Montreal, November 12, 2014

PUBLIC DECLARATION ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IGUALA AND TLATLAYA, MEXICO.

To the federal, regional, and local political authorities of Mexico,

We are profoundly distressed by the events that recently took place in Mexico. On June 30, 2014, 22 people were killed in Tlatlaya, state of Mexico; 15 of them were executed by the Army, which is now being prosecuted. On September 26 and 27, 2014, a massacre occurred in Iguala, Guerrero. It involved members of the municipal police and non-identified armed men, which, according to surviving witnesses, are part of a group called "Guerreros Unidos". These incidents caused the death of six persons, three of which were students from Ayotzinapa's rural school *Raúl Isidro Burgos*. Since then, 43 students, who were detained by the police, are missing. The mayor of Iguala has been accused of masterminding the massacre. Moreover, the governor of the state of Guerrero has resigned following allegations of complicity in the mayor's criminal activities. According to witnesses, the Army would also be involved.

The crimes of Ayotzinapa and Tlatlaya are not isolated events; on the contrary, they add up to the series of violations of human rights taking place in the country. Since 2006, more than 90,000 deaths have been registered, more than 25,000 people are missing, and more than 250,000 people have been internally displaced. These numbers could be higher, depending on the sources. All these violations of human rights are caused by the said war against drug cartels started by Felipe Calderón's government, a war which has been adopted as the central security strategy of Enrique Peña Nieto's government. This war against narco-trafficking has been denounced by human rights organizations as constituting strategies of criminalization and repression used by the state.

In this context of repression and criminalization of popular mobilization, the State undermines public education, particularly the rural normal schools. The objective of such schools is the training of teachers for the most disadvantaged zones of the country. However, they have been struggling for 40 years to ensure their survival against state actions seeking their dissolution. The Mexican State's repression towards the normal schools has been systematic and constant, notably in the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas, where poverty levels are the highest of the country. We stand in solidarity with the normal rural schools, recognized as places where social mobilization and protest has historically emerged.

These crimes undermine the right to protest and suppress all forms of political opposition and free expression. This systematic and violent repression threatens the human rights of all Mexicans, and particularly of those sections of the population most vulnerable. We condemn categorically the arbitrary use of force by the government and its collusion with organized crime.

We consider that these events are unacceptable and extremely serious, this is why we demand the relevant organizations of the Mexican government to:

1. Conduct the investigations and research activities necessary to find the 43 missing students in a fully transparent manner considering that the results have been unsatisfactory until now.
2. Conduct a rapid, effective, and independent investigation relating to the events of June 30, 2014 in Tlatlaya and of September 26 and 27, 2014 in Iguala.
3. Initiate administrative and judicial proceedings against state and federal authorities that have failed in their duty to prevent these serious human rights violations, in order to make them accountable before the courts.
4. Ensure the security and integrity of the students and witnesses who denounced the events as well as protect human rights defenders who are supporting the students of the Normal School of Ayotzinapa. This must be done in accordance with the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
5. Put an end to the systematic persecution of dissident voices and all forms of protest and political mobilization.

We wish to be informed of the actions that you will undertake to establish the legal liability regarding these events. The crimes of Ayotzinapa and Tlatlaya are crimes against humanity, as has been denounced by different human rights organizations in Mexico, among which the Human Rights Center Miguel Augustín Pro Juárez A.C. (Prodh Center) and Amnesty International.

¡Vivos se los llevaron y vivos los queremos!
Alive they were taken, alive we want them back!

Association des juristes progressistes
Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)
Bloc d'artistes du CTI (Centre des Travailleurs et Travailleuses Immigrantes à Montréal)
Chaire Nycole Turmel sur les espaces publics et les innovations politiques, UQAM
Coalition québécoise sur les impacts socio-environnementaux des transnationales en Amérique latine (QUISETAL)
Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine (CDHAL)
Comité régional d'éducation pour le développement international de Lanaudière (CRÉDIL)
Common Frontiers
Confédération des syndicats nationaux - CSN
Costureras de sueños-Teatro independiente
Diversitas Coop
Femmes de diverses origines
Groupe d'entraide internationale Spirale (Conseil d'Administration)
Horizons of Friendship
Illusion Emploi

Institut Polaris
InterPares
L'Entraide missionnaire
Mexicanxs unidxs por la regularización
MigrantWorkersRights/DroitsTravailleursMigrants
Mining Watch Canada
Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie (PASC)
Relations publiques sans frontières
Rencontre Interculturelle des Familles de l'Estrie
SalvAide Canadá
The United Church of Canada – Ministries in French
United Steelworkers