

## Release of Ayotzinapa suspect triggers probe into prosecutors, judiciary

*Mexico News Daily, September 4, 2019*

### 'El Gil' believed to be one of the main perpetrators in the disappearance of 43 students in 2014



The release by a judge of a key suspect in the disappearance of 43 students in Guerrero in 2014 will be subject to a federal investigation.

The federal government will ask the Attorney General's Office (FGR) and the Federal Judiciary Council (CJF) to investigate officials and judges responsible for the release of the suspect and many others in the case, human rights undersecretary Alejandro Encinas said on Wednesday.

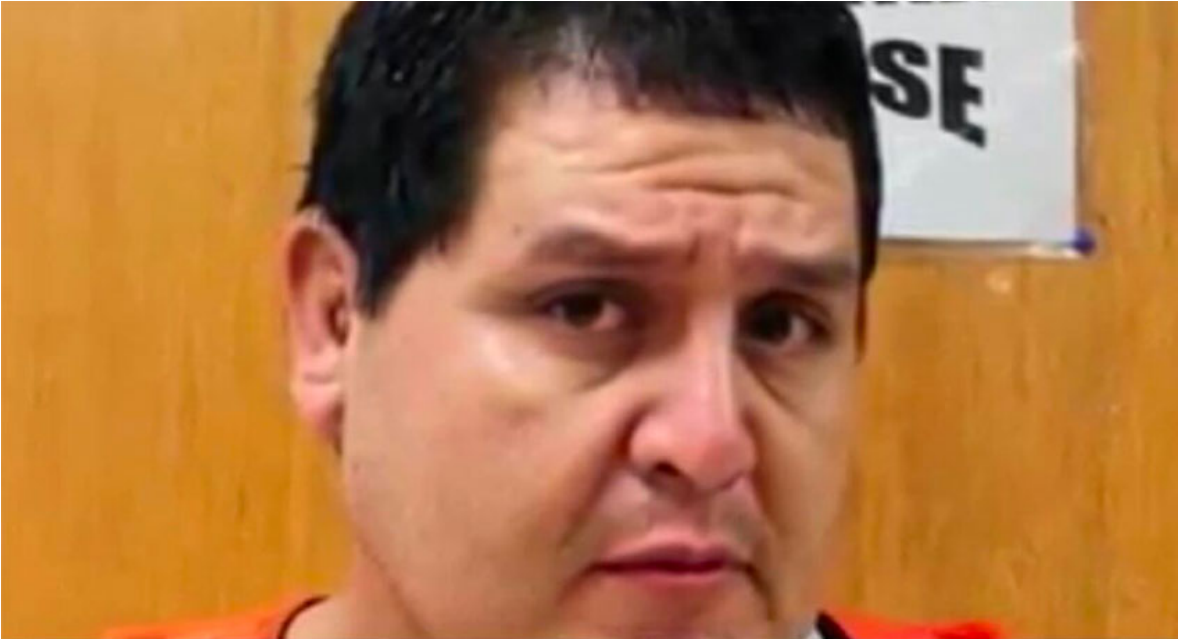
Encinas' announcement comes a day after news broke that a federal judge acquitted and ordered the release of [Gildardo López Astudillo](#), who was allegedly the plaza chief in Iguala of the Guerreros Unidos gang at the time of the students' disappearance.

Prosecutors who served during the previous government alleged that López Astudillo ordered the abduction of the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College students after mistaking them for members of a rival gang.

He was arrested in Taxco in September 2015.

Encinas told reporters at the presidential press conference that on instructions of President López Obrador, the government will request that the FGR and CJF

investigate officials and judges who may have acted illegally in relation to the release of Ayotzinapa suspects.



Ayotzinapa suspect 'El Gil.'

More than 140 people were arrested, many of whom were suspected members of the Guerreros Unidos gang, but more than 50 have been released.

Santiago Aguirre, director of the Prodh human rights center and a lawyer for families of the victims, said on Tuesday that among the suspects who have been released are six people accused of ordering the disappearances.

Encinas charged that “instead of guaranteeing the right to truth and justice for the victims,” judges and officials have favored “silence and impunity.”

The undersecretary said that the release of López Astudillo, who faces no other charges, set “a very grave precedent.”

“It’s an acquittal of one of the main perpetrators of the crime of forced disappearance,” Encinas said, adding that the ruling could be used to release more than 50 other people who are in custody as a result of their alleged involvement in the students’ disappearance.

They include the former mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca Velázquez, and his wife, María de los Angeles Pineda, [who have spent almost five years in jail awaiting trial](#) on charges related to the case.



The 43 students who disappeared September 14, 2014 in Guerrero.

According to the judge who released López Astudillo, much of the evidence presented against him by prosecutors of the former government was obtained illegally.

The United Nations said in a 2018 report that [34 people were tortured in connection with the investigation](#) into the disappearance of the 43 students, while [a video showing the torture of a suspect](#) was published on YouTube in June.

In November 2018, [a federal judge ruled](#) that 83 statements made by the majority of people accused of involvement in the crime must be omitted from the Ayotzinapa investigation due to evidence that their human rights were violated.

According to the former government’s “historical truth,” the 43 students were intercepted by corrupt municipal police in Iguala on September 26, 2014 while traveling on buses they had commandeered to attend a protest march in Mexico City.

The police then handed them over to members of the Guerrero Unidos gang who killed the students, burned their bodies in a municipal dump and scattered their ashes in a nearby river, according to the investigation.

However, the former government’s conclusion was widely questioned both within Mexico and internationally and authorities were heavily criticized for their handling of the case.

Many people suspect that the army played a role in the students' disappearance and presumed deaths.

Encinas said today that the "poorly-named 'historical truth' was built based on simulation, fabrication of evidence [and] torture."

Two days after he was sworn in as president, [López Obrador signed a decree to create a super commission](#) to conduct a new investigation into the Ayotzinapa case but to date no new findings have been publicly disclosed.

Source: [El Financiero](#) (sp), [Associated Press](#) (en)