



## **HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**11th Session, 2-18 June 2009**

**Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Ms. Yakin Ertürk**

**Joint Oral statement delivered by the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center, a nongovernmental organization with roster status, and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), non-governmental organization with general consultative status, and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), non-governmental organization with roster consultative status**

Thank you, Mr President.

Ms Ertürk,

Center Prodh, the OMCT and APWLD would like to thank you for your very timely thematic report to this Council, (A/HRC/11/6) in which you outline the socioeconomic causes of violence against women (VAW), as a complement to the deconstruction of cultural discourses that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination outlined in a previous report. We consider these as two major contributions to the mandate that must be pursued with the same vigor, along with your work on indicators. We also commend your report on the 15 years of the VAW mandate, which provides an excellent basis for discussion on how to consolidate its achievements, overcome persisting challenges and break new ground.

We wish to make particular reference in this regard to the issue of violence against women in Mexico, especially in the context of the case of San Salvador Atenco as a paradigmatic example of the use of sexual torture as a tool of repression against women. On May 3 and 4, 2006, more than 2,500 members of state and federal police forces assaulted both protesters and by-standers in a conflict that had resulted from a failed dialogue with local flower-vendors. Among the persons arrested were 47 women, many of whom were systematically tortured and ill-treated by Mexican police through rape, sexual assault and beatings.

Despite the severity of the crimes committed in Atenco, more than three years after these violations, Mexican authorities have not brought criminal prosecutions against any of the police officers who participated in the police operation either for torture or rape. Only a handful of officials have been charged with minor offences such as abuse

of authority and libidinous acts. This is not to mention the impunity of the government officials who planned and oversaw the operation. Center Prodh has taken on the legal accompaniment 11 of the women who suffered torture by Mexican police. However, the Special Prosecutor for Crimes related to Violence against Women and Human Trafficking (FEVIMTRA) has not so far brought criminal charges against any of the alleged perpetrators.

Baring in mind the recommendations adopted on the case of Atenco by the Committee against Torture (CAT)<sup>1</sup> and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),<sup>2</sup> and your individual communications sent to the Government,<sup>3</sup> we would like to ask you whether you would consider requesting a country visit to Mexico in the near future to address this urgent issue, possibly through a joint mission with the Special Rapporteur on Torture and/or other relevant special procedures?

Center Prodh, the OMCT and APWLD would like to take this opportunity to thank you wholeheartedly for your important work as Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> See UN Doc. CAT/C/MEX/CO/4, para.19.

<sup>2</sup> See UN Doc. CEDAW/C/MEX/CO/6, paras. 14 and 15.

<sup>3</sup> See UN Doc. A/HRC/7/6/Add.1, paras. 279-286.