

ACTION OCS-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ALS-01	AMAD-00	CA-00	CIAE-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	WHA-00	DS-00	UTED-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	LAB-01	NSAE-00	PA-00	SCT-00	TEST-00	R-00	ECA-00
	DSCC-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	/002W		

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R 201907Z FEB 04
 FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
 TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 SECSTATE WASHDC 1815
 INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
 AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ

UNCLAS CIUDAD JUAREZ 002746

E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: CASC, PHUM, PREL, ASDEC, ALOW, MX
 SUBJECT: EACT FW: MURDERED AND MISSING WOMEN OF CIUDAD JUAREZ DRAW
 INTERNATIONAL PROTEST

SUMMARY

1. From February 13 -15, 2004, U, S. Congressional Representatives Hilda Solis (D - CA) and Janice Schakowsky (D - Ill) joined merican activist and playwright Eve Ensler, actresses Jane Fonda and Sally Field, in conjunction with Amnesty International in Ciudad Juarez for the 2004 V-Day protest of violence against women. The highlight of the V-Day protest was the February 14 peaceful march of approximately 2,500 Mexican and American demonstrators through downtown El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. The purpose of these V-Day events was to draw attention to the unsolved murders and disappearances of approximately 300 women and girls in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua state over the past 10 years. The event received international media coverage. Activists and special Mexican federal appointees repeatedly pointed to local, state, and federal incompetence and/or unwillingness to fulfill obligations to secure justice for the families of the young women.

V-DAY EVENTS

2. Consul General Parker hosted a pre-event reception at his residence on February 13, to enable the V-Day organizers to informally meet Mexican federal, state and local officials in Ciudad Juarez. Despite an unusual snow on the day of the event, approximately 150 invitees were in attendance. Conspicuously absent from this reception were all invited guests from the Chihuahua state government. PAN gubernatorial candidate Javier

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
 DATE/CASE ID: 06 JUL 2006 200502506

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Corral, on the contrary, was present. At the request of Representatives Solis and Schakowsky, the reception was followed by a private meeting between V-Day organizers, the recently appointed Mexican Federal Commissioner for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence in Ciudad Juarez Guadalupe Morfin Otero and Special Prosecutor for the Investigation of Women's Homicides in Ciudad Juarez Maria Lopez Urbina. The meeting was a frank and informative exchange which helped the American delegation to gain a better understanding of the tremendous handicaps and challenges facing Mexican authorities in solving any of the murders.

3. The events of February 14 began with a standing-room-only conference, at the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez, chaired by local NGO coordinator Maria Elena Ramos Rodriguez. PRD congresswoman Marcela Lagarde, in a comprehensive analysis, outlined the nature of "feminicidio," a term she coined to describe the wide range of crimes against women occurring in Mexico. She condemned Mexican officials' silence along with their investigative negligence. Lagarde demanded an end to impunity from prosecution of the perpetrators of violence, the beginning of professional investigations to obtain clear facts for each case, public policy legislation, and use of the press as a means to educate the public. Guadalupe Morfin Otero, followed-up the cry for justice by noting that silence only contributes to the path of violence. In an attempt to heal tensions within the community Morfin stressed that her commission would be inclusive, allowing for input from all of civil society, including that of international organizations, as asking and receiving solidarity constituted a fundamental human right.

4. Activist Eve Ensler, opening an equally packed press conference, asked authorities to stop harassment and coercion of the victims' families. Congresswoman Hilda Solis urged U.S. citizens present to support H.Res. 466 to place the murders of young women in Mexico on the bilateral agenda between that country and the USG, while Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky mentioned the conditions of exploitation and insecurity women face in the assembly plants. She stated there would be zero tolerance for violence against women. Jane Fonda expressed her dismay that it took international movie stars to draw the press out of their stupor. The speakers reiterated the need for proper funding and increased power for Special Commissioner Guadalupe Morfin and Special Prosecutor Maria Lopez Urbina, lest their mandates become a "cruel charade".

5. A pre-march rally was held in El Paso, where Carol Kiecker, mother of Amcit Cynthia Kiecker (currently on trial in Chihuahua for the murder of a disappeared girl), spoke about her

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daughter's case and the possible state involvement in her daughter's alleged torture and the inconsistencies in evidence submitted by the prosecutor. Following the pre-march activities on both sides of the border, two columns of protesters, from El Paso and from Juarez--by some estimates, between two and three thousand--converged at Stanton Bridge, on the Juarez side, and marched toward the downtown rally point, Monumento a Benito Juarez, for an ecumenical service. Protestors reminded mothers they were not alone in their struggle for justice against negligence and corruption.

6. Though the V-Day activities and rally did create significant local press coverage, not all of the victims' families participated. Some felt the circus-like atmosphere (effigies, drums, the bazaar outside of a free theatrical performance of

"The Vagina Monologues" featuring American actresses Sally Field, Jane Fonda and Christine Lahti) violated the solemnity they wished for their deceased. Some considered the program a descent upon the city from the outside and an agenda determined by interests at odds with the sensitivities of those most touched by the tragedies.

COMMENT

7. V-Day events in Ciudad Juarez successfully accomplished the goals of bringing together most parties, organizations and government officials interested in finding a solution to the murder of women in this border town; focusing international and local attention to the miscarriage of justice that has been plaguing Ciudad Juarez for ten years; and making the unsolved crimes of murdered women a subject of public discussion and debate in Ciudad Juarez. Most importantly, V-Day activities have successfully placed the issue of the murdered women on the agendas of the two primary candidates for governor of Chihuahua. This may explain PAN gubernatorial candidate Corral's presence at the CG's reception. As the state moves towards the July elections it will become evident as to what extent the new governor will make the investigation a priority of his administration.

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