

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Mexico: Amnesty International Statement on the decision of the Inter-American Court to close the file on the case of Alfonso Martín del Campo, a torture victim

The unfavourable ruling given by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in a torture case does not release the Mexican government from its responsibilities to ensure that justice is done, said Amnesty International today.

The organization regrets that a recent ruling of the Court citing procedural grounds with regard to competence renders an exhaustive study of the case of Alfonso Martín del Campo Dodd by this international body impossible.

Extensive and convincing evidence indicates that, in 1992, at least ten police officers subjected Alfonso Martín del Campo to severe torture at the Federal District Prosecutor's Office (Procuraduría General de Justicia del Distrito Federal) (PGJDF) to make him confess to the murder of his sister and her husband. Alfonso Martín del Campo subsequently complained that he had been tortured and forced to incriminate himself by signing a confession. A police officer who had participated in the interrogation also admitted that torture had been used to extract the statement. However, none of this information was taken into account to invalidate the confession.

In its ruling, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights argues that the events complained of took place before Mexico had accepted the court's competence in 1998 and that, consequently, without reaching a conclusion on the existence or otherwise of torture, it cannot legitimately study the case.

Amnesty International regrets that the Mexican government chose to disregard the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in relation to the case of Alfonso Martín del Campo. The Commission is the only international institution that has studied the case in depth and, in October 2002, recommended that the authorities: promote action to invalidate the confession obtained under torture; make immediate provision for the release of Alfonso Martín del Campo while a review of the entire judicial proceeding takes place; undertake a full, impartial and effective investigation to determine the responsibility of all perpetrators of violations of human rights and adequate compensation for the victim.

Amnesty International considers that it is time for the Mexican government to comply with the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission and see that justice is done in this case of serious

violations of human rights.

Additional Information

In January 2003 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights lodged a complaint before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights following the Mexican government's failure to comply with the recommendations; this was the first Mexican case to be brought before the international court. Amnesty International has pressed the Mexican government on numerous occasions to fulfil its responsibility under international treaties on human rights to guarantee the inadmissibility of any evidence obtained through coercion or the use of torture.

For more information on the case of Alfonso Martín del Campo, see the Amnesty International document: Unfair trials: unsafe convictions at:
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ESLAMR410072003?open&of=ESL-MEX>

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