for ¡Presentación con vida y castigo a los culpables!
Here are some ideas for how you can organize for September 26th. Take pictures of your action/event/mural and send them to jacki.moreira@ssdp.org so we can send them to the families so that they know we have not forgotten nor forgiven!

Demonstrations in front of Mexican Consulate or Mexican Embassy if there is one in your city.

If you choose to demonstrate outside of a Mexican Consulate or Embassy, be conscious of those who need to use those resources. Our goal is to stand in solidarity with the families, denounce the corrupt state, and demand an end to US policies that are causes of these disappearances.

-Outside the Mexican Embassy in San Salvador

-Raíces sin Fronteras light display at the US/México border
Get your University presidents, chancellors, representatives, etc. on board.

A month after the disappearances of Ayotzinapa, a student at the University of San Francisco reached out to the school’s president and the president released this letter:

Stand Against Violence

Dear Students,

This past Sunday at least 46 students were killed by a suicide bomber in Potiskum, Nigeria. Last month, students in a Teacher’s College in Iguala, Mexico were also the victims, first of kidnapping, and then of mass killing, sparking outrage and protests in Mexico and throughout the United States. And last April, more than 300 young women were kidnapped from their school in Nigeria, and while some escaped, many others remain missing.

It is no coincidence that these events happen in schools, in places where freedom of thought and personal ability combine to create opportunity for all and to raise the level of humane discourse free from violence and coercion. We are reminded by these tragedies that the privilege of our education asks us to stand up against the violence that is engulfing other parts of the world. As I said in my inaugural address, USF “will continue to be a socially engaged university, a university where every member of our community is cherished and where learning is based on a global vision of the human family and a holistic appreciation of the human person.”

Twenty-five years ago, on November 16, 1989, six Jesuits and two women who worked with them at the University of Central America, were brutally murdered by soldiers under orders from the military government, which itself was backed by billions of dollars of aid from the government of the United States. I invite you to stand against the violence and atrocities committed in Mexico, Nigeria, El Salvador, and in all places where oppression and violence stifle the lives of students and teachers who strive to repair the world.

Please join me to deepen our commitment to each other, to stand in solidarity against these recent senseless acts of violence, and to commemorate the Martyrs of El Salvador. Consider attending one, two, or all three of these events this coming Sunday evening.

Sincerely,
Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J.
President

Get your representatives to support the reduction of funds to Mexican security forces.

S3117 Committee on Appropriations

“The Committee is concerned that after providing more than $2,500,000,000 for the Mérida Initiative since 2008, the flow of illicit drugs into the United States and the number of transnational criminal organizations in Mexico have increased significantly, with few successful prosecutions of senior level drug traffickers in Mexico.” -p. 84

“Of the funds available for assistance for Mexico under this heading, 25 percent shall be withheld from obligation until the Secretary of State determines and reports to the Committee that the Government of Mexico is: thoroughly and credibly investigating and prosecuting violations of human rights in civilian courts…The Committee expects the Government of Mexico to cooperate fully with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Group of Experts investigation of the disappearance of 43 students in Guerrero in September 2014.” -p. 94

Art Installations.
Sometimes these can be more impactful than a sidewalk demonstration or a march, making sometimes a greater and longer-lasting impression. Street, wall, sidewalk paintings/murals.

-Padres y Madres de Ayotzinapa.
43+ is a message signifying the search for justice for all the disappearances in México. Since the 2006 War on Drugs there have been over 20,000 disappearances in México, almost 10,000 people being reported missing since the beginning of Enrique Peña Nieto’s presidency.

-Escuela Normal Raúl Isidro Burgos photo: Livia Radwanski 2015 (Brazil/Mexico)
Write an article/column/blog post.

If you belong to a newspaper or other publication, write about what has happened in Ayotzinapa, commemorating 2 years since the disappearances, and addressing the wider human rights violations and increased disappearances in Mexico since the onset of the drug war.

"...our solidarity is more important and needed than ever. The government has sought to officially close their investigation and expelled the independent commissioner of human rights tasked with monitoring Ayotzinapa's case because of the truth they did not allow the government to suppress. I had the privilege in going to Mexico City and met with Omar Garcia, a surviving normalista, and he said this: 'It does not matter if you are ten, forty, or one hundred. We are thankful that you still mobilize for my brothers because it assures us that we are not alone'."

-Lopez, Chris. hastalavictoriablog

Writing an article or blog post every month on the 26th is another way you can continue to support the families searching for their sons and fighting state repression and impunity.
**Campus Demonstrations.**

Empty desks with the faces of the 43 disappeared students symbolizing the repression against students in México.

- UNAM, México

-USC Berkeley, CA
Public Demonstration/Vigil.
Organizing a demonstration or vigil in a public place where your action can receive more attention, spread greater awareness.

-Dallas, Texas

-Mexico City
Organize a march.

Two students from San Diego City College organized a march to the Mexican Consulate on the International Day of Action in November of 2014, facilitating transnational activism by bringing together 400 students from local San Diego and Tijuana colleges.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6_vUaPE66I]
Street Theater Performance

In São Paulo, Brazil, a group of activists organized a street theater performance to condemn the narco-state.

São Paulo

Students preforming a street theater reenactment of the attack on September 26th, 2014 in Mexico City.

https://www.facebook.com/JOSEVENANCIOEAST/videos/1020287291375005/
For more examples of previous demonstrations:

El mundo reclama justicia para Ayotzinapa

To read the last report of the GIEI Independent Investigative Team that had been essentially expelled from Mexico in April 2016 (Spanish):

Informe II Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes GIEI