

NEWS LETTER

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X Anniversary

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TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEXICAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

(June 6, 2000) Due to the circumstances in which millions of Mexicans are living, we consider that this is no time for celebration when:

Undocumented Mexican immigrants are being victimized over the border.

Thousands of our citizens are being humiliated by overbearing authorities and the Rule of Law remains wishful thinking.

Men and women are victims of impunity due to an ineffective system of justice which causes the armed forces to undertake the functions of policing some areas of the country.

Millions of our compatriots are facing all types of deficiencies and lack the minimum conditions for enjoying a decent life.

At the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights we commemorate this date as a day for reflection and solidarity with all our fellow citizens whose fundamental rights are still not a reality.

We renew our commitment to the defense of human rights, the Rule of Law, the dignity of the individual, tolerance and a society that demands more of the National Commission.

José Luis Soberanes

Major national problems with regard to Human Rights and their possible solutions.

On June 24, 2000, the national meeting of Public Organisms for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights was held in the headquarters of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH in its Spanish acronym), the aim being to draw up a document to be handed to the next Federal Government for its consideration in defining the National Agenda and a State policy on Human Rights.

The meeting - which was called Major national problems with regard to Human Rights and their possible solutions - was attended by the chairpersons of the State Commissions and Attorneys' Offices who made proposals to solve these problems and joint schemes for work on this subject.

Under the chairmanship of Dr. Soberanes, President of the CNDH, the heads of the four visitorships and the Technical and Executive Secretaries, the chairpersons of the Public Organisms for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights were informed of the result of four regional meetings, held on the initiative of the CNDH's program "Major national problems with regard to Human Rights".

They were also given a General Overview of the subjects discussed at the four regional meetings (Oaxaca, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí and Chihuahua) so that they could analyze them and make their relevant comments.

Dr. Leonel Armenta, General Coordinator of the Chairmanship of the CNDH, as well as of the four above-mentioned regional meetings, pointed out that these meetings "made it possible to have closer contact with the Ombudsmen of the different states, a progressive unification of criteria and policies in order to deal with common problems and find a solution to them".

Among the main problems mentioned by the state Ombudsmen were the insufficiency of budgets which prevent the strengthening of the work of the Human Rights Commissions, the lack of political will on the part of numerous authorities to accept and fulfill their recommendations and the inconsistent training and professionalization of the members of the police forces in charge of preventing crime.

This project started with Dr. Soberanes' invitation to the 32 Human Rights Commissions and Attorneyships in Mexico to participate by contributing their opinions and proposals on the subject.

The response was extraordinary, which reflects the spirit of collaboration and unity existing among the Human Rights institutions that go to make up the Non-Jurisdictional System for the Protection of such rights in our country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No. 3/200

June 13, 2000

Case: Refutation measure brought by Arturo Huerta Magallanes

Authority responsible: Attorney General for Justice in the State of Coahuila.

Recommendation No. 4/200

June 19, 2000

Case: Acts of violence which took place in the months of October and November, 1999, at the Tabasco's Center for Social Readaptation (CRESET in its Spanish acronym), in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco.

Authority responsible: The Governor of the State of Tabasco.

Recommendation No. 5/2000

June 27, 2000

Case: Maria Isabel Dominguez Carpio.

Authorities responsible: The Attorney General of the Republic and the Attorney General for Justice in the State of Morelos.

OFFICERS

President

José Luis Soberanes

First Visitor

Víctor Manuel Martínez Bullé-Goyri

Second Visitor

Raúl Plascencia Villanueva

Third Visitor

José Antonio Bernal Guerrero

Fourth Visitor

Leoncio Lara Saenz

Executive Secretary

Francisco Olguín Uribe

Technical Secretary of the Council

María del Refugio González

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Francisco Olguín Uribe appointed Executive Secretary of the CNDH

On the first of June, Dr. José Luis Soberanes appointed Francisco Olguín Uribe as Executive Secretary of the Mexican National Commission.

Francisco Olguín has a degree in Public Administration and Political Science from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and studied a master's degree in Political Science of El Colegio de México.

He has been a member of the Mexican foreign service since 1977 and has held various posts in Mexican diplomatic missions in Austria, England, Canada, France and the European Union.

He has taught Political Science, History of Political Thought, Economics; Statistics; Applied Mathematics; and Political, Economic and Social Problems of Mexico at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Panamerican University. Furthermore, he has published various articles on international matters and finance. He was decorated with the "Victoria Order" (United Kingdom) and the "Légion d'Honneur" (France).

Cycle of lectures and round tables on "The prevention of violence, attention to vulnerable groups and Human Rights".

During the month of May, the cycle of lectures and round tables was devoted to "Patients' Human Rights".

On this occasion, the following persons took part in the round tables: Dionisio J. Kaye, professor at the ITAM, with the paper on "Human Rights and the health care services"; the member of Parliament Francisco Javier Serna Alvarado, from the Health Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District, on "The rights of users of the health care services in the Federal District"; Dr. Horacio García, officer from the ISSSTE, on "Clinical research and patients' rights"; Dr. Luis Enrique Soto Ramírez, from the National Institute of Nutrition, on "The rights of HIV patients"; Dr. María Esther Lozano, from the Mexican Institute for Social Security, on "Death with Dignity"; Dr. Francisco Ruiz Maza, from the Spanish Hospital on "Rights and responsibilities of patients"; Roberto García de la Mora, from the Mexican Foundation for Alzheimer's and Similar Diseases (a private institution), with the paper on "Patients with Alzheimer's Disease"; Dr. Graciela Rodríguez, from the Institute for Juridical Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with "Patients and Human Rights"; Dr. Benjamin Domínguez, from the Psychology Faculty of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with "Chronic pain, protection and treatment of the patient"; Dr. Germinal Cocho, from the Physics Institute of the UNAM, with the paper on "AIDS and patient' rights" and, finally, Octavio Casa Madrid, from the National Commission for Medical Arbitration, with a lecture on "Patients' Rights".

The month of July will be devoted to "Migrants' Rights".

N.B. These lectures and round tables take place every Thursday throughout the year in the hall of the Mexican National Commission's headquarters at 18.00 hours.

Training Courses

During the month of June, the National Commission, adhering to the spirit promoted by the Ombudsman institution to disseminate the study, teaching and divulgation of Human Rights, undertook 39 related activities.

Staff members from the CNDH's training area gave 5 lectures, and carried out 13 workshops, 1 seminar, 3 diploma course sessions, 1 course, 2 forums, 2 guided tours, 12 workshop-courses, 1 televised lecture and, at the request of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, gave three sessions of the course on "Human Rights", in the installations in Mexico City for candidates aspiring to enter the Federal Judicial Police.

These training activities covered various subjects, the most outstanding of which were: The training of Human Rights promoters; training in civics and ethics; International Law on Human Rights; the juridical background for Human Rights; Human Rights, democracy and development; the Human Rights of the Disabled; training in civics and education of citizens; promoting and defending girls' and boys' rights; the Human Rights of the Elderly; the rights of vulnerable groups; domestic violence; Women's Human Rights; Human Rights and Health; Human Rights and the medical profession; Human Rights and patients in hospital; citizenship and sovereignty in Human Rights; Human Rights and military road blocks; Male and Female Migrants' Human Rights; protection of refugees in Mexico; Human Rights and the police duties; the existence and work of the National Commission for Human Rights and the use of force and fire-arms.

These training courses were coordinated with various government and non-governmental organizations and addressed staff members of the Human Rights Organization Mano Amiga (a private association) in the Municipality of Tehuacan, Puebla; teaching staff of the La Salle University, in Leon, Guanajuato and the Autonomous University of Guerrero; disabled persons belonging to the Vida Independiente organization (a private association) in the Municipality of Metepec, Puebla; staff members of the Institute for Security and Social Services for State Employees (ISSTE) in the State of Nuevo León; migration officials at the Commission for Human Rights in the State of Tabasco and judicial police at the Training Institute of the Office of the Attorney General for Justice.

Likewise, heads and officials of the Ministry for Public Security of the State of Chihuahua; In the State of Oaxaca police officers belonging to the General Coordinating Office for Human Rights; public servants of the State of Oaxaca; doctors and nurses of the Regional Hospital at Pinotepa Nacional and police officers of the Industrial and Banking Police; sector heads and deputies of the Office of the Director General for Public Security and Transport Police in the Municipality of Tlalnepantla, State of Mexico; staff members of the Mayor's Office of Tizayuca in the State of Hidalgo; disabled persons and their families of the ISSSTE in the Cuauhtémoc Delegation, Federal District; police officers of the National Bank for Rural Credit, in the Cuauhtémoc Delegation, Federal District; public servants from the Federal Electoral Institute in the Tlalpan Delegation, Federal District; staff members from the National Fund for Low-

Cost Housing in the Federal District, and members of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Mexico City, all received training courses.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Executive Secretary meets with a delegation from the International PEN Club.

On June 8, 2000, the Executive Secretary of the CNDH received a delegation from the International PEN Club, a non-governmental organization of world writers whose objective consists of promoting friendship and cooperation among writers in the intellectual field world-wide.

The International PEN Club defends freedom of expression and writers under attack from oppressive regimes. The present Chairman of the International PEN Club is the Mexican poet Homero Aridjis.

During this meeting, the PEN representatives indicated that their trip to Mexico was due to their interest in the subject of violations of reporters' and writers' Human Rights.

For his part, the Executive Secretary, on thanking them for the organization's interest in Mexico, expressed the CNDH's desire to increase communication and cooperation with NGOs devoted to promoting and protecting Human Rights.

Meeting between officials of the Executive Secretariat and the European Commission's Delegation in Mexico. On June 21, the Executive Secretary of the CNDH met with Ambassador Manuel López Blanco, head of the European Commission's delegation in Mexico.

On that occasion, officials of the two delegations reiterated their interest in working together on the implementation of programs on Human Rights, a subject that the European Commission considers to be of great importance in its relations with Mexico.

At the end of the meeting, both the officials of the CNDH and those from the European Commission agreed to work on drawing up specific collaboration programs on Human Rights and instrumenting them shortly.

Roberto Cuéllar, Executive Director of the Interamerican Institute for Human Rights visits the CNDH.

On June 30, 2000, Roberto Cuéllar, Executive Director of the Interamerican Institute for Human Rights made a working visit to the CNDH.

Among the subjects discussed on this occasion the most outstanding were the need to reactivate the Collaboration Agreement signed by the two institutions in 1996; the participation and collaboration of the IIHR in the international seminar on the prevention of violence that the CNDH will be holding on December 7-9, 2000; the need for close collaboration on the subject of a possible reform of the interamerican system; the International Criminal Court, and also the preparations for the forthcoming 5th Annual Congress of the Iberamerican Federation of Ombudsman (FIO).

Finally, it was agreed on the need to establish a computer linkage between all the human rights organizations and open up links between the IIHR's offices and those of the corresponding Latin American Ombudsmen.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Making use of the time officially assigned to the CNDH by the Ministry of the Interior's Office of the Director General for Radio, Television and Films, the Mexican National Commission showed the following documentaries on both private and public television channels: "The National Commission against all forms of discrimination"; "The National Commission with the Yaquis of Sonora"; "The National Commission with the Mayas of Yucatan" and "The National Commission with the Huicholes of Jalisco".

On Radio Universidad's program Argumentos, the following issues were presented: "The Program for prevention and comprehensive care of teenage pregnancies"; "Domestic Violence" and "Talk shows in Mexico".

PUBLICATIONS

La Admisión de la Competencia Contenciosa de la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. El caso de México. (The Competence of the Interamerican Human Rights Court to Try Cases. The case of Mexico), CNDH, June, 2000.

La Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (The Political Constitution of Mexico), CNDH, June 2000.

Guía para obtener beneficios de libertad anticipada (Guide for obtaining the benefit of early release), CNDH, June 2000 (folder).

Historia, Derechos Humanos y Medicina (History, Human Rights and Medicine), CNDH, June, 2000. (brochure).

Los derechos sociales desde una nueva perspectiva (Social rights from a new perspective), CNDH, June, 2000. (brochure).

Desobediencia civil y objeción de conciencia (Civil disobedience and conscientious objection), CNDH, June 2000. (brochure).

Ética y Derechos Humanos (Ethics and Human Rights), CNDH, June, 2000. (brochure).

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