

Release of Iguala police sign of justice system's 'rotten and wretched state'

Mexico News Daily, September 16, 2019

Judge slammed for making 'a mockery of justice' by releasing 21 officers suspected of complicity



The release of 21 municipal police officers detained in connection with the disappearance of 43 students in Iguala, Guerrero, in 2014, is a sign of the “wretchedness and rot” of Mexico’s justice system, according to human rights undersecretary Alejandro Encinas.

He told a press conference on Sunday that the decision of Judge Samuel Ventura Ramos to absolve the officers is an “affront to the victims, to their parents and to justice.

“It’s a mockery of justice because it feeds silence and complicity . . .” Encinas added.

The undersecretary also said that the judge’s ruling is an affront to the investigative work currently being carried out by the federal government to determine exactly what happened to the 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers College.

Encinas said that Ventura didn’t follow a legal precedent that establishes that in cases where evidence was obtained through the use of torture, people accused of committing a crime must be subjected to a new investigative process rather than being acquitted.



Undersecretary Encinas: judge has made a mockery of justice.

The judge ordered the officers' release on the grounds that statements they made to prosecutors in the previous government were obtained by illegal means, including torture.

Encinas accused Ventura of hypocrisy, stating that while he exonerated the police because of the torture to which they were subjected, he didn't assign any responsibility to those who allegedly committed the torture.

The judge's ruling gave precedence to the interests of the alleged perpetrators of crime over the rights of its victims, the undersecretary charged.

"The judge interpreted the law with a lot of laxity . . . He didn't impart justice and caused serious damage to the search for truth," Encinas said.

The previous government's "historical truth" – that the students were intercepted by corrupt municipal police and handed over to the Guerreros Unidos crime gang who killed them and burned their bodies in a municipal dump – has been widely rejected.

President López Obrador's government has [established a truth commission](#) to conduct a new investigation into the case.

Encinas' criticism of Judge Ventura and the Mexican justice system came a week and a half after he slammed the same judge for [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.

Declaring that the release of the key suspect set "a very grave precedent," Encinas announced on September 4 that the government would ask the Attorney General's Office (FGR) and the Federal Judiciary Council to investigate officials and judges responsible for granting freedom to López Astudillo and others who were arrested in connection with the case.

On Sunday, Encinas applauded the decision of the FGR to launch investigations into former attorney general Jesús Murillo Karam – who first announced the "historical truth" – as well as former Criminal Investigation Agency chief Tomás Zerón and former Ayotzinapa investigation chief José Aarón Pérez.

They are "ex-officials who must be held accountable by the Attorney General's Office," he said.

Source: [Milenio](#) (sp)