

# *Mexican Women Raped and Beaten by Police Deliver Testimony*

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Washington, November 17 (RHC)-- Eleven Mexican women who were sexually tortured during a brutal police crackdown in 2006 have delivered their testimony before a court in the United States. The hearing at the Inter-American Court, which is part of the Organization of American States, began this week in Washington D.C., the association of victims confirmed.

The court ruling, unlike the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) recommendation, is binding and could create a precedent to better address sexual abuses by Mexico's federal security forces in the future.

In December 2015, the commission ruled in favor of the victims: residents from the small community of San Salvador Atenco, who blocked a highway in March 2006 to protest the violent eviction by police forces of flower sellers from a local market. Although the state of Atenco admitted partial responsibility in 2013, it failed to deliver justice for the victims. The federal forces involved in the abuses have yet to be reprimanded.

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, then governor of the state, ordered hundreds of state police to

remove the blockade. Violent confrontations followed, in which two protesters died and at least 217 people — mostly women — were arrested, before being packed onto buses and sent to distant prisons.

"The women — a mix of merchants, students and activists — were raped, beaten, penetrated with metal objects, robbed and humiliated, made to sing aloud to entertain the police," the IACHR report said. "One was forced to perform oral sex on multiple officers. After the women were imprisoned, days passed before they were given proper medical examinations."

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