



International Fair Trial Day



## 2023 Ebru Timtik Award Goes to Two Prominent Lawyers and Human Rights Defenders from Mexico

The 2023 Ebru Timtik Award has been granted to two prominent lawyers and human rights defenders from Mexico:

### **Alicia de los Ríos Merino & Ana Yeli Pérez Garrido**

*"I studied law with the motivation to find you. When I turned 25, in June 2002, your mother Alicia, your sister Martha and I, accompanied by the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre, had for the first time the opportunity to criminally denounce your disappearance before the Special Prosecutor's Office for Social and Political Movements of the Past (FEMOSPP)."*<sup>1</sup>

**Alicia de los Rios Merino - Letter to her mother**

*"If equality is not achieved in all areas, we cannot talk about the country's development. It is useless if women's right to life is not guaranteed, because we can lose it in our homes or by going out on the streets, because there are no guarantees of security for us."*<sup>2</sup>

**Ana Yeli Pérez Garrido.**

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<sup>1</sup> Alicia de los Rios Merino, *Letter to mother about my meeting with the perpetrators of her disappearance.*

<sup>2</sup> [México carece de política de Estado para combatir feminicidios: Pérez Garrido \(contralinea.com.mx\)](https://contralinea.com.mx)



International Fair Trial Day

## Alicia de los Ríos Merino



Alicia de los Ríos Merino holds a PhD in History and Ethnohistory from the National School of Anthropology and History. She works as a full-time lecturer and researcher in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua. She researches the history of the present time through oral history on insurgencies, counter-insurgencies and collectives of relatives of disappeared people in Mexico from the second half of the 20th century until today. She belongs to research associations and networks such as the Red Nacional de Investigación Historia del Tiempo Presente and the Red Iberoamericana de Resistencias y Memorias, among others. As a lawyer and daughter of a person who disappeared in the context of the counterinsurgency, she has been assisting the Attorney General's Office in seven cases of serious human rights violations since 2002.

Alicia is a lawyer and historian who has dedicated her life to the search for her mother, a victim of forced disappearance in the 1970s, and accompanies victims of human rights violations. She was a member of Eureka, the first collective in Mexico made up of relatives of disappeared persons. She is noted for her permanent work in demanding justice for her mother and the more than 100,000 disappeared persons in Mexico. She forced the Mexican state to create the Truth Commission, of which she is a pillar and a beacon of hope.



International Fair Trial Day

## Ana Yeli Pérez Garrido



Ana Yeli Pérez Garrido is a feminist lawyer, human rights defender, Mexican; founder and director of the organisation Justicia Pro Persona, legal advisor to the National Citizen Observatory on Femicide and member of the Latin American Network of Strategic Litigation (ReLeg).

She has sensitively accompanied and represented women, girls and adolescents who have been victims of disappearance, torture and sexual and family violence; attempted femicide and femicide; including cases against police or military. She has bravely carried out her work in the context of generalised violence against women, impunity, in territories controlled by organised crime groups, work which is extremely risky for defenders and journalists. Despite the fact that the cases in which she has been involved have had serious irregularities with respect to the investigation of those cases and significant due process violations, she has succeeded in obtaining positive results for her clients, making visible situations of vulnerability and gender inequality, forcing judges to establish measures for reparation of damages and generating important parameters for access to justice.

Throughout her career, she has promoted litigation and advocacy strategies that have had results in the modification of regulatory frameworks and the creation of public policies for the prevention, attention, and punishment of violence against women and girls in the country, including, for example, with respect to the criminalisation of femicide; the development of protocols for the investigation of the crime of femicide and disappearance; the creation of specialised prosecutors for the investigation of crimes and serious human rights violations related to femicide and enforced disappearance of persons; and the establishment of the first Analysis and Context Units in the country, She has also worked on the technical strengthening of law enforcement and justice administration bodies, through training processes with a gender and human rights approach.



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## Conclusion & Announcement from the Selection Committee

The selection committee of the Ebru Timtik Award 2023 considered three main elements: the defence of the right to a fair trial, the defence of human rights, and the defence of the most vulnerable people.

The selection committee believes that Alicia de los Ríos Merino deserves this award because, faced with the forced disappearance of her mother in the 1970s, beyond being a victim herself, she chose to study and work on behalf of those who have suffered the heinous policy of disappearance of human beings, assisting since 2002 in seven cases of serious human rights violations before the Attorney General's Office of the Republic. Alicia also represents the thousands of people in Mexico and Latin America who continue to search for their relatives.

Ana Yeli Pérez Garrido's work is particularly relevant in a country where the levels of gender-based violence against women result in the violent deaths (feminicides) of 11 women every day, many of which go unpunished thanks to a patriarchal and unjust criminal justice system. Her legal work and accompaniment have not been without risk, given the crimes and human rights violations she has denounced, which not only point to individual perpetrators, but also to Mexican state authorities.