



15 March 2011

Federal Government install solemnly working-groups to comply with the Inter-American sentences in the cases of Inés Fernández Ortega y Valentina Rosendo Cantú.

On 15 March 2011 the Official event on the installation of working-groups to comply with the Inter-American sentences in the cases of Inés Fernández Ortega y Valentina Rosendo Cantú took place at the Ministry of Interior.

Ms. Inés Fernández Ortega and Ms. Valentina Rosendo Cantú attended the event, in company of members of the Organisation of Indigenous Me'phaa People (OPIM) and the Human Rights Centre Tlachinollan. In representation of the State were present the Under-Secretary of Legal and Human Rights Affairs, from the Ministry of Interior, Felipe de J. Zamora Castro; the Under-Secretary of Multilateral and Human Rights Affairs, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo, Under-General Attorney of Legal and International Projects from the General Attorney's Office, Jorge Alberto Lara Rivera; the Deputy Legal Advisor on Constitutional Control and Litigious, from the Legal Advising Team of the Presidency, Ricardo Celis Aguilar Álvarez. As an honour witness the Javier Hernández Valencia, Representative in Mexico of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, signed the rapporteurship act of the event. At the event attended as well representatives of Embassies and civil society organisations.

Ambassador Juan Manuel Gómez Robledo opened the event recounting the international obligations contracted by the Mexican State while recognising in free will the contentious jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Following this intervention, the Head of the Unit for the Promotion of Human Rights of the Ministry of Interior read the resolutions of both sentences.

Ms. Fernández Ortega and Ms. Rosendo Cantú spoke about their struggle pursuing justice in Mexico, which has been denied, and demanded that the sentences shall be complied without delays, in conditions that do not expose them and their families to new risks, prioritising the access to justice and the recognition of International responsibility. In addition, they requested for the investigations to be transferred to the civilian jurisdiction, according to the ruling of the IACtHR, as the military jurisdiction has only increased the risks and impunity.

As part of the installation of the working-groups with both Ms. Fernández Ortega and Ms. Rosendo Cantú, the Under-Secretary Zamora detailed the programme elaborated in coordination with the parties to fully comply with the sentence, placing at the core the necessities of the victims. The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will coordinate the programme.

Consequently, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs subscribed the agenda which establishes that the working-groups will be divided by themes: Justice, Recognition of International Responsibility, Education, Health and Rehabilitation, Compensations, Training, Legislative Reforms, and Public Policies and Community Reparations. During the event it was informed that the first working-group would be announced within the next fifteen days.

Otilia Eugenio Manuel, President of the OPIM and Abel Barrera, Director of Tlachinollan remarked that after nine years of restless struggle for justice, the rulings of the IACtHR recognise the veracity and strength of Inés and Valentina, obliging that those who are responsible be processed and sanctioned. They stated that the structural reparation measures are clear steps in order to avoid that similar events take place again, against other women. Thus, in the current context, complying with the sentences will attend important issues of the Mexican human rights agenda such as: lack of access to justice for women victims of gender violence; lack of access to health services for women; institutional violence and discrimination; the increasing number of human rights violations as a result of the lack of civilian checks over the armed forces; and the increasingly risky situation of those who organise to defend indigenous people's human rights.

Finally, Under-Secretary Zamora, responsible of the coordination of the working-groups and of the implementation of the rulings, stated that the sentences dictated by the Inter-American Court will be fully and timely complied, and that all necessary measures will continue to be implemented to guarantee the integrity and security of Ms. Fernández Ortega and Ms. Rosendo Cantú, their families and the organisations that accompany them.

To Ms. Fernández Ortega and Ms. Rosendo Cantú the event constitutes the formalisation of the beginning of the work towards obeying with the binding ruling. In the same breath, they affirm their hope in the compromise of the State to not diminish its international obligations. After this formal event, for the organisations that have accompanied Inés and Valentina in their struggle is fundamental that the process of implementation be monitored by civil society and other political and social actors committed with strengthening democracy and human rights in Mexico.