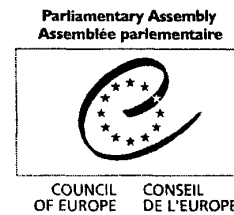


Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



Doc 10551 Addendum
21 June 2005

Disappearance and murder of a great number of women and girls in Mexico

Addendum to the report: Information on recent developments
Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
Rapporteuse: Mrs Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold, Switzerland, Socialist Group

1. Following the adoption of the Committee's report on "the disappearance and murder of a great number of women and girls in Mexico" on 28 April 2005, a number of developments have taken place which the Assembly needs to be informed about.
2. In May 2005, two girls – aged 7 and 10 – were sexually assaulted and murdered in Ciudad Juárez, bringing the death toll of women and girls in the city to 17 for the first five months of 2005, a very high number. The most recent murders sparked a series of anti-violence marches in Ciudad Juárez, including a 20.000-strong gathering on Friday, 27 May 2005.
3. Speaking on Monday, 30 May 2005, President Vicente Fox reacted by accusing the media of overplaying the story and rehashing old crimes. "We must attend to the case of Juárez and we are, but it must also be seen in its proper dimension," Fox said. "These murder cases have been solved". His conclusion that the situation in Ciudad Juárez was "under control" in turn led to indignation by victims' families, NGOs, the National Human Rights Commission, women's groups and parliamentarians, who claim that the majority of cases have not been solved and are appalled at the authorities' apparent inability to put a stop to the killings of women and girls in the city.
4. The same day, the new Prosecutor-General, Daniel Cabeza de Vaca, called the Ciudad Juárez murders "a top priority", and announced that Mireille Roccatti had been named to replace María López Urbina as the Special Federal Prosecutor assigned to investigate the unsolved killings and disappearances in Ciudad Juárez. Ms Roccatti has served as the Head of the National Human Rights Commission. However, the mandate and powers of the Special Federal Prosecutor remain unchanged, i.e. rather limited. Ms López Urbina, who had spent 15 months in the position, had come under increasing criticism, as her office took over only 22 of the investigations. Although she recommended that criminal charges be brought against 41 of the 143 state officials under investigation, so far only two have been charged with negligence and none have been punished.