

NEWS LETTER

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CNDH IS PRESENT DURING MARCH OF ZAPATISTA NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (EZLN) REPRESENTATIVES TO MÉXICO CITY Pursuant to its autonomy and in support of the universal principles of neutrality and humanitarian right, the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH, in its Spanish acronym) kept a permanent watch over the EZLN representatives' march, which began on February 25, and concluded on March 11, in Mexico City.

CNDH presence sought to strengthen the principles of respect for Human Rights and record possible transgressions to the rights of the members of the procession and, if necessary, file the corresponding complaints and accusations.

The Mexican National Commission guarded the respect for the guarantees and fundamental rights of those accredited to accompany the march, such as: foreign legislators, national and international NGO members, representatives of civil society groups, journalists and media correspondents.

CNDH mobile brigades escorted the members of the procession and the accredited associates during the journey. Ten Visitors followed the route and were at the stopovers for the night. At each of the points of the sections to be covered, the National Commission set up tables of attention to hear cases.

The CNDH exhorted the federal authorities and governments of the 13 States of the country through which the Zapatista march passed, to take the necessary measures to observe and respect the Human Rights of the members of the procession and their companions.

The Mexican National Commission considered the fact that the members of the march expressed interest in direct dialogue with instances of Mexican Congress as a significant and good sign, for it is there that the peace process must begin. The National Commission has always manifested its rejection towards any form of violence to solve conflicts and has expressed its disposition to help in the Chiapas peace process.

The National Commission's participation in this march is based on Articles 6, fraction VII and XI, and 15, fraction III, of its Internal Rules, which establish that this national organism is empowered to promote the observance of Human Rights in México, and draw up and carry out preventive programs in this area, as well as dictate the specific measures it deems convenient to better fulfill its duties; and on article 69, which sets forth that the authorities and federal, local and municipal public servants collaborate, within the sphere of their competence, with the National Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2/2001

February 19, 2001

Case: Violation to Human Rights by Public Servants belonging to the Federal Center for Social Readaptation Number 2 "Puente Grande", State of Jalisco.

Authority Addressed: Federal Attorney General.

Recommendation 3/2001

February 28, 2001

Case: Refutation measure brought by Mr. Godolio Méndez Duarte.

Authority Addressed: Mayor of Cuernavaca, State of Morelos.

Recommendation 4/2001

February 28, 2001

Case: Mr. José de Jesús Quintero García.

Authority Addressed: Minister of the Interior.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Rodolfo Lara Ponte was appointed as Fourth General Visitor of the CNDH

On February 1, 2001, doctor José Luis Soberanes Fernández designated Rodolfo Lara Ponte as the Fourth General Visitor for the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH, in its Spanish acronym).

Lara Ponte is a lawyer by the Faculty of Law of the National Autonomous University of México (UNAM), and studied a specialization in Economy and Administration in the American University in Washington D.C.

He has been a member of the Institute for Juridical Investigation of the UNAM, and has held different posts in Federal Public Administration, the most important being: Counselor of the Federal Judicature nominated by the Mexican Senate, and Chief Clerk of the Ministry for Social Development.

He wrote the books *Las libertades públicas y sus garantías en el Estado de Derecho* [Public Freedoms and Guarantees in the Rule of Law], *Los Derechos Humanos en el constitucionalismo mexicano* [Human Rights in Mexican Constitutionalism], and *Vicente Jara, vigencia de un ideal* [Vicente Jara, Force of an Ideal]. Moreover, he has published several articles on juridical subjects related with health, the administration of justice, government control and Human Rights, and has collaborated as editorialist in the national media.

Seminar - Justice by One's Own Hand: Reflections in the Light of Human Rights

The Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, in collaboration with the Institute for Juridical Investigation of the UNAM, organized the seminar "Justice by One's Own Hand: Reflections in the Light of Human Rights", from February 14-16, in México City.

Throughout history, in México, there have been cases of justice applied by one's own hand, from the literary example of Fuente Ovejuna to the events which took place in San Miguel Canoa, State of Puebla. However, nowadays, it is disturbing that in view of the consolidation of democracy in México this type of conduct should occur, a conduct which propagates a climate of violence in detriment of Human Rights protection.

The main causes for lynching include: citizens' despair vis-a-vis increase in delinquency rates; distrust and incredulity in the Rule of Law and the legal procedures to check and punish the offenders; impunity generated by networks of complicity among the infractors of the law, commanders and members of police corporations; the impact on the population of political and media campaigns requesting the application of a "hard hand" against the liability and erosion of basic civic principles, such as respect for human life, be it the life of delinquents, and the repudiation of cruelty and savageness.

Faced with this panorama, the Mexican National Commission assembled a group of renowned specialists to reflect on this phenomenon and its implications in the light of Human Rights. These included: Carlos Monsivais, journalist; Efrain Cardoso, from the Faculty of Law, UNAM; Gerardo Islas, from the Civilian Association for Tolerance; Agustín Ávila, from the College of Ethnologists and Social Anthropologists, A.C.; Víctor Manuel Martínez Bullé-Goyri, CNDH First General Visitor; Olga Islas, Ph.D., Hugo Concha Cantú, both from the Institute for Juridical Investigations of the UNAM, and Tomás Flores Allende, former Attorney General for the State of Morelos. Finally, a cinema-debate session was held projecting *Canoa*, with the presence of film director Felipe Cazals.

Annual Cycle of Conferences and Roundtables: Democratic Transition and Human Rights Protection

The Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law of the UNAM, continues to organize the Cycle of Conferences and Round Tables, this year under the heading "Democratic Transition and Human Rights Protection", with which it endeavors to consolidate a culture of Human Rights and promote public debate on these topics.

Thus, the CNDH seeks to ponder the conception of democracy, understanding it as a way of life, an unfinished project in constant construction. From this viewpoint, democracy and democratic transition are a sole concept. If this is so, which are the main features of the current state México is undergoing? The definition of these profiles account for a domestic scene in which it is possible to reflect on democracy and the democratic exercise as a warrantee of respect for Human Rights. In other words, is democracy an ample enough pre requisite to hope for enhanced protection of fundamental rights?

The inauguration ceremony of this cycle was held on February 1 and was in charge of doctor José Luis Soberanes Fernández, President of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, in the Themis Auditorium in the Library of the Faculty of Law, UNAM. The speakers included: Jose Woldenberg Karakowsky, Chairman of the General Board of the Federal Electoral Institute; Mariclaire Acosta, Special Ambassador for Human Rights and Democracy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and doctor Evencio Nicolás Martínez Ramírez, Chairman of the Human Rights Commission for the State of Oaxaca.

Moreover, on Thursday, February 8, the second roundtable was held with the participation of: Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, Head of the Citizens' Commission for Studies against Discrimination; doctor Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, Counselor of National Security; Carmen Aristegui, journalist, and doctor Mauricio Merino Huerta, Electoral Counselor of the Federal Electoral Institute.

Lastly, on February 22, the roundtable was devoted to the indigenous peoples vis-a-vis migration problems. The speakers were: Felipe de Jesús Preciado Coronado, Commissioner of the National Institute for Migration; Marcos Matias, General Director of the National Indigenous Institute, and Fabienne Venet, from the NGO No Borders.

The subjects of the agenda for Module II of this cycle are listed below:

We meet at 18:00 hours in the Dr. Eduardo García Maynez Auditorium of the Antonio Caso Library, Faculty of Law, UNAM, Circuito Escolar, Ciudad Universitaria, México City.

CYCLE OF CONFERENCES AND ROUNDTABLES 2001

Democratic Transition and Human Rights Protection

Module II

Subjects of the Agenda

Round Tables:

Migration on the Southern Border

April 26

Universal Jurisdiction and Human Rights

May 3

Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance

June 21

Trafficking of Children and Women

June 28

Public Safety and Human Rights

July 5

Respect for the Law and Conscientious Objectors

July 12

Application of Human Rights Indicators

July 19

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

August 16

Human Rights Defenders

August 23

Intellectual Property
August 30

Traffic of Organs
September 6

Constitutional Reforms and Human Rights
September 13

The International Criminal Court
September 20

Human Development: Extreme Poverty and Human Rights
September 27

The Right to Information
October 4

The Administration of Justice and Human Rights
October 11

The Armed Forces and Concern for Human Rights
October 18

New Actors of the Transition: Political Lobbying and Human Rights
October 25

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 February, 2001, undertook various activities related to Human Rights.

Personnel belonging to the training area of the Mexican National Commission for Human Rights gave six conferences, one workshop, the completion of the "Diploma Course on Human Rights"; took part in the Religious Tolerance Day with a message addressing several religious associations and groups; participated in a meeting in the facilities of the Church of the Living Christ, Column and Support of Truth "Light of the World", to establish the corresponding liaison with religious associations; chaired 13 meetings to present work programs for the current year with several non governmental organizations, as well as with various religious associations among which: the Mexican Organization in Support of Children, A.C.; the National Youth Institute; the International Red Cross Committee; the Association of Citizens' Action for Tolerance, A.C.; the Association of Citizens' Action for the Abolition of Torture; YMCA of Tijuana, State of Baja California; the Association of United Citizens for the Defense of Human Rights; the Inter-religious Council of México, A.R., and the Association of Jehovah Witnesses of México, A.R., all in the Federal District.

Likewise, other activities were undertaken for the promotion of Human Rights: with representatives of the Association of Graduates of Spain for the organization of a Seminar on Human Rights; the Inauguration of the Doctorate in Human Rights; with public servants belonging to the Ministry of Defense, structured the first project for a National Cycle of Workshops and the National Congress on the Armed Forces and Human Rights; with members of the Federal Preventive Police a training course was prepared for wardens of the Center for Readaptation "Puente Grande" in the State of Jalisco; with members of the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District for the organization of forums on the subject of Human Rights and education; with the German Ecumenical Association; with representatives of the International Red Cross and members of the CNDH Program for the Southern Border.

The subjects of the training activities were varied, the most important being: Juridical Aspects of Human Rights and their Relation with Bioethics; the Constitution and Children; Infant Mistreatment and the Rights of Children; Human Rights of the Elderly; Human Rights and Individual Guarantees, and the Handling of Firearms, Prejudicial to Crime.

PUBLICATIONS

- . Gaceta, the National Commission for Human Rights' official monthly publication, No. 125, corresponding to the month of December, 2000.
- . Informe de actividades 2000 [Report on Activities, 2000], Mexican National for Human Rights, México, February 2001.
- . Informe de actividades 2000. Anexos [Report on Activities, 2000. Annexes], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, February 2001.
- . Mexican Political Constitution, 2nd ed., Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, February 2001.
- . Personas de edad: derecho a la seguridad social y la procuración y administración de justicia [The Elderly: the Right to Social Security and the Administration and Procuration of Justice], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, February 2001. Booklet.
- . Principios de las Naciones Unidas a favor de las personas de edad [United Nations principles in Favor of the Elderly], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, February 2001. Booklet.
- . Convención Internacional sobre la protección de los Derechos de Todos los Trabajadores Migratorios y sus Familias [International Covenant on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, February 2001. Booklet.
- . Tenemos derecho a vivir sin violencia [We Have the Right to Live without Violence], Mexican National Commission for Human Rights, México, February 2001. Triptych.

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