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## Mexico

# HUMAN RIGHTS

### CONTEXT



**Sixty-three** Journalists and **108** human rights defenders were **killed** between December **2018** and October **2022** in Mexico.



As of October 2022, the GOM acknowledges the disappearances of **106,000+** people.



In 2021, the GOM registered the findings of **174** clandestine graves.



**978 femicides** were reported in **2021**.

### OVERVIEW

Significant human rights violations, including torture, forced disappearances, and femicides persist in Mexico, enabled by high rates of impunity. Organized crime, and its pernicious effect on governance, rule of law and corruption, drives many human rights violations. Journalists, human rights defenders, and environmental activists, whose work often exposes corruption and threatens illicit local power dynamics, continue to be targeted, threatened, and killed. Due to a legacy of violence and mass killings, there is a significant forensic backlog to identify disappearances victims and bring closure and justice to their families.

### OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE SYSTEMS TO PREVENT & ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

USAID collaborates with the Government of Mexico (GOM) to strengthen its systems to prevent, investigate, and prosecute human rights abuses. Assistance also supports civil society organizations (CSOs) to engage the GOM and represent victims' rights on issues related to freedom of expression, gender-based violence (GBV), torture, and disappearances. USAID partnerships with federal and state institutions and CSOs improve the accountability and effectiveness of human rights systems, access to truth and justice, and the quality of preventative and protective measures for victims (including those under threat) of human rights violations.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AS A RESULT OF USAID SUPPORT



With USAID assistance, authorities in **Chihuahua** and **Coahuila** generated **1,066 family reference samples**, positively identifying **81 deceased persons**.



USAID supports **Mexico's National Protection Program**, which as of November 2022 offered **protection plans with security measures** for **560 journalists** and **1,112 Human Rights Defenders**.



In **Nuevo León**, USAID-trained civil society organizations assisted **7,523 female victims** of **gender-based violence**.

**Human Rights Accountability Activity, RED-DH (Chemonics)** \$24m, 2022-2025. This activity partners with the GOM to provide more effective and accountable responses to grave human rights violations, namely forced disappearances and torture. It strengthens national human rights oversight mechanisms, improves inter-governmental coordination, supports state-level implementation of human rights laws and safeguards, and provides targeted forensic technical assistance to address the backlog of unidentified remains of disappearances victims in five priority states.

**For the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, PDP (Tetra Tech/Management Systems International)** \$13.4m, 2021-2026. This activity partners with governmental and non-governmental actors to protect journalists, human rights defenders and environmental activists, including support to the GOM's National Protection Mechanism. It supports an enabling environment in which they can safely, without fear of harm or harassment, engage in their important work and reduces impunity for crimes committed against them.

**No More Femicides (Fundación IDEA)** \$2.5m, 2018-2023. This activity supports state government institutions in Nuevo León to address specific challenges in the prevention, classification, investigation, and prosecution of violent crimes against women and girls, including femicides. Worldwide, this is the first USAID Activity designed with a targeted and integrated approach to prevent and address femicides.

**Justice for the Disappeared in Chihuahua (Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres / Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense)** \$2.47m, 2018-2023. This activity advances access to truth and justice for victims of disappearances and their family members in Chihuahua State. In partnership with Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team, this activity supports forensic investigations to identify disappearances victims, more effective prosecution of cases, and increased advocacy and services for victims and their families.

**Strengthening Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, SAFE (Article 19/Mexico)** \$2m (USAID) / \$2m (Leverage), 2021-2024. This activity improves respect for freedom of expression in Mexico by documenting and analyzing attacks against journalists, increasing the national and international visibility of offenses, and promoting government transparency and accountability in journalist protection. Through its advocacy efforts, Article 19 has litigated emblematic freedom of expression cases, setting important judicial precedents for future cases. It has also advocated against forced or self-censorship of journalists.

**Towards a New Understanding of Femicides in Nuevo Leon (Data Cívica)** \$1.27m (USAID) 2019-2023. This activity improves state prevention and response to femicides through empowering female victims of GBV and CSOs to monitor the state response and advocate for and litigate femicide cases.

**Documenta Tortura (Documenta A.C.)** \$803,000 (USAID) / \$803,000 (Leverage), 2019-2023. This activity aims to reduce the use of torture in Baja California, Coahuila and Jalisco by raising public awareness and changing attitudes toward torture, and strengthening local actors to investigate, prevent and sanction torture.