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Subject: Support and additional information to the complaint about human rights violations relating to the enforced disappearance of 43 students in Mexico

Dear High Commissioner,

Education International (EI), the global union federation representing some 32.5 million teachers and other education employees, expresses its support for, and wishes to be associated with the American Federation of Teachers' complaint to the Human Rights Council concerning the specific human rights violations that have occurred in connection with the enforced disappearance of forty-three (43) young students (*normalistas*) from Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College in Iguala, Mexico on or about 26-27 September 2014.

EI submits the present addendum to complement the initial complaint lodged by the American Federation of Teachers and five other teacher organisations¹ on 26 September 2016.

According to an independent review conducted by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (IGIE)², the following events occurred on or about 26-27 September 2014:

- 1) Six people were extrajudicially executed in four different crime scenes (including a *normalista* with clear signs of having been tortured, and another two who were shot to death at point-blank range (less than 15 cm away); and the three dead in the attack against the *Los Avispones* soccer team, among which there is one minor): at the crossroads between Juan N. Alvarez and Periférico Norte streets (in this case in two different episodes), on the Andariego road, on the way to the Iguala industrial area; on the highway leaving Iguala, in front the Palace of Justice; and on the Santa Teresa crossroads 15 km away from the town of Chilpancingo.
- 2) Over 40 people were wounded. These abuses took place during the referred facts in the initial crime scene in the Juan N. Alvarez and Periférico Norte crossroads, in the second attack three hours later in the same place, and at the Santa Teresa crossroads where another two consecutive attacks took place.

¹ *Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina* (Argentina); *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação* (Brazil); *Colegio de Profesores de Chile* (Chile); *Federación Colombiana de Educadores* (Colombia); *Asociación Nacional de Educadores Salvadoreños 21 DE JUNIO* (El Salvador), American Federation of Teachers (United States). The six teacher organisations are affiliated to Education International.

² The IGIE was appointed by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, with the agreement of the State of Mexico and that of the representatives of the victims subject to this complaint, to investigate the events that led to the disappearance of the 43 students in Iguala, Mexico on or about September 26-27, 2014.



- 3) Around another 80 people, including students from Ayotzinapa and teachers and other people who demonstrated their support endured different forms of persecution and attacks against their lives in at least three crime scenes, including the drivers of the buses involved: the Juan N. Alvarez and Periférico Norte street crossing; the area before the Palace of Justice and the Pajaritos colony; and the zone of 24th February Colony in Iguala.
- 4) Another 30 people survived killing attempts in the case of the bus with the *Los Avispones* soccer team in the crime scene at the Santa Teresa crossroads.
- 5) 43 *normalistas* from Ayotzinapa were unlawfully detained and arrested from two different crime scenes and buses, one in the town center and the other in the outskirts of the town of Iguala. They were later subjected to enforced disappearances.

Among the victims it is also necessary to take into account the relatives of these direct victims -at least 700 people - and especially the relatives of the 43 disappeared *normalistas*.

The State of Mexico has not been able to provide adequate remedies to the victims of the gross human right violations that arose from the events in Iguala on 26-27 September 2014. IGIE's report indicates that there are significant deficiencies and shortcomings in the State's investigations of the matter and suggests coordination between State agents and members of organized crime in the commission of the attacks. Specifically, the report found that evidence from the night of 26-27 September was manipulated resulting in inaccurate conclusions. The report further suggests that officials suspected of involvement into the enforced disappearances were not properly investigated and alleged suspects were tortured as a means to obtain confessions. This case underscores the high rate of impunity and structural failures that exist in Mexico for addressing such serious crimes.

These events and circumstances directly implicate the following universal humanitarian values and rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 3 – "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Article 5 – "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Article 8 – "Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law."

Article 9 – "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

The victims of September 26-27, 2014, were denied their right to life, liberty and the security of person by way of torture and murder and were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention. Police agents failed to protect the victims and as the IGIE report suggests took part in the coordination of the attacks against the victims. The State of Mexico has failed to provide the victims and their families an effective remedy addressing the human rights violations that took place. To date, what happened to the victims of September 26-27 remains unsolved.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that you pressure the government of Mexico to exhaustively investigate the events surrounding the enforced disappearance of the 43 *normalistas* and hold the perpetrators of the crimes accountable for the egregious violations of human rights.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary