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Mexico

Not one single more death!

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The murder of Susana Chávez in Ciudad Juárez shows in one single case the seriousness of the situation of violence which Mexico has arrived at, combining femicide and the criminalization and repression of the social struggle that occurs within the framework of the militarization of the country imposed by Felipe Calderón and his alleged war on drug trafficking.

Femicide certainly already existed before Calderon came to power by fraud in 2006. It is clear that when there is impunity, when the murder of women is unchecked (including exoneration of convicted murders as in the case of RubÃ-) the crime is repeated, multiplies and spreads. The most immediate example is the murder of the mother of RubÃ-, comrade Marisela Escobedo.

But all the same this is already happening beyond Ciudad Juárez. When there is impunity femicide extends. In Mexico state the number of women killed is growing. Last week the state government, with the support of the Ministry of the Interior and "Women's Institutes" in several states opposed declaring a "gender emergency" in that entity on the grounds that it was "politicizing" the situation, noting the responsibility of the Governor PeÃ±a Nieto, aspiring PRI presidential candidate for the year 2012.

In Colima at the other end of the country human rights and feminist organisations are at the same time denouncing the serious increase in the number of violations and assaults of all types against women. Impunity encourages and conceals femicide.

But we should also add to the above the explosive combination that has resulted from Felipe Calderón's coming to power and his criminal policy of militarization of the country in his war on drugs, with violations of all kinds of rights. There is not full agreement on the figures and there is a desire to manipulate them, and there is a dark part concerning, for example, the number of new forced disappearances, hidden under the confusing rubric of "kidnappings" as if all were the work of "organized crime", rather than police and soldiers who sometimes act in complicity with criminals.

Since the end of 2006 when Calderon declared war, a concept he now hypocritically denies having used, although there is all the evidence of his speeches and even his ridiculous military costume, there have been more than 28,000 homicides. A new and terrifying category has had to be incorporated into the statistics, of 10,000 orphans, the product of Calderón's war.

More difficult to determine, the figure of the disappeared oscillates between one and two thousand and two thousand people who have been kidnapped and of whom there is no news. Rosario Ibarra demanded the presentation, along with the mothers of the "Eureka" Committee, of more than 500 people who disappeared under PRI governments, especially under the government of Luis EcheverrÃ-a, who had the characteristic of being linked in one way or another to political struggles or the guerrilla units of those years.

With Calderón this has risen to more than a thousand people but probably the victims now are from a wider social ambit and not necessarily political activists, which slows the process by which their families publicly denounce their disappearance. For 2010 alone, the year of increased violence, they are talking about 15, 273 killings. The concept is important because in a supposed war there are conflicts, battles and in Mexico, these clashes are the least common. There are executions, i.e. murder, without any clash of the two parties. Youths have been killed at fifteenth birthday parties, as have whole families passing military roadblocks, and students coming out of school.

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They use these figures to say they are “winning” the war. The more people dead, the greater the triumph in the war. They suggest that all the dead are criminals, which is false (and even if they were it would not justify a policy based simply on killing) and when it is shown that they are slandering innocent people as “thugs” or criminals, they incorporate the explanation that this is “collateral damage” or the “necessary sacrifices” within the framework of this war. This is the outcome of this criminal necropolitics of militarization.

We denounce the falsehood and hypocrisy of this war and the rights-violating reality of militarization which is now also killing defenders of human rights, activists against militarization and femicide. Thus the killing last year in Ciudad Juárez of Josefina Reyes, an activist from the first wave of the struggle against femicide. Like many people from Ciudad Juárez who have emigrated to the U.S. or other parts of the country, threatened activists have also had to leave, like comrade Cipriana Jurado, also a fighter from the first wave of struggle against the femicide.

The other particularly serious case is that of Marisela Escobedo, who denounced the judicial exoneration of Sergio Rafael Barraza, the confessed killer of her daughter Rubi, and who was killed when she protested before the Governmental Palace in Chihuahua. Since her murder, assaults and threats against relatives and friends continue, forcing many of them to emigrate to the United States.

In spite of all this street protests and mobilizations continue in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, thanks to the valour, strength and commitment of activists and defenders of human rights together with the sorrow of the people and families of the victims. All of them deserve our solidarity and support in actions and protests everywhere outside of Chihuahua also, as threats continue such as that which was received in recent days by comrade Jose Hernandez in Ciudad Juárez.

The high degree of violence against women in Mexico has made the country a paradigm for women who have been murdered and whose deaths have not received justice or been accounted for. Chihuahua has become the archetype of the militarization of the country, being one of the hardest hit states during the so called war against drug trafficking, placing Ciudad Juárez at a world level as one of the most violent frontiers. The gravity of the situation has risen with the murders of female defenders of human rights, social strugglers and activists who demand justice for cases of violence against women.

After the murder of Marisela Escobedo that of Susana Chávez is now a paradigmatic case which must not be underestimated. She was an activist and social fighter, a poet, who sought to link art and culture in the fight against femicide in Ciudad Juárez and creator of the slogan: not one more death!

That is why her murder has generated a great response of indignation and social protest. Now the authorities seek to impugn the memory of Susanna and trivialise her murder. That is the meaning of the official version that aims to explain the murder as the product of a binge in the company of “undesirable” people. It is a new edition of the misogynistic, sexist, “explanation” which aims to make women responsible for their death by “provocation”, lifestyle or form of dress. The current Attorney General, Mr Chávez Chávez, when he was Procurator of Justice in Chihuahua used to chide the mothers of murdered youngsters for allowing them to wear miniskirts.

Nothing justifies the killing of women and women have the right to live, act, behave, dress as they want to without being condemned to live enclosed in their homes, unable to go out to the streets, especially at certain times or directions, or only in the company of their parents or husbands.

We do not want the world of terror and intolerance of the right and values that it now wants to impose with the impunity of the feminicides and the crimes produced by the militarization of the country.

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If Susana was murdered for daring to live in freedom this is one example more - against those who close their eyes and do not dare to mention the word femicide, like the officials of Peña Nieto- that she was murdered for being a woman.

But knowing Susana's trajectory, what she wrote and thought, the reasons for which she fought, the murder of Marisela, a few weeks earlier, the continued threats against family and friends, threats against other activists, it is obvious that the murder of Susana is an open aggression against the movement and human rights defenders in the person of one of their most clear and responsive comrades.

A PRI deputy from Chihuahua, knowing of the protests of the movement, because the authorities have removed again and again the candles placed in memory of Marisela opposite the Palace of Government, has said that it is a "business" of NGOs that appeal for money in the United States to buy hundreds of candles and that if they wanted to place them they should do so in the Cathedral instead, as it was in the Cathedral where it was necessary to pray for the end of violence.

We reject the moral lessons of the right, the PAN and the PRI. No to resignation, no to acceptance of the current situation as a "natural evil" or "collateral damage". It is not by staying at home to mourn or pray that this will end.

It is by means of struggle, in the street, in mobilization, in organization and political combat, that Mexico will awake from this nightmare of a government which is illegitimate, but also criminal, herald of death, of the necropolitics of the state, responsible for the current situation of violence facing the country, violating laws and rights, offending against life, access to justice, social welfare and human dignity.

The dream of Susana screaming "Not one more death" is possible only through organised struggle.