
Missing Mexican Students' Bodies Were Not Burned at Dump, IACHR Experts Say

07/09/2015



The IACHR's Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts said during the presentation of their report in Mexico City that it reached this conclusion based on the work done by Jose Torero, a well-known expert on fire.

After conducting field work, examining the evidence and reviewing the statements of the suspects in the case, Torero concluded that "no evidence exists to support the theory based on the statements that the 43 bodies were cremated" at the dump on Sept. 27, 2014, the day after the students disappeared, the experts said.

The evidence gathered in the case shows that "the minimum amount of fire needed to cremate the bodies could not have occurred" at the dump in Cocula, not even enough to burn one body, the report said.

The huge fire needed to burn the bodies would have produced "general damage that would have been visible in the vegetation and trash," but no evidence of this was found, the experts said.

Torero also found no evidence that the amount of fuel needed for the fire was at the dump at any time, with signs of only "fires of small dimensions" observed.

Iguala municipal police officers fired gunshots at students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School, a nearby teacher-training facility, on the night of Sept. 26, 2014, Mexican officials say.

Six people died that night, 25 were wounded and 43 students were detained by police and then handed over to members of the Guerreros Unidos drug cartel.

Three suspects in the case – Patricio Reyes, Jhonatan Osorio and Agustin Garcia – confessed to having killed the students and burned their bodies at the dump.

The statements given by the suspected Guerreros Unidos members “indicate events that cannot be possible given the conditions needed for what would be the minimum amount of fire necessary to cremate 43 bodies,” Torero said.

The federal Attorney General’s Office said in January that the “historic truth” about what happened to the students had been arrived at based on evidence and statements by those involved.

The security forces, both state and federal, made no effort to protect the education students, the experts said in their report, which was produced after a six-month investigation.

The IACHR experts called on the Mexican government to investigate the possibility that a drug shipment was what prompted the attack on the students.

The Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School students may have been attacked because one of the buses they took on the night of their disappearance contained a hidden load of drugs, the IACHR experts said.

The education students took five buses, but investigators could not account for one of the vehicles, the experts said.

The students’ taking of the buses for a trip to Mexico City to attend a protest may have coincided with the “existence of illicit drugs (or cash)” in one of the vehicles, the experts said.
