



## TRANSCRIPT

# "DISAPPEARANCES IN MEXICO: A REPORT FROM THE LEGAL TEAM FOR THE 43 STUDENTS ABDUCTED IN IGUALA"

*A Conversation With Abel Barrera*

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\* \* \*TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: BACKGROUND NOISE THROUGHOUT; ONLY TRANSCRIBED IF PARTICULARLY INTRUSIVE. Accent difficult to understand at times.\* \* \*

## ANNOUNCER:

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## SANDY COLIVER:

I'm Sandy Coliver with the Open Society Justice Initiative. Delighted to be able to welcome our guests from the Tlachinollan Center for Human Rights. We have with us Abel Barrera and we have-- Malu (PH)-- Aguilar Rodriguez. And we also are very pleased that they're accompanied by Lydia Allen, with the R.F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights, which awarded Abel a human rights award in 2010.

We're-- especially pleased because-- the Human Rights Initiative has begun supporting the Tlachinollan Center this year. And I wonder, Emily, are you there in Washington? I know that the Human Rights Initiative has asked me, in particular, to say what a pleasure it has been to work with you.

So-- I sent around information about Abel. I wanna be very brief because they do need to leave at 12:30. But I did wanna flag that Abel has just an amazing

background. He-- trained to be a Catholic priest. He's studied philosophy, humanities, in addition to theology. And then he studied anthropology at the National Faculty of Anthropology and History where he also became a professor.

He returned to his native region of Tlapa to set up the center-- to provide legal aid and human rights counseling. They've been at the thick of-- the-- the breakdown in human rights-- in the state of Guerrero. They've re-- representing the families of the 43 abducted students. So without anything further, I'd like to hear from both of you. I think we're hoping that we can start questions-- before noon.

And I think people here are-- well informed about the overall situation. We're much looking forward-- to updates and also to hearing about, in particular, what you're doing and about the threats against you-- and how you see the situation.

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So good morning. Thank you very much for having us here. For us, it's very symbolic to be here because we feel like we are covered (?) by-- that our struggle is covered (?) by all this movement that you represent-- all the commitment that you have in our country. And we are very proud to feel-- as we are part of this movement, that you are starting in your office in Mexico with the Justice Initiative.

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So as a human rights center, we-- we became 20 years old in-- in July (?). We accompany, mainly, indigenous people in the Montana (PH) region. We are around 22 colleagues-- who work in the-- in 19 municipalities in Guerrero. Our office, it's an open-door office, which every day, people from everywhere-- in these municipalities come. People who suffered discrim-- discrimination-- who are victims of the militarism and-- which is kind the essence of our work. The essence of our work is to accompany all these people who have-- no-- who suffer all these-- violations. And we are the defenders of-- of this-- situation.

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So when people come to our office, we try to document-- all the situation which are-- like, which are the main-- violations, to identify the issues. And when we identify-- an emblematic case, and when the victims feel like they-- they want to commit to their-- struggle, the-- then we start to-- what we call the comprehensive defense, which is-- when we've got (RUSTLING) (UNINTEL) of our-- areas-- the education area, the legal area, the international and the communications area.

And we continue our professional work, which-- now, it's being respect-- in all Mexico. So we have been able to accompany-- emblematic cases at the international arena. Two of them we (?) came (?) to the-- Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So Mexico is living in a complex situation. We believe that there is a governability crisis in Mexico, where the justice system has been collapsed. Mexico's justice system is famous because of how it treats the population, how-- it's based on extortions and-- and basically paybacks and in-- within the justice system.

We have a crisis of representabili-- representability as well. The people doesn't found any response from the system in-- or any response for any of their issues in-- in these kind of institutions. So the prosecutors basically discriminates every-- everyone who comes into the office and doesn't Spanish, for example, in the Montana (PH), or who-- doesn't have money to pay for-- for the work. So-- the authority doesn't give-- a proper answer to the-- the sys-- to the crisis. So what-- that (?) cause a culture of-- (OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **FEMALE VOICE:**

Disregard?

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

Disregard, yeah--

(OVERTALK)

**ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So the government answer to this-- crisis has been the-- the use of the security forces in the streets. So Calderon took out-- military to the streets. And then, as you know, all the human rights violations rised. We have-- hundred thousand-- homicides in-- in one administration. And the number of disappearance rise as well.

So the-- these security policies are based on militarization and has touched, like, every single life of all the population in Mexico. So now this population feels anger. It feels-- deception and-- and pain. We remember all the numbers of the familicides (?), all the violations against-- migrants-- and all the (UNINTEL) that has been-- continue to all these-- human rights violations.

So in the sense-- our accompaniment to the-- students of-- of the Ayotzinapa-- teaching school-- starting in 2011, when two students were killed-- when they were doing a blockade in the-- in one of the main-- highways that connected Mexico City with Acapulco, while they were-- asking for a hearing with the governor.

The-- what they were asking was mainly just to-- to sit down with the governor and to-- negotiate-- so they could open, once again-- the-- the school for the next year. You know, like, the call of applications for 147-- students that will continue to-- to go to this school. The response was the use of excessive force, of lethal force. The police came and basically opened fire against the students. So-- we started this accompaniment (COUGH) that was very close accompaniment with the students in-- in that time.

This has meant-- for us, threats-- and other kind of-- aggressions-- up to the point that one of our colleagues, Vidulfo Rosales (PH), which is the-- coordinator of the legal unit in-- in Tlachinollan-- had to leave the-- the country for three months in 2012 (INAUDIBLE)-- yeah, 2012.

**ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So-- so, yeah, up that point, we started to accompany-- the students in 2011. And we

came very close with them and we did-- a student committee and defend (?) some of the families. So when-- up to the point that we are-- close to-- send this case-- a petition of this case to the Inter-American Commission of Human Right (?) and so for the events of 2011.

So when the events of-- 26 of September in-- in this year happened-- where s-- six people died-- were killed, basically, and three of them students, and 43 more students were-- forcibly (?) disappeared-- we started to accompany the families and the students from the first day.

This was something that was already-- predicted (?) or we could see coming. So we could see coming that the-- mayor, the-- the security-- ministry of the-- of the municipality-- were colluded with the organized crime. It's something that everybody knew. It was also-- foreseeing that-- the organized crime and the authorities are colluded in-- in this region in-- in Mexico.

But what (UNINTEL) showed us was that all-- all these things-- have been completely-- exploited. I mean, it's out of control. So we have-- a situation where 43 students are-- are disappear, and then the militaries in the region didn't do anything for two hours. They have two main battalions in Iguala-- with an elite force-- which was very close to the-- where these things happened. The federal police didn't do anything. And what it means for us is that all the state-- all the state institutions were-- at least-- I mean, they-- they are-- related to the events, at least for mission (?).

All the inaction from the-- from the state, it's what-- what was covering (?). All this-- and what this process that all the state-- institutions are colluded with the organized crime. Before, we couldn't say anything. I mean, even if-- people in-- in Guerrero knew about it, because this means a death threat. I mean, a death sentence.

But-- because-- before it was very easy for us-- oh, well (UNINTEL). It was-- common for us to-- denounce a military because you knew that-- the military committed the-- the human rights violation. And then you were denouncing before the authorities that this was-- happening. Or you were denouncing-- a municipality police that were extortion (?) and you knew that this was what-- you were facing.

But you-- now, you don't know if this is the organized crime or if you are, like, denouncing somebody that is working for the organized crime. So-- while (?) it's an example of all this pain and suffering and violence that the people had to live with every day-- and this was uncovered for all the country and all the international arena. So people has now been going out to the streets and start to-- denouncing this. And they have basically losed the fear of-- of all these threats. But because of the escalation of all the situation.

## SANDY COLIVER:

So--

(OVERTALK)

**ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**SANDY COLIVER:**

Okay, yes?

**ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So-- there is a team of-- of Tlachinollan-- the-- of colleagues from Tlachinollan that are based basically in the-- in the school, who are, like, accompanying the-- the families and the students-- every day. We have seen the inconsistencies of the-- of investigations. We know that the-- (UNINTEL) office wants to close the investigation. They are moot basically because of the political pressure and not because of the-- of the claim of justice-- which means that-- we have-- we can see and-- and put down some-- some-- (UNINTEL) in the-- in the investigation and also in the searches, which are-- the main-- objective of the families who-- which it's the-- the main denounce of them, that they had to continue to look for them, alive. There is no scientific-- (FOREIGN LANGUAGE) like--

**SANDY COLIVER:**

Basis--

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

Well, scientific-- yeah, basis for-- to know that the-- th-- thesis of the attorney general's office is it's conclusive. There was one identification of one of the-- of the students, but it's not-- conclusive for-- for all the version of the-- of-- of the attorney general's office.

There is a team of-- forensic anthropologists from Argentina-- working closely with the case. And they have point out that the investigation doesn't comply with the standards-- in-- international standards for-- for disappearances. And most-- most important-- or-- or one of the-- main things that we have seen now is that there is also a campaign of-- of polarization and-- and-- not threats, but, like--

(OVERTALK)

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## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

I do not want to say that (LAUGHTER) word (UNINTEL) yeah, but that-- from-- from many authorities. Especially-- we've seen it in-- from the-- ministry of-- of-- of the army-- the navy, which to say that-- the parents were manipulated by some-- some groups that were accompany them.

We are now in-- in a very (UNINTEL)-- country, which doesn't-- which the state doesn't understand what's the claim of justice that the-- the parents and all the population is doing. And-- and we don't think that they are up to that-- standard to comply with that.

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

Thank you. A very dangerous situation, I think, and very challenging. We'll-- we'll take some questions now. And-- we'll start with Aryeh Neier who is the former president of the Open Society Foundations and now a senior advisor.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **ARYEH NEIER:**

You have-- you indicated that you are looking to the-- Inter-American Commission for Human Rights and the-- the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for-- some-- assistance. And you've indicated that-- the various governmental institutions-- not being of any-- help.

I wonder-- if you see any institution, any national institution in Mexico, that you regard as-- a significant supporter of your efforts to-- to protect human rights. That is-- the National Commission on Human Rights, at least when it started, was-- a valuable instrument-- for protecting human rights. Do you see the church as playing a role in protecting human rights? Do you see the media playing a role in-- in protecting human rights? That is-- are there national institutions that you think of as being supportive of what you're trying to do?

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So, yeah-- what we have been trying to do in-- in-- in Mexico is to gather all N.G.O.'s and all human rights movement-- organized movement-- a movement of defenders, and to call up to international standards and to international organizations, because

we don't see that there is many institutions in Mexico, within Mexico, that we have to-- to cover and to protect us. Regrettably, the National-- Commission for Human Rights has not been close to the organ-- (NOISE) organizations in Mexico. They are very far away from-- from-- from all the-- situations--

## **ARYEH NEIER:**

'Cause they started out well many years ago.

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

Yeah, it did. And-- and now the president has just changed. So he (?) has a chance to do something new. But it-- I mean, for most of organization, we have always denounced that it's an-- it's an institution that has been basically very close to the state. In the case of the church, there are some sections that are (?) very sensitive to this situation.

For example, in Acapulco, which is one of the most violent-- municipalities in Mexico, there is-- a group of priests that-- accompany victims of violence in general (?) and in Tlapa, our work is covered by the church. For us, I think, what it's-- the best measure of protection is the people itself who are very strong and who-- give us hope and who are usually more vulnerable than-- than us and who continue to struggle for justice. And this is what-- give us strength.

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

Aryeh, do you have-- a follow-up?

## **ARYEH NEIER:**

No-- you didn't say anything about the media. What has been the role of the media-- with these matters?

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So-- yeah, in the-- but in the media, there is a sector basically from the press, like the printed press, which are-- very committed to human rights in-- in general. We have seen-- many good pieces and very deep pieces that in this situation, in (UNINTEL) by



which have helped to-- to get more conscious outside in the-- in the society and to-- point out which are the main issues in this-- in this case-- which are very professional.

But then you go to, like, some other kind of-- media like-- like-- TV and radio, which you have the official version, which are media that-- have helped the state to-- attack the defenders, to promote this idea of-- of-- of the defenders being-- some kind of-- threat to their governability. But we have very good allies in the-- in the media, in the-- in the press media-- in the printed media, and-- and also the international media now has to-- has done-- a lot of good-- work in-- in the-- in the case of (INAUDIBLE).

## **ARYEH NEIER:**

Thank you.

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

Thank you. I'll turn now to-- questions here in New York, and then I'll go to D.C., and then on the phones. And if you can ask your questions in Spanish-- those of you who can, and then just summarize in English for us? I'll start with-- with Mark, if you'll come to the table?

## **MARK:**

Sure. I'll just-- I'll shout.

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

Okay.

## **MARK:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

So my question was about-- President Pena Nieto's recommendations-- in particular-- to substitute local police for state-level police-- and with the g-- the level of corruption that exists in-- at all levels, if he thinks that this is-- a solution for reform.

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:

So, yeah, this is not a new idea. The-- this comes from-- basically from the last administration, which-- tried to-- create-- a unique force from-- that thinks that-- things can be done from up to them-- where-- and that this will change actually the situation. For us, this is not the most-- assertive-- idea.

These kind of-- images that are portrayed of-- a unique force that will be from elite-- and this will come with this-- big, new technology and this-- *Rambo* idea of-- of-- of what is the-- the police does not really build trust-- which is the most important part. And-- it's not a poli-- it will not be a police that will be very close to the society. So I think what-- (THROAT CLEARING) what should be done is the-- a complete reform of the police forces, a democratization of the police forces.

This will not mean to-- to change the local forces for-- a unique and federal force. That does not be-- that will not be understanding of the situation within the local situations. This doesn't mean that you should not change the current situation. I mean, this is important. It's-- it's-- most of the municipality polices are corrupted.

But what has to be done is-- a security policy that is more like coming from the citiz-- citizenship (?). That it will be built from the community and—Abel mentioned the-- the situation in indigenous communities where police forces are named within the community and have some mechanisms of accountability and response. So this will-- this model exists.

## SANDY COLIVER:

Very interesting. Thank you. We have-- Lydia, could we have--

## LYDIA ALLEN:

Yeah.

## SANDY COLIVER:

--an extra five minutes?

## LYDIA ALLEN:

Yeah, definitely.

## SANDY COLIVER:

I'd like to take a question from D.C. and then I'll come back to Sanjay. Are there any

questions in D.C.? Well, while you're thinking about it-- let me take Sanjay and-- and--

**SANJAY PATEL:**

My question was actually the same as Mark's--

**SANDY COLIVER:**

Oh.

**SANJAY PATEL:**

--but the follow-up question I do have is-- which locality-- is there this close relationship between indigenous populations and police? Where has this worked in Mexico?

**SANDY COLIVER:**

And that's Sanjay Patel of the public health program.

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So the comm-- the community police-- comes from 19 years ago-- in the Costa Montana (PH) region where we're mainly working-- as an alternative model of security. It's mainly based in five municipalities in-- in Guerrero. And it has been working because the community-- tissue, it's-- it's very strong.

I mean, the-- the-- the assembly-- of all the community names, the police-- and the-- these police have to-- be accountable for all their actions. In addition, this-- like, the town's police, and they all are coordinated in a big network, which do-- a diagnosis of the situation within the whole region. So they know where-- where the-- the threats and-- and the risk come from.

In addition, the-- the authorities that-- like, kind of the others, th-- th-- they-- they investigate-- the-- the crimes that the-- persons that are detained-- committed. Then, if-- if they come to their-- jurisdiction, basically, they are-- they sanction them. And then the-- the person who's detained comes into a whole process of what they call reeducation, which is basically that they do community service-- in some of the communities.

And then they-- that's during the morning. And then, during the afternoon, they get-- talks or chats with the elders of the community. So they can-- change their-- their-- their perspective and then they are detained. And-- this whole system, it's-- actually recognized by the constitution in Guerrero. So it's-- it's an indigenous kind of form of-- of alternative security model.

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

Thank you. So please--  
(OVERTALK)

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

--introduce yourself. And-- and I'm also gonna-- after you ask your question, I'll ask Ina (PH), and those'll be our-- our final questions.

## **FEMALE VOICE:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **FEMALE VOICE:**

I just wanted to ask, like, what can we do-- here to support you? Or what can be done at a global level to support you, in addition to what you already proposed at a national level in Mexico?

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

And Ina (PH), do you want to add a question or should we come back to you?

**INA:**

Yes, I-- I would like to make two comments and put Abel a question, if-- if possible. I don't know if this is the right moment.

**ALISON HILLMAN:**

Sandy, I wonder if I could jump in, too, now? Apologies.

**SANDY COLIVER:**

Okay, sure--  
(OVERTALK)

**ALISON HILLMAN:**

--this is Alison from D.C.

**SANDY COLIVER:**

Okay. Why don't you-- you jump in and then we'll-- we'll get responses, and then we'll get Ina (PH) as the final comment. So, please.

**ALISON HILLMAN:**

Great.

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

Basically (Alison Hillman from the Human Rights Initiative) I asked-- they've been working through the Inter-American system. What do they hope, as a response, from the Inter-American system? And what do they hope that they (?) will respond, given that the-- that the police forces are so-- tied with the (UNINTEL)?

**ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

**M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So, yes, I think-- with-- this current situation in Ayotzinapa has bring a lot of--

actions and different activities (?). And so what we think it's important, it's to-- to take this-- analysis and to bring them up and bring them to the-- to-- to the public. So, for example, that the recommendation of the-- group of international experts that will come to Mexico from-- the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, which-- or will be appointed by the Inter-American Commission Human Rights, that to-- demand the state that they will actually-- take this recommendation and implement them and not just-- to be one more recommendation to Mexico.

To continue with the-- search-- of the students-- because-- the parents have been very spoken out. They-- they-- the attorney general's office and the state has not continued to do the search-- especially after they say that the-- that the students were killed in the-- in this-- part of Cocula.

And also to spoke out for the defenders of-- in Mexico-- we need guarantees (?) to do our work and to (UNINTEL) and-- we think it's very important. So the international community to-- point out this to Mexico. And finally, to-- to call for the-- for the state to-- to do-- a real confrontation to organized crime, but not just with security measures, but-- with some kind of policy that actually-- include the citizenship and to-- to-- yeah, to make some real changes.

With regard to the inter-American system-- question-- we have been-- well, the first thing that we did af-- after the disappearances was to-- request-- precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission. So they were granted-- basically with short notice. It was, like, after ten days, I think. So in this context, we asked the state to call for-- technical assistance from the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.

There is only two cases before that, that have been actually-- having one, I think, in Chile and on in Mexico for the-- Dinochos (PH) case. And what we were aiming was that they basically-- to have some kind of-- output from outside, from independent experts, on the-- on the investigations, and to-- also to make sure that all this part of the-- of the case was covered by the precautionary measures because-- what we thought was that if, when the international pressure (?) and international (UNINTEL) comes down, then we need something that-- to actually continue to monitor the actions of-- of the state.

For us, it's very important. We think it's-- it's a challenge. I mean-- what we have been hearing is that-- maybe the state will not comply with that, and as-- it will be something that will be-- covered, basically, in resources, by the states. This will-- could-- undermine their capacity. But I mean, that's why we need that-- also. Everybody who use the inter-American system can support this idea because it's-- it's something that could make a good president for-- for this.

And basically what we are including is-- so that independent experts could look at how the state is doing in the searches and-- if they are really using all the resources that they have and how it's-- how it's done-- in compliance with international standards.

Also-- basically, if the investigation's actually looking at the relation between the

organized crime and the authorities and if they are really exhausting all the-- investigative lines. If they are using all the technology that it's-- that it's possible for looking at the-- at the students. And also if they are giving all the-- facilities for the forensic work to be done, and specifically for the independent experts.

And last, but-- which we think it was very important in the context of the inter-American system, I mean, not just for the-- for the-- for the case and specifically with-- the-- the group who do some good recommendations, in terms of-- the structural causes (?) and-- and the structural challenges, in terms of disappearances in Mexico, which are-- I mean-- and these will help us to put in perspective the magnitude of the crisis in Mexico, which is, like-- it's big.

I mean, officially recognize 22,000-- disappearance in-- in the last six to eight-- eight years. I mean-- so then this-- I think it's the biggest challenge for-- for the inter-American system-- in this case. I mean, to actually make sure that the-- the-- this group of-- of experts could actually come up with recommendations that go through the whole thing in-- in-- in Mexico, but also that Mexico will accept them and start to do something with some (?) of this (?).

## SANDY COLIVER:

Thank you. Fascinating. Ina Zoon is our colleague with the Justice Initiative in Mexico. Maybe some final comments?

## INA ZOON:

Hi. I-- I just wanted to make two comments about the investigation. The first one is that the-- at the first moment, the authorities-- took a position that the disappearances of the students are exclusively the responsibility of organized crime-- and until the press conference of the general prosecutor of Mexico.

When the general prosecutor indicated that-- that (UNINTEL) an involvement of municipal police. And at that moment, the general prosecutor said, literally, "This is a typical case of enforced disappearance." Later, there were some notes in the press that passed, overlooked, mainly, that the students were taken to the police station and then they disappeared from the police station. But nothing more was said.

And this week, *Proceso*-- published some (?) materials that the federal police was in fact monitoring all the movements of the students, from the moment they went out from Ayotzinapa to Iguala, which proves, you know, that at-- at least, if not the direct involvement, proved that the federal police was, you know, knowing and-- and contemplating, without doing absolutely anything, what was going on.

To this one, we need to add, you know, what Abel already was saying, that the soldiers (the army) did not react, although they had troops (elite troops) and they were aware of what is going on in Iguala. Now-- one of our consultants made the-- information request through transparency law, asking for the public version of the

investigation, up to date.

And-- and-- and using the-- article of the transparency law that's saying that-- the general prosecutor office should make public-- the investigation when it's about serious (?) human rights violations. The response of (UNINTEL) that we received yesterday, it was that all the investigation will be in reserved (?) for 12 years because this is not about human rights violations and this is not about crime against humanity. I have to mention that we--  
(OVERTALK)

## INA ZOON:

--didn't ask anything about crimes against humanity.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## INA ZOON:

I-- I really-- I need to (INAUDIBLE) something about the measure because I think that our colleagues in-- in-- Justice Initiative needs to understand that. But the (UNINTEL) measures that-- that-- Pena Nieto proposed, they are (UNINTEL) in-- in legislative initiatives that are, right now, in the congress, which are hugely important. They are the law on (?) the independent prosecutor office-- modification and the-- reform of the criminal justice system that-- senators-- the-- M.P.'s, they have the order to pass it on fast track, which are not discussed with anybody and they are not-- improving the situation but is-- undermining some of the things that were achieved until now.

## SANDY COLIVER:

Ina, thanks for those comments. Well, we'll have to end it there. Was there-- a last comment? We really are short of time now. But was there something that I heard from D.C. that felt that you needed to say? Fine. Yes, we'd love to hear your-- your-- your final reactions and recognize that the time is short.

## M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:

Yeah. No, I just-- before he says-- the final thing, I just have to say something that Ina said; that it's very important. I mean-- the investigation is not open for enforced disappearances. It's-- within the attorney general's office at the federal level. It's open for organized crime and-- with modality of kidnapping. So it's actually nobody (?) it's being prosecuted for-- for disappearances, not even the 22-- police that were detained a long time ago, and the other 20 police from Cocula that are already on the



process. It's (INAUDIBLE).

## **ABEL BARRERA:**

(FOREIGN LANGUAGE NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **M. AGUILAR RODRIGUEZ:**

So, just to-- end up-- we think the authorities will-- are aiming to-- to disconnect this relationship between all the levels of-- of responsibility. They want to just point out the responsibility of the mayor, the local security-- security ministry, and the-- and the local polices. What-- they want to say that this is an isolated case-- and that there is no structural kind of-- of causes of this.

What we said, it's that this is a problem of all the (NOISE) state-- all the Mexican state. That this are the responsibility of the three levels, because of omissions or collusion or corruption or whatever, but because they-- they knew what was the situation in-- in-- in Iguala. Iguala, it's an expression of many other places in Mexico-- many other places in Guerrero-- where impunity covers-- the organized crime and the authorities-- at the same time-- where the army's used as-- a mean of-- social contention and not to actually-- act against organized crime-- and where-- militarization has just-- serve (RUSTLING) as-- as-- as an excuse to-- to use-- against the-- the population.

We don't think there is a political will to actually go deep into all the responsibilities of all the three levels. They just want to-- continue to point out it's the municipality-- authorities. And for us, we think this is the-- the biggest challenge for Mexico now, specifically because there is no credibility on the authorities anymore. And-- and-- Ayotzinapa has to become to be a turning-- a no-turning-back point-- in this-- in this sense.

## **SANDY COLIVER:**

Thank you. Thank you-- Malu (PH) for translating and for all your insights. Thank you, Abel. It's-- it's-- it's-- a rare opportunity and-- a privilege to hear this firsthand account. I know that you're running to the next-- you can see we have many more questions to ask you. And maybe we can continue the conversation in other fora. Thank you.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

\* \* \*END OF TRANSCRIPT\* \* \*