

## STATEMENT

### International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

Mexico City and Tapachula – Chiapas. Mexico

26 June 2017

In the context of the commemoration of the **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**, the **Human Rights Program** and the **Migration Studies Program** of the **Universidad Iberoamericana** (Mexico City) along with the **Fray Matías de Cordova Human Rights Center (CDH Fray Matías – Tapachula, Chiapas)**, express our concern that, despite improvements to the legislation regarding acts of torture in Mexico, the number of documented cases of torture continues to rise at an alarming rate, and in a context of absolute impunity for perpetrators and abandonment of victims.

Although many sectors of the population in Mexico are affected by acts of torture, the plight of **migrants, asylum seekers and refugees** that fall victim to this scourge must be recognized. It must also be remembered that many of those who arrive in Mexico in need of international attention have left their countries due to having been **victims of torture**. The levels of social and political violence in **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras**, the most common countries of origin for those seeking asylum in Mexico, are especially alarming, and structural in nature.

Upon crossing the border, migrants are frequently subject to **assaults, rape, kidnapping and extortion** on their journey. Many of those who suffer violence become cases of **forced disappearance or forced recruitment** at the hands of **organized criminals**. The **control of the border and of migration** exercised by the State through a multitude of armed forces leads to a generalized context of **abuses of force**. Those who are captured and detained by these controls are subsequently interned in **migration detention centers**, where they are held in the condition of **privation of liberty** without legal protection, and suffer physical and psychological aggressions, isolation, inadequate medical attention or access to legal defense, among many other violations of their human rights.

These acts cause **grave physical and psychological suffering**, and on many occasions are perpetrated with the **clear intention** of punishing, humiliating, harassing, intimidating or forcing the deportation of migrants and asylum seekers. **Public officials** also play a clear role in these acts, either through participation, omission or tolerance. The characteristics of the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers outlined above mean that many cases can be identified as **cases of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment**.

Finally, victims of torture – as asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied children and adolescents, and people of LGBTTTI or other vulnerable groups frequently are – are **deported** or forcibly returned to violence from which they fled, **in violation of the principle of non refoulement** established both in Mexican legislation and in the Conventions against torture (such as the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) to which the Government of Mexico is obliged to comply.

The Human Rights Program and the Migration Studies Program of the Universidad Iberoamericana, along with the CDH Fray Matías demand the urgent application of administrative, legislative and other necessary measures required to put into effect the **General Law to Prevent, Investigate and Punish Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**. We also exhort the Government of Mexico to adopt the necessary mechanisms for its implementation in the case of migrants and refugees in Mexico, including **comprehensive attention for the rehabilitation of victims**.

We also trust in the **United Nations System**, through the Committee Against Torture, the Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture, the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other bodies, to demand that the Government of Mexico take measures to ensure the **prevention and non-repetition** of acts of torture and provide **reparations** to victims.

### **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

Mexico, 26 June 2017

#### **Universidad Iberoamericana**

Human Rights Program

Migration Studies Program

#### **Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdoba**