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Mexico

Zapatistas call Red Alert over state attacks

- News from around the world -

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The leadership of the EZLN (Zapatistas) have suspended their 'Other Campaign' and called a new 'red alert' in response to massive state repression against the communities of San Salvador Atenco and Texcoco (both in the Valley of Mexico, about 28 kms outside Mexico City - just beyond the city's huge rubbish dump). The red alert calls for the closure of the Zapatista community centres in Chiapas and a raft of other security measures, including putting the EZLN fighters on maximum alert.

[Visit page of photos of the attack](#)

The red alert follows the clashes in on Wednesday May 3, when more than 200 people were arrested and one killed, as police brutally prevented flower sellers from Atenco setting up stalls on the building site which is to become a new Walmart shopping mall. According to local people, the police will only acknowledge 109 people arrested, nine people have completely disappeared and women have been raped by police, in addition to the 14-year old boy murdered.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/rep8a.jpg>]

An eyewitness report at [Upsidedown World](#) reports the events as follows:

"At 7am this past Wednesday, May 3, state police blocked 60 flower vendors from setting up their stands at the Texcoco local market. The police beat and arrested those who resisted.

"The flower vendors called to the residents of neighbouring San Salvador Atenco for help and the Atenco residents blocked the highway that borders their town and leads to Texcoco.

"The police response was overwhelming: hundreds of state and federal police, most clad in riot gear, arrived to lift the blockade. Atenco resisted, with machetes, clubs, Molotov cocktails and bottle rockets. The police tried to lift the blockade five times throughout the day, and five times they were repelled.

"The violence was extreme. Photographs published in local papers show Atenco protestors beating a fallen policeman, police beating tens of protestors. Severe beatings. Protesters kicking one fallen police officer in the face, groups of police pulverizing tens of protestors with rocks and batons.

"Police also attacked photographers from both the national and the international press. Photographers and television cameramen from Associated Press, Reuters, Milenio, Jornada and Televisa all reported beatings and attempts to confiscate cameras. Photographs and film coverage of the beatings were published on the internet and shown on national television. Local and international news articles however, have not mentioned the systematic police violence against reporters."

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/ivrep2.jpg>]

Mass resistance in the streets

Why is this heavy-handed repression taking place? It is about much more than stopping local peasants from selling their flowers where Walmart wants to be. This district is an area with a long history of militancy, where local people in 2002 stopped the building of an airport on peasant land around Atenco. This campaign reached near-uprising proportions. Moreover Atenco has symbolically declared itself an 'autonomous municipality', like the Zapatista communities in Chiapas.

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Local popular leaders invited Subcommandante Marcos, in nearby Mexico City for 'Other campaign' meetings, to visit Atenco as part of his tour. It was in the wake of his visit that the repression took place. During his visit, Marcos promised to align the Zapatista Army of National Liberation with Atenco's struggle. The Atenco Front, with machetes in hand, was in charge of providing security for Marcos during the May first Labor Day march to Mexico City's main plaza where the Front's leader, Ignacio Del Valle, spoke before tens of thousands gathered in the plaza.

Upsidedown World reports, "Two days later riot police stormed the house where he (Ignacio del Valle) had been hiding since the attack in Texcoco. At that moment the Televisa cameraman was outside the house filming the police operation when some five police officers approached and repeatedly beat him with clubs. As a result there is no film coverage of the police raid.

"Several newspaper photographers, however, photographed Del Valle's arrival to prison several hours later that night. He was carried in a headlock by a masked police officer, who, in the photographs, is pointing for the photographers to leave the area. Another masked officer walked slightly behind, grabbing Del Valle's back.

"The two masked officers walk Del Valle through a gauntlet of a hundred riot police with helmets and shields. Del Valle's head is covered with a towel in the pictures, but his face, swollen and bloody is partially visible. Also visible is a blood stain the size of a fist on the groin of his jeans, evidence of repeated strikes to his testicles."

Subcommandante Marcos reappeared in Atenco at a rally on Friday 5 May, holding up empty cartridge case which he said police had used live ammunition when 14-year old Javier Cortés was killed on 3 May. Marcos called on the commercial media to stop their 'smear campaign' against the people, who have been accused by TV and newspapers of supporting the EPRI [1] Marcos also announced at a protest rally in Plaza de la Tres Culturas [2] that the Other Campaign was being suspended and that in the light of the situation in the Texcoco valley he would remain in Mexico City 'indefinitely'.

As a response to Marcos' campaign, the government and media are ominously arguing that Marcos has violated the nine-year old amnesty law that officially brought armed conflict to a temporary end.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/ivrep3.jpg>]

Marcos (centre front, back to camera) addresses protest rally in Atenco, 5 May

On Saturday 6 May a judge committed peasant leaders Ignacio del Valle and Felipe Alvarez to jail for the crime of 'armed kidnap'. Forty-four prisoners also announced the same day a hunger strike for their release.

At Friday's Atenco rally Marcos said: "To the media and its workers; I have seen you in Chiapas, risking your lives, suffering hunger, and I have seen how your bosses change everything. I've seen how your photos, your videos, are disappeared into the desk drawers of your editors."

"There is a lynch mob campaign against the FPDT (Peoples' Front in Defense of Land, the Atenco organisation that stopped the multi-billion dollar international airport project in 2002) and its leaders.

"Your bosses are putting themselves at the service of lies. They are paid by those who have money, and we don't have it. Well, they are not in the streets. They are not in the factories. They are not out planting the fields. The Mass Media... is dedicated to discrediting the good and noble people who fight.

"I am going to remain for an indefinite period of time in Mexico City to participate in the mobilisations." Marcos also announced that Zapatista supporters would launch a nationwide campaign for the arrested and brutalised on Atenco

and Texcoco.

In a statement on 4 May, the Political Committee of the PRT [3], declared the events at Atenco to be "a deliberate provocation against the Other Campaign" saying that "without a shadow of doubt" the police attacks has been designed to coincide with Marcos' visit, and to impede the progress of his campaign. After finishing the Valley of Mexico part of his trip Marcos was due to travel to San Luis Potosí, where an important rally for the release of political prisoners was due to take place.

Latest News: Brutal beatings in Santiaguito jail

According to the left-liberal paper La Jornada (7 May), the detainees held in Mexico State's Santiaguito prison have been systematically brutalised and threatened with death since their arrest. Click [here](#) to read.

Also according to La Jornada, two more gunshot victims in Atenco have been discovered. The paper also reports that the house of Ignacio del Valle has been broken into by state forces, clothes torn, furniture wrecked and electrical appliances trashed.

MARCOS SPEECH AT RALLY IN PLAZA OF THE THREE CULTURES

"Companeros and companeras,

A few moments ago we were watching and listening to the media and the manipulation of what was happening, the informational manipulation about what was occurring [in Atenco]. We listened to the commentators on Television Azteca imploring that law be restored, that the military enter to restore order and end what was taking place there. We also listened to the indignation of the viewers who sent letters to the station stating that the commentators pleading for greater public force were idiots.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/se_torturaab.jpg]

Vienna protest at Euro-Latino government summit

Years ago here, in the Plaza of Three Cultures [Tlatelolco] there was a massacre and in response to this the government claimed that the army had been attacked. And much time passed until someone asked what the army had been doing at a student meeting in the first place. And now over those same means of communication, including radio, it does not occur to reporters to ask what the public forces were doing in San Salvador Atenco.

And what they were doing there was enforcing this alliance that was made between the PRD and the PRI in order to oust a few flower vendors because the municipal president of Texcoco thinks they deface the city; because he wants to put a shopping center there, a Wal-Mart in Texcoco and the small merchants bother him and because the PRD aligned there with the PRI at the state level and with the PAN at the national level, and now they will have to be accountable for this death.

As the 6th Commission of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, signatory to the Other Campaign, we are asking, soliciting respectfully the regional and sub-regional coordinators throughout the entire country to execute actions and mobilizations in support of the Frente de Los Pueblos en Defensa de La Tierra [Salvador Atenco] beginning at 0800, eight in the morning tomorrow, the fourth of May, 2006.

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As the Sixth Commission we are declaring a red alert. The troops of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation have already been declared under red alert and from that point onwards the Caracoles and Autonomous Zapatista Rebel Municipalities will be closed. Beginning at that moment, from that moment on, the new chain of command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation will be in place. Whatever may happen to me, there is now someone else in place to make decisions. We don't know about everyone else, but today, we, the Zapatistas, are Atenco!

We are going to be attentive to their demands. We call for the holding of meetings by sector, by region, as you all see fit. As the Sixth Commission we are canceling all of our participation in programmed activities and we are waiting for the cue from the Frente de Los Pueblos en Defensa de La Tierra. If it needs our presence there, we will go there. If not, we will participate directly in the actions that you all program tomorrow beginning at 0800, eight in the morning.

Close the highways, close the streets, fly, paint, whatever occurs to you, in a civil and peaceful manner. Atenco cannot be left all to itself. We will not cease these actions and this situation until the companeros of the Frente de Los Pueblos en Defensa de La Tierra indicate so to us.

We are not going to pay attention to any piece of information that doesn't arrive directly from them. For us, they, those who comprise the Frente de Los Pueblos en Defensa de La Tierra are the Other campaign in those lands. We will respect their decisions. We will go wherever they tell us to go. They have been clear in their demands: immediate liberation of those detained and total withdrawal of the government forces that are invading their lands.

This is our message companeros and companeras. Not only for the Other Campaign in this Other Mexico, in this Other Mexico City that is rising up. It is our message to the Other Campaign in the entire country. From Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Campeche, until the two Baja Californias, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon. From the north to the south, from the east to the west so that the Other Campaign echoes in Atenco and let there be justice for those that have fallen!! Thank you companeros, thank you companeras."

[1] Independent Revolutionary Army of the Poor. Since the arrest of their major leaders in 1999 it has not been clear whether this organisation really exists.

[2] site of the 1968 student massacre

[3] Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican supporters of the 4th International