

NEWS LETTER

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On October 19, the Mexican society was informed of the regrettable assassination of the tireless human rights defender, Digna Ochoa y Plácido. Before this shameful event, the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights and the Mexican Federation of Public Organizations for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights made known to the public opinion the following:

PRONOUNCEMENT

In addition to the deep and painful unrest caused by the death of any person in full exercise of his capacities, the murder of DIGNA OCHOA Y PLÁCIDO casts the public into a new state of total indignation because, with her activities and talent, she served people who were violated in their Human Rights.

Never before has the world been so clearly divided between those who strive to establish peace, public welfare, the development of the nations, and those who seek for the prevalence, at all costs, of the innumerable facets which characterize the culture of death.

The imbalance is large and that is why society cries out for an ever greater number of citizens to work for the common good, bravely and without fear of the truth, a decision which is not easy to take, but which once accepted by someone, must be protected by the State and his integrity must be guaranteed so as to have firm pillars where it can support its permanent progress. In the case of DIGNA OCHOA, her existence was not safeguarded and the defense for Human Rights lost a valuable element, however, it is time to act seriously. We want the circumstances of this crime to be investigated exhaustively, for detailed information to be given regarding the progress --or stagnation-- of these investigations, and for her death not to remain unpunished. We do not want any more martyrs of democracy, we want a country in which it is possible to build in favor of better causes.

It is in this sense, and due to such regrettable events, that today the Directors Committee of the Mexican Federation of Public Organizations for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights launches this PRONOUNCEMENT.

Ninfa Delia Domínguez Leal
President of the Mexican Federation of Public Organizations for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights.

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández
President of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights.

RECOMENDACIONES

Recommendation No. 24/2001
October 21, 2001
Case: Violations to the Human Rights of the inmates of the Center for Social Rehabilitation in Mérida, State of Yucatán.

Authority Addressed: Governor of the State of Yucatán.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Seminar on Human Rights and Health

The Mexican National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH, in its Spanish acronym), in collaboration with the La Salle Medical School, on October 1, conducted the "Seminar on Human Rights and Health", in the Auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine of the La Salle University.

In this event, the following topics were covered: Institutions for the defense of medical services users, the right to health protection and Human Rights, and doctor's professional responsibility and health professions. Not only experts but also officers from the different health organisms took part; among others: Dr. Julio Frenk Mora, Secretary of Health; Raúl Valadéz García, MA, Dean of the La Salle University; Senator Elías Miguel Moreno, Chairman of the Health Commission in the Senate; Congresswoman María Eugenia Galván Antillón, Chairwoman of the Health Commission in Congress; Dr. Carlos Tena Tamayo, head of the National Commission for Medical Arbitrage, and Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández, President of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights.

During this act and before professionals of medicine, legislators and authorities of the health sector, Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández pointed out that the Mexican State is obliged to comply with the rights recognized in the Mexican Constitution, in international treaties and other laws in health matters.

Likewise, the head of the Mexican National Commission stated that there is enormous public attention towards which are the efforts of the Mexican State in health matters over the last years, and towards the steps taken by the government to fully review the National Health System, with the aim of broadening and improving the services in the Mexican hospital network.

Lastly, the Mexican Ombudsman said the National Commission and the State Human Rights Commissions, in addition to disseminating information on the

right to health protection and the mechanisms to make this effective, are committed to informing the health institutions on the observations regarding deficient practices which damage this constitutional guarantee, as well as the corresponding proposals to remedy this situation.

Annual Cycle of Conferences and Round Tables: Democratic Transition and Human Rights Protection

The Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, in collaboration with the Law Faculty of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM in its Spanish acronym), during the month of October held four roundtables.

The first, celebrated on October 1, dealt with "The Human Rights of Longevous Mexicans" and included the participation of Dr. Henri Jouval, representative of the Pan-American Health Organization (PHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in México; Dr. Agustín Lara Esqueda, Director of the Program for Adults and Old Aged People belonging to the Ministry of Health, and Marcelo Fernández Ocampo, Director General of the "Luz" Project. The second roundtable, on October 4, was devoted to "The Administration of Justice and Human Rights". The speakers were: Dr. Eduardo Alfonso Guerrero Martínez, Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice for the Federal District; Paulina Vega González, Coordinator of the Program for Research and Legislative Proposals of the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights, and Alberto Begné Guerra, Director General of Arcana Magazine.

Moreover, the third roundtable, held on October 11, was devoted to the subject "The International Criminal Court", and the following people participated: Joaquín González Casanova, researcher at the Institute for Legal Research belonging to the UNAM; Socorro Flores, Director of International Law at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Gautier Mignot, First Secretary of the French Embassy to México. Lastly, the fourth roundtable, celebrated on October 25, dealt with the "Application of Indicators for Human Rights" and the speakers were: Rocío Mondragón Pérez, consultant to the Presidency of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Data, and Dr. Alejandro Aguirre from El Colegio de México.

Finally, at the request of the Juárez Hospital of México, on October 31, a roundtable was held on "The Rights of User's of Medical Services and Doctors' Rights", in which the following took part: Dr. Sergio García Ramírez, Board Member of the Mexican National Commission; Octavio Casa Madrid Mata, from the National Commission for Medical Arbitration Antonio Rendón Tavera, M.D., Deputy Director for Health at the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA, in its Spanish acronym), and Francisco Ruíz Maza, M.D., Chief of Nephrology in the Spanish Hospital.

Except for extraordinary factors, as took place on the 31st of October, the cycle of conferences and roundtables are held every Thursday at 18:00 hours in the Auditorium "Dr. Eduardo García Maynez" of the "Antonio Caso" Library in the Faculty of Law, UNAM.

Training Courses

The National Commission for Human Rights, following the spirit promoted by the institution of the Ombudsman to disseminate the study, teaching and diffusion of Human Rights, during the month of October, 2001, undertook 116 activities related to Human Rights.

Personnel belonging to the training area of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights gave 11 workshops, 21 workshop courses, six conferences and, in collaboration with the Autonomous University of Durango, imparted the module "Educational Innovation and Learning in Human Rights" to the academic personnel of the University.

In attention to the request of the Institute for Security and Social Services for State Workers (ISSSTE, in its Spanish acronym), on different occasions, gave courses on "Children's Rights", addressing parents. With the organization "Cáritas Bienestar del Adulto Mayor, I.A.P.", in the Federal District, carried out the "Second Day for the Rights of the Elderly, for elderly adults and, lastly, in coordination with the Regional Cooperation Center for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, held the international meeting "Permanent Education for Peace, Human Rights, Equality and Gender", addressing members and collaborators of Non Governmental Organizations in México.

Likewise, it carried out different training activities with several organizations among which representatives of the Human Rights Commissions for the States of Jalisco, Nuevo León, Michoacán, Querétaro, Durango, Zacatecas, Nayarit; with the Chairwoman of the Federation of Public Organisms for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights; with representatives of NGOs such as the organization "Primero Texcoco al Amparo del Menor, A.C.", and with representatives of NGOs in the State of Querétaro. Moreover, training work was coordinated with representatives of the Community Development Center "Juan Diego, I.A.P."; members of the Autonomous University of Nuevo León and the Technological Institute of Monterrey; representatives of the organization "Desarrollo Integral del Individuo A.C."; the Human Rights Network "Todos los Derechos para Todos"; representatives of the organization "Sin Fronteras"; the National Institute for Indigenous Affairs, and, finally, members of the Office for the Representation of Indigenous Peoples belonging to the Mexican Presidency.

The subjects of the training activities were varied, among which: "Basic Human Rights Aspects", "Education in Human Rights and Education for Peace", "Evolution, Concept and Basis of Human Rights", "Permanent Education for Peace", "Human Rights and Equality of Gender", "Human Rights and the Promotion of its Values in the Family", "Basic Course of Human Rights", "Human Rights, Religious Tolerance and Cultural Diversity", "Women's Human Rights", "Human Rights and Domestic Violence", "Youth and Human Rights", "The Rights of Young People", "Boys' and Girls' Rights", "Human Rights of the Elderly", "The Human Rights of Migrants, Women and Children", "Domestic Violence and Women's Rights", "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples", "Mediation as an Alternative to Solve Controversies in Family Crises", "Human Rights and Vulnerable Groups", "The Rights of Migrants on the South and North Borders", "The Rights of Childhood", "The Rights of People with HIV or Aids", "Medical Ethics, Legal and Doctors' Responsibility", "Organization and Functioning of the CNDH", "Basic Aspects of Human Rights and the Use of Firearms", "Criteria of Activities on the Use of Strength and Firearms in the Protection of Human Rights", and "Formation of Human Rights Promoters".

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mexican National Commission Takes Part in International Ombudsman Institute Board Meeting

The annual meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) Board of Directors took place in Seoul, Korea, from October 29 to 31, 2001.

During these days, the 21 members that make up the I.O.I. Board of Directors discussed financial affairs, including: affiliation and membership fees, reform and appeal of membership committees, the state of publications, attacks on the Ombudsman's independence and safety, coordination and cooperation between the Institute and the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, among many others.

The representatives of the regions of Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America presented their respective report of activities carried out during the last year, in which they pointed out the problems, steps taken, seminars, plans for conferences and workshops, measures to promote the concept of the Ombudsman, future activities, as well as the creation of new offices in the region.

At the meeting it was announced that Lewis N. Klar, Ombudsman of Ontario, Canadá, was to be the new I.O.I. Executive Secretary, replacing Mr. Daniel Jacoby in the post.

Lastly, the work plan for the celebration of the VIII I.O.I. International Conference, which will be held in Quebec City, Canadá, in 2004, was presented for the consideration of the attendees.

The Mexican National Commission, as on previous occasions, promised to continue translating the I.O.I. bulletin into Spanish, in addition to other articles of interest for I.O.I. members.

Annual Conference of the United States Ombudsman Association is Attended by Mexican National Commission

From October 3 to 5, an officer from the CNDH Executive Secretary's Office took part in the work of the 22 Annual Conference of the United States Ombudsman Association in Concord, New Hampshire, USA.

"The different facets of the Ombudsman" was the central topic of the Conference, and issues dealt with included the making of reports of the offices of the Ombudsman, conflict solving, and the evaluation of these offices.

In addition to the U.S. Ombudsman, this meeting was attended by representatives of the offices of the Ombudsman of Australia, Canada, Spain, Israel and Mexico. It is worth mentioning that, due to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York City and Washington, an important part of the Congress was devoted to the work of the Ombudsman in times of emergency.

PUBLICATIONS

Gaceta, the National Commission for Human Rights' official monthly publication, No. 133, corresponding to the month of August, 2001.

La Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos [The Mexican Constitution], (third edition), Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, Mexico, October, 2001. Book.

Recomendación General 1/2001. Derivada de las prácticas de revisiones indignas a las personas que visitan centros de reclusión estatales y federales en la República Mexicana, 19 de junio de 2001 [General Recommendation 1/2001. Derived from the practice of degrading inspections to people visiting state and federal confinement centers in Mexico, June 19, 2001], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, October, 2001.

Recomendación General 2/2001. Sobre la práctica de las detenciones arbitrarias, 19 de junio de 2001 [General Recommendation 2/2001. On the practice of arbitrary detentions, June 19, 2001], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, October, 2001

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