THE DISAPPEARED, A PAIN FELT ACROSS MEXICO

This year, I met a searching mother whose son disappeared in 2011, when he was just fourteen years old. Today he would be 28, and she is still looking for him. When I asked if she feared for her life, she firmly answered no. Her story is a brutal reminder of the pain that thousands of families face every day, but it's also a testimony of strength, dignity, and resilience.

She currently supports more than 560 people in their search along the Pacific coast. To date, they have found 22 people deceased and 8 alive. Her efforts are making a difference.

In another part of the country, a friend of mine who belongs to a religious congregation has joined the community to support a collective of searching mothers—families of victims of enforced disappearance. This group carries out many actions, including psychological, pastoral, spiritual, and legal support. They actively participate in the search, including exhumations in clandestine graves. They also maintain ties with media and authorities and promote public awareness and prevention campaigns in public spaces and schools.

In this context, the mutual support among families has become essential, building solidarity networks that fill the void left by the state. Enforced disappearance in Mexico is a serious

human rights crisis. This crime—committed either by state agents or organized crime—involves the illegal deprivation of liberty with no information on the victim's whereabouts. As of July 2025, Mexico has recorded over 114,000 missing and unlocated persons, according to official figures. The victims include women, men, boys, and girls.

In comparison, Colombia has documented over 80,000 enforced disappearances between 1958 and 2016. In Chile, during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973–1990), an estimated 3,200 people were killed or disappeared.

In the face of this reality, civil organizations and collectives have been key actors in denouncing the crimes and carrying out searches—risking their lives in pursuit of truth. In contrast, impunity persists. And although there has been some legal progress, justice has yet to arrive. A real commitment is urgently needed—one that involves critical thinking, empathy, and courage to transform institutional structures that continue to fail those who need them most.

I close with two phrases:

"Impunity is not just forgetfulness: it is a form of violence that repeats itself every day."

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice every where."

— Martin Luther King Jr.