



REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS.

Mexico, 2019



Report on the situation of environmental human rights
defenders

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I. Introduction.

Mexico's record on human rights has been characterized by the sociopolitical violence which has prevailed since 2006 in the context of the country's war on drug trafficking, in which we have seen a systematic and widespread pattern of serious human rights violations by the Mexican state, including forced disappearance, torture, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial executions, massacres, forced displacement of people, and findings of clandestine gravesites¹. It is this context that environmental human rights defenders exercise such rights, and as a result such sociopolitical and patriarchal violence has a disproportionate impact on women human rights defenders. The complexity of different ways violence can be expressed has become one of the greatest obstacles to exercising the right to defend human rights in Mexico.

The year 2019 was a convulsive period for the defense of human rights in the world and in Latin America. Protests against acts of corruption, reforms, and enactment of laws violating human rights and forms of governing multiplied, and states reacted by repressing social protests committing various human rights violations against protesters exercising their rights to freedom of speech and to defend human rights². This has also deepened the crisis surrounding the discussion of and struggle for sustainable development, the visions of development and life of indigenous peoples and peasants confronting an economic system which prioritizes a hegemonic vision of development which has trampled their economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights.

The international organization Front Line Defenders has disseminated figures on killings of defenders worldwide. Latin America remains in first place in such killings. The countries in the region with the most confirmed killings were Colombia (106); Honduras (31); Brazil (23); and Mexico (23); and Guatemala (15). Also, it has been confirmed that in 85% of cases the victims were previously threatened; in other words, before murders were committed, human rights defenders were subjected to a string of various acts of aggression³.

In this report, we found that 13% of cases involved killings of women and 40% of all killings targeted persons who defended rights of indigenous peoples, land, territory, and the environment.⁴

At the regional level, based on the report by Front Line Defenders, Mexico shares third place with Brazil among countries with the most human rights defenders killed, although the numbers were lower than in 2018. After killings, the most common aggression the organization reported in cases from Latin America involved threats, smear campaigns, and verbal abuse.⁵

¹ Aluna, "Si no somos Nosotras, ¿Quiénes?, si no es ahora, ¿Cuándo?," Mexico, August 2019, p. 1.

² The Mexican state assumed the international commitment to protect the work of environmental human rights defenders in accordance with the *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, approved in 1998, which states that Each State shall adopt such legislative, administrative and other steps as may be necessary to ensure that the rights and freedoms of human rights defenders are effectively guaranteed.

³ Front Line Defenders, *Global Analysis 2019*, pp. 5-6. Available at: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2019_web.pdf

⁴ *Idem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

Despite the measures the Mexican state has taken, our findings reveal that the country has not advanced in effecting structural change to create appropriate and safe conditions to exercise the right to defend human rights. Today, we see a continuing stream of discourse and narrative from the government seeking to disqualify and stigmatize the defense of human rights, which in turn polarizes perceptions in the broader society, delegitimizing defenders and creating a hostile climate in which they can be subject to further aggressions.

Environmental human rights defenders find themselves in a situation of risk aggravated by the political and economic interests they oppose, especially when dealing with the implementation of large-scale infrastructure and development projects. Also, impunity plays a fundamental role in this situation persisting and worsening to the point where people are unable to defend human rights.

Responsibility for perpetrating such aggressions has been imputed to the government, primarily, but also to other aggressors such as company personnel, paramilitary groups, armed groups, and members of the same communities, among others. In the sphere of business activity, it is important to recall that industry has an obligation to respect human rights under the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)*⁶. Worldwide, in 2019 there were 572 documented attacks on defenders related to abuses in business activity. The sectors linked to the majority of such aggressions were mining (143); agrobusiness (85); waste management (51), and renewable energy (47). Most of the attacks were concentrated in Latin America and Asia. The country with the most attacks reported is Honduras. Other countries with high numbers of aggressions are Colombia, Mexico, Russia, India, the Philippines, Brazil, Peru, and Guatemala⁷.

In this regard, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, published his report on the impunity which persists in human rights violations committed against defenders of such rights and identified the challenges of combating it.

In this sense, Forst mentioned that “[i]mpunity facilitates the recurrence of human rights violations, weakens people’s trust in the rule of law and leaves them defenseless when confronted with injustice. Not only does it prevent recognition and reparation of the physical, social and psychological harm done to victims, but it also has profound and insidious consequences at all levels of society, as it undermines the fight against all forms of violence and obstructs access to the truth and to learning from experience.”⁸ Impunity increases the impact of human rights violations committed against human rights defenders, as it conveys a lack of recognition for their role in society and constitutes an invitation to continue violating their rights. One of the basic aspects of supporting such environments is to ensure access to justice and an end to impunity⁹.

⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [OHCHR], (2011). *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework*, HR/PUB/11/04. New York and Geneva: OHCHR, Human Rights Council.

⁷ Business and Human Rights Resource Center, *Human Rights Defenders and Business*, January 2020 Snapshot. Available at: <https://dispatches.business-humanrights.org/hrd-january-2020/index.html>

⁸ Forst, Michel, UN, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, A/74/159, July 15, 2019, par. 2.

⁹ *Ibidem*, par. 4 and 7.

In this context, the Mexican Center for Environmental Law (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental A.C. (CEMDA)) publishes an annual analysis of the situation of aggressions against defenders of the rights to land, territory, and environment in Mexico. Most recently, it released the sixth *Report on the situation of environmental defenders in Mexico*, containing figures on aggressions which occurred between January 1 and December 31, 2019, with itemized statistics on points like number of cases by state; type of victim, aggressor, and aggression; and sector with which cases are linked. Also, the report presents an overview of such data for the years 2012 to 2018, from which we have been able to identify some tendencies and patterns of violence.

This year, it was decided to broaden the analysis of the situation of environmental defenders in Mexico to examine the issue of stigmatization as one of the aggressions which are commonly overlooked but have substantial impact on recognition of the right to defend human rights and the people who exercise that right. In many cases of murder, it has been found that defenders had previously been targeted by different forms of aggression, such as death threats and public shaming, among others; in this sense, stigmatization in discourse, which is later reflected in the media and in public opinion, may foster a climate of hostility and aggravate the risk. This is why in this report we take time for reflection to identify stigmatization and its forms and types of impact.

Subsequently, the report analyzes the role of the Protective Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, created by the Mexican state, its challenges, and obstacles in the way to the successful construction and implementation of a comprehensive public policy of protection in accordance with the standards developed by the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights, insisting on the need for Mexico to ratify the Escazú Agreement. Finally, this report concludes with a series of conclusions and recommendations for the Mexican state on ways to comprehensively address the issue and create measures and policies with a differential and gender-based approach.

II. Methodology.

This report, by means of a qualitative analysis, describes the context in which the right to defend environmental human rights in Mexico is exercised. This document seeks to highlight the risk to which environmental human rights defenders are exposed. The CEMDA, in collaboration with CartoCritica, conducted an ongoing analysis of cases, through monitoring and recording information on aggressions against defenders of the human rights to land, territory, and environment¹⁰.

Sources of information for such monitoring include articles from print and digital media, published by around 200 local and national media outlets, as well as information, advice the CEMDA provides for environmental defenders and civil society organizations, cases the organization follows, and information and urgent actions provided by other civil society organizations and institutions involved in advocacy for human rights defenders.

In this regard, we need to emphasize that, given the context of violence, impunity, and criminalization to which environmental defenders are exposed, they do not always report these situations to law enforcement, and in some cases to the media, out of fear of the consequences it could have for their lives and those of their families. In Mexico, publicly denouncing an aggression may increase the risk, given the lack of follow up and the resulting impunity of aggressors, added to the stigmatization of rights defenders, especially women defenders, by the authorities.

At times, defenders take aggressions as a natural consequence of exercising the right to defend human rights, normalizing this kind of violence. As a result, the data shown in this report do not include all aggressions which have occurred in the country, but only a small sample of the attacks, which include aggressions which have been reported in the press, and by other civil society organizations and in publicly available documentation on cases. Also, requests for public information were filed with the Protective Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists to gain access to official figures on beneficiaries, protective measures ordered, and other data which may contribute to our research.

The Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (Spanish acronym CIDH) has observed that a lack of official statistics from states is one of the reasons it lacks tools to identify the potential seriousness of various obstacles for its human rights advocacy, particularly on groups in situations of acute vulnerability or historical discrimination. For that reason, the CIDH has stressed the importance of establishing an official register to compile detailed, precise, and up-to-date statistics on attacks and acts of violence and intimidation as an essential pre-requisite to design, implement, and evaluate effective public policies on prevention, protection, and criminal prosecution of violence against human rights defenders¹¹. The CEMDA sees these exercises from civil society as helping to provide a stronger perspective and analysis of the issues and contribute to possible solutions.

¹⁰ In this collaboration, changes were made to the categories and variables of analysis like identifying the sector and subsector related to aggressions. Likewise, the figures were modified on finding that certain news reports reported more than one act of aggression, for which reason it was decided to count them, a process which confirmed a total of 460 attacks committed from 2012 through 2018.

¹¹ CIDH, "Políticas Integrales de Protección de Personas Defensoras," OEA/Ser.L/V/II, Doc. 207/17, 29 December 2017, par. 144-145.

III. Aggressions against environmental human rights defenders in Mexico.

Since the year 2012, the CEMDA has worked constantly to record attacks and aggressions committed against environmental human rights defenders. While figures have varied year to year, it has been observed that violence against this group of human rights defenders is a constant red flag which obliges civil society to continue to raise the visibility of the situation to produce data which support a more accurate reading of our reality and help the Mexican state develop measures and public policies to foment and construct a favorable, violence-free climate for the defense of human rights and the defense of the environment, land, and territory in Mexico.

In this section we present, on the one hand, the systematization of data published in the first 5 CEMDA reports, covering aggressions reported from January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2018; on the other hand, we present data for the period from January 1 through December 31, 2019.

III.I Systematization of aggressions against environmental human rights defenders in the last seven years (2012-2018).

The CEMDA presents this first analysis of the period 2012 to 2018 with the aim of detecting tendencies and patterns in attacks and aggressions committed against people who have defended the environment, land, and territory in Mexico over the last seven years. The table below shows the final results on attacks identified by year, including figures from 2019, for which our analysis will be presented subsequently.

Year	Number of attacks
2012	24
2013	64
2014	78
2015	107
2016	85
2017	53
2018	49
2019	39
Total	499

Table 1. Number of attacks on environmental defenders by year (2012-2019).

In the period from January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2018, we identified 460 cases of attacks on defenders of the rights to land, territory, and environment. The years in which we observed the greatest numbers of aggressions are 2015 and 2016, with 107 and 85 attacks respectively. It is highly relevant to note, as part of the context, that this spike in aggressions occurred after a process of reforms in the energy sector starting with the proposal to amend the Mexican Constitution, passed by the Congress in December 2013 and completed in August 2014 with the enactment of nine secondary laws and amendments to twelve more.

These reforms entailed the implementation of various massive infrastructure projects nationwide, including gas pipelines, oil production, renewable energy facilities, and geothermal plants. It is important to mention that, in the oil industry, the changes to Articles 25, 27, and 28 of the Constitution led to the elimination of the exclusive role the state had played in exploration, production, and refining since 1938, when the oil industry was expropriated and Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex) was founded. Starting in 2013, private entities were allowed to receive contracts for exploitation, as well as permits for activities related to refining and petrochemicals¹².

These reforms in the energy sector have been questioned by several civil society organizations because the implementation of large-scale energy projects without the proper environmental and social safeguards (for example the obligation to obtain the consent of indigenous communities affected significantly by such energy projects was not included) causes over-exploitation of natural resources, appropriation of territories of indigenous and peasant communities, and incitation and provocation of social and environmental conflicts, placing indigenous and peasant communities in a vulnerable position¹³.

In addition, 80% of Mexico's forests and jungles are under systems of communal ownership¹⁴. The management, use, and enjoyment of such collective property are in (*sic*) territories of indigenous peoples and similar communities. Their ecosystems are constantly affected by the implementation and construction of various large-scale projects, the consequences of which include illegal appropriation of indigenous territories and unfettered extraction of natural resources, like water.

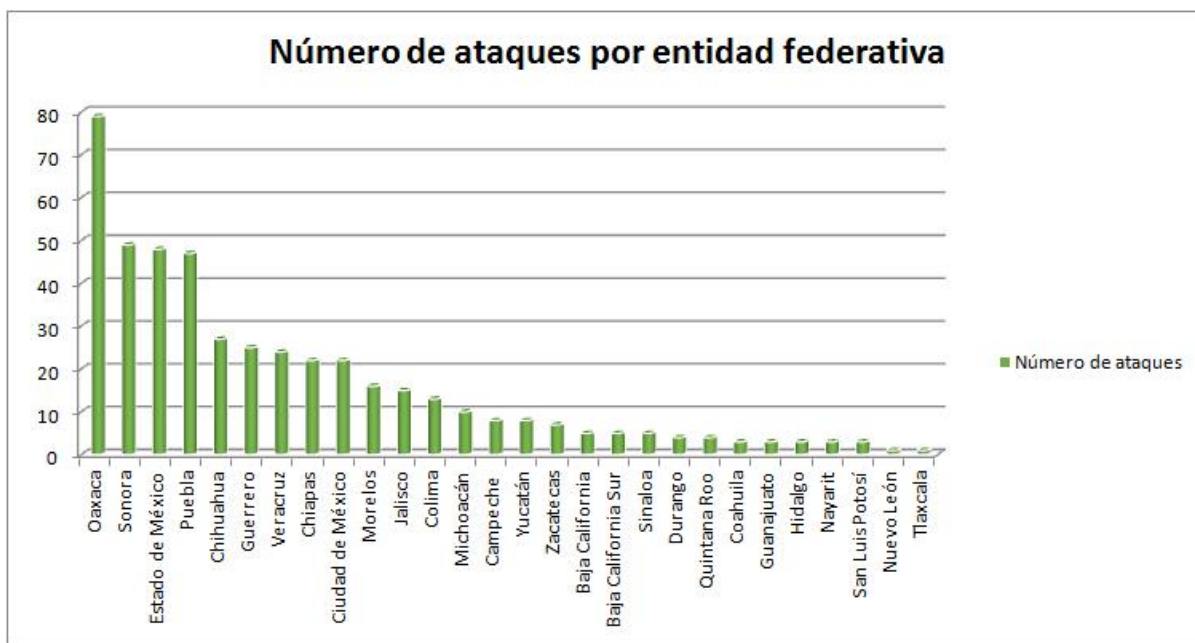
These mega-projects or development projects produce a series of social and environmental impacts, which can lead to violations of human rights like environment, territory, water, food, and/or health, in addition to local conflicts and damage to the social and communal fabric. Members of communities who, in defense of their rights, territory, and lifestyle, protest and reject such projects are often victims of aggression, as the perpetrators seek to impede and repress the defense of their environmental human rights.

¹² Center for Analysis and Research, "La Reforma energética en México: retrocesos en la gobernanza democrática de los recursos naturales." Available at: <https://fundar.org.mx/la-reforma-energetica-en-mexico-retrocesos-en-la-gobernanza-democratica-de-los-recursos-naturales/>

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 188-190.

¹⁴ FAO. "Caracterización del Sector Forestal". Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/j2215s/j2215s06.htm>. Visited August 21, 2019.

Of 460 aggressions reported between 2012 and 2018, 175 threats (38%), 84 physical aggressions (18%), 82 cases of criminalization (17.8%), 70 of intimidation (15.20%) and -the most serious- 68 cases of homicide (13%) were identified. In 29% of all cases, aggressions were associated with energy projects, especially those related to hydroelectric plants (66 cases) and wind power projects (53 cases). The states with the highest number of attacks in the period were Oaxaca, con 79 attacks, Sonora with 49, and the State of Mexico with 48 cases of aggressions. The states with the fewest attacks in the same period were Nuevo Leon, with one attack, and Tlaxcala, with one case of aggression. On the other hand, no aggressions were reported in Aguascalientes, Queretaro, Tamaulipas, and Tabasco.



Graph 1. Number of aggressions against environmental defenders reported by the CEMDA by state (2012-2018).

Oaxaca has been the state with the highest number of attacks in these years; specifically, the greatest concentration of attacks have occurred in Juchitan de Zaragoza, where aggressions have occurred in the context of construction of energy projects, specifically generation of wind power. The years in which Juchitan de Zaragoza saw the most attacks were 2013 and 2014, with a total of 28 and 20 attacks respectively. It is important to mention that the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is one of the regions with the greatest potential for wind power, with the first wind farm built in 1994¹⁵. Today, there are 28,¹⁶ providing power to a group of large corporations or industries.

¹⁵ Sergio Juarez Hernandez and Gabriel Leon. "Energía Eólica en el Istmo de Tehuantepec: desarrollo, actores y oposición social." School of Engineering, UNAM-Mexico, 2014. Available at: http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0301-70362014000300007

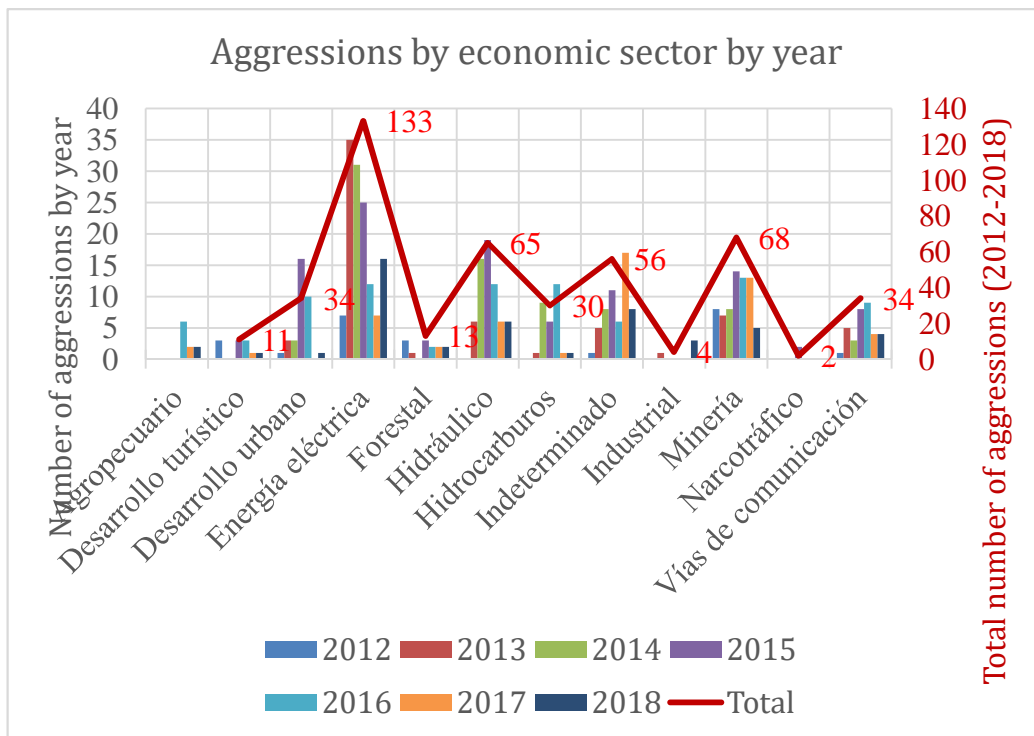
¹⁶ Steve, Oscar, Xataka, "Oaxaca es un gigante en energía eólica en Juchitán se estrenó el parque eólico más grande de México y América Latina," May 30, 2019. Available at: <https://www.xataka.com.mx/energia/oaxaca-gigante-energia-eolica-juchitan-se-estreno-parque-eolico-grande-mexico-america-latina>

State	Number of attacks
Oaxaca	79
Sonora	49
State of Mexico	48
Puebla	47
Chihuahua	27
Guerrero	25
Veracruz	24
Chiapas	22
Mexico City	22
Morelos	16
Jalisco	15
Colima	13
Michoacan	10
Campeche	8
Yucatan	8
Zacatecas	7
Baja California	5
Baja California Sur	5
Sinaloa	5
Durango	4
Quintana Roo	4

Coahuila	3
Guanajuato	3
Hidalgo	3
Nayarit	3
San Luis Potosi	3
Nuevo Leon	1
Tlaxcala	1

Table 2. Number of attacks by state (2012-2018)

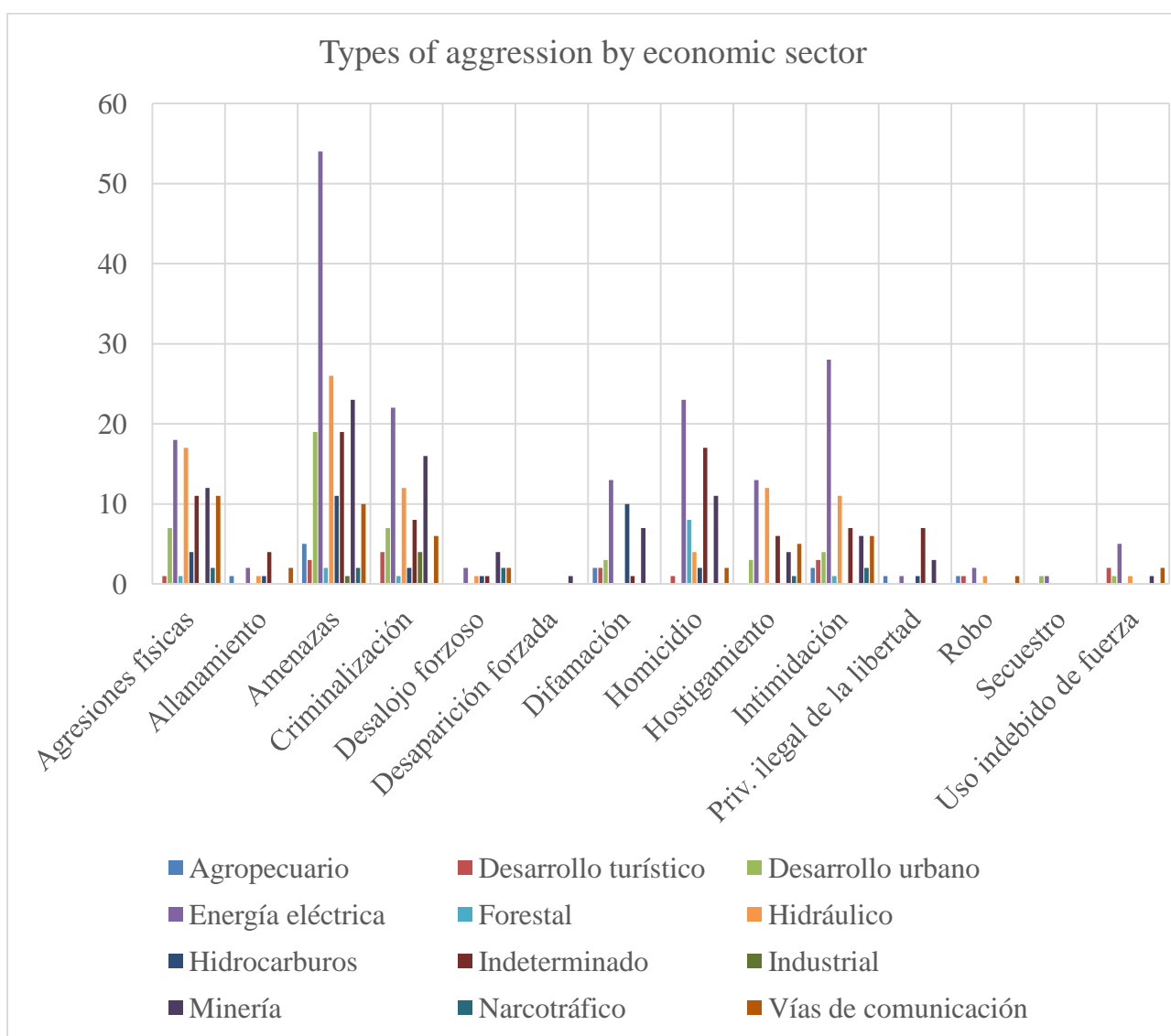
In the period from 2012 to 2018, the energy sector saw the most aggressions, reporting 133 cases, accounting for 29% of all attacks. Specifically, the subsector with most aggressions was hydroelectric in different parts of the country, with 66 attacks, followed by wind power with 53. As mentioned before, a majority of these aggressions are related to wind power projects in Juchitan de Zaragoza. The second sector with the most attacks was mining (68), followed closely by the water with 65, accounting for 15% and 14% of attacks, respectively. Almost half the aggressions reported in relation to the water sector are related to the construction of the Independencia water pipeline in Sonora.



Graph 2. Aggressions by economic sector by year (2012-2018).

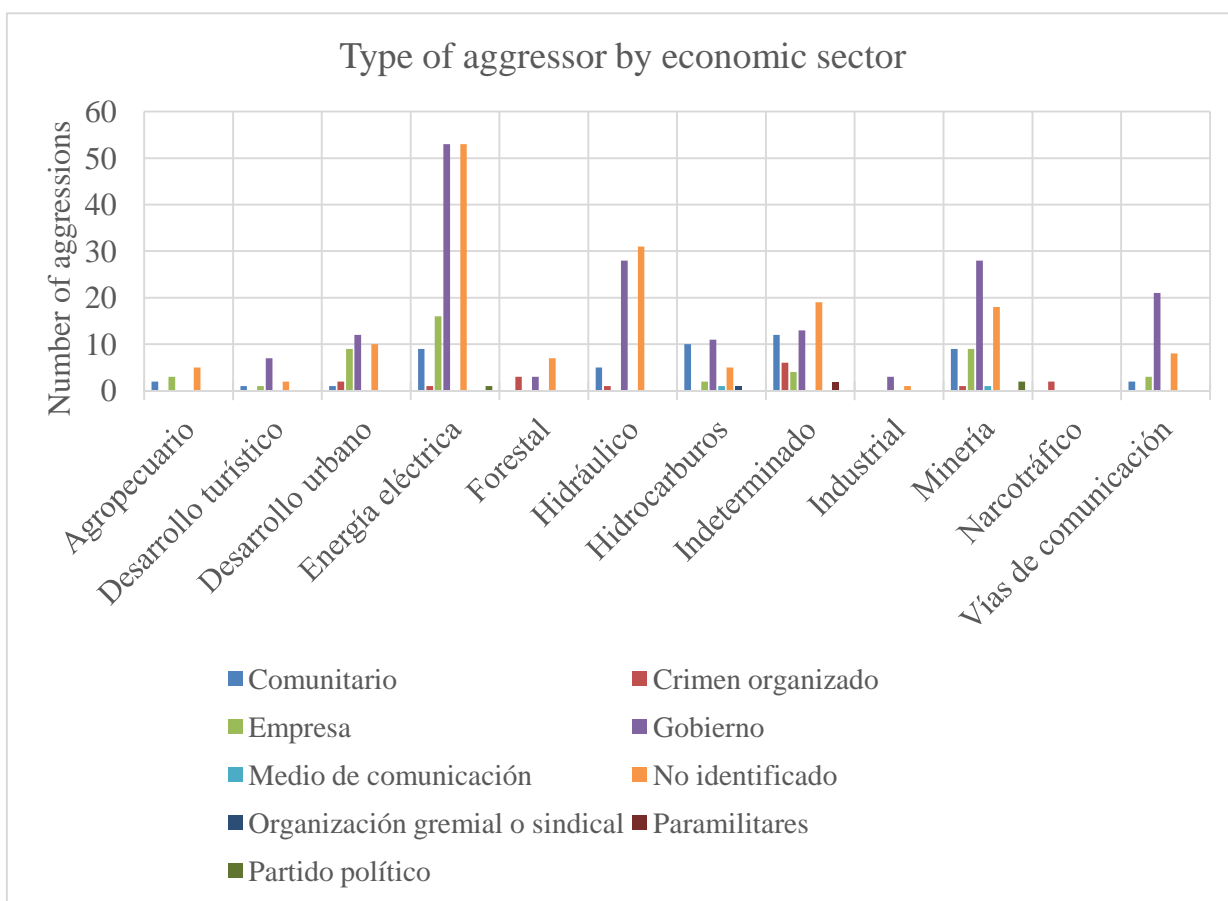
In the data collected, we observe that the most common type of aggression between the years 2012 and 2018 was threats, with 175 such attacks (38% of the total). Such threats often lead to other forms of aggression such as stigmatization, criminalization, or homicide, among others. Also, the next most common attacks were physical aggressions, with 84 cases, and criminalization with 82, accounting for 18% and 17.8% respectively. The next most common form of aggression in the period examined was intimidation, with 70 attacks (15.20% of aggressions).

Of the 460 cases reported as attacks, 68 were homicides, in other words 13% of reported attacks which occurred in the years 2012 through 2018 resulted in at least one fatality. Harassment and defamation were also common occurrences, with 44 and 37 cases respectively, accounting for 9.5% and 8% of attacks.



Graph 3. Types of aggression by economic sector (2012-2018).

In this period we observe that the government was presumably responsible for 39% of attacks against defenders of land, territory, and environment, with a total of 179 aggressions. Of those, the majority were carried out by a local authority, with 114 cases of aggression (63.7%); 42 of the attacks were presumably committed by municipal authorities (23.5%); and in 22 of the cases, responsibility was imputed to the federal government. In this analysis, we observed a greater involvement of authorities at the state level in such aggressions. The authorities are the primary aggressor named and the aggressions they commit most frequently are criminalization, threats, and physical aggressions. The greatest number of aggressions are related to electrical projects, mining, and construction of dams. Also, the Mexican authorities have been named in 75% of aggressions in the industrial sector, 64% in tourist development, and 62% in means of communication.



Graph 4. Type of aggressor by economic sector (2012-2018).

Finally, we were unable to obtain complete figures on aggressions committed against women and men because in most cases the victims' gender was not reported in national and local news reports, preventing us from using such data in our report for purposes of a gender-based analysis of aggressions.

III.II Aggressions against environmental human rights defenders in 2019.

Below, we present the figures on attacks and aggressions against environmental human rights defenders which the CEMDA reported in the period from January 1 through December 31, 2019.

A) Cases reported.

In the period from January 1 through December 31, 2019, 39 attacks on defenders of the rights to land, territory, and environment were identified, observing a lower number of attacks than in previous years. As regards the number of aggressions, 2019 had the lowest figure in the last six years, except 2012 when 24 cases were reported. However, it is necessary to point out that of the 39 cases reported in 2019, almost one third were homicides, with 15 environmental defenders killed and one attempted homicide. It is highly alarming that homicide continues to appear as one of the top forms of aggression against defenders of environment, land, and territory.

Among the most violent cases which occurred in 2019 are the murder, in the state of Morelos, of Samir Flores Soberanes, who held a position of leadership and prominence in the defense of territory against the implementation of the Morelos Integral Project (Spanish acronym PIM) and was a founder of the Amilcingo community radio station. Samir was murdered on February 27, 2019, outside his home, on the eve of a citizen poll on the project proposed by the president, mere days after the president referred to the defenders of the People's Front for the Defense of Land and Water (*Frente de Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra y el Agua*), to which Samir belonged, as opponents of the thermoelectric project supported by the state¹⁷. Samir had been threatened several times dating back to the year 2012. In the wake of his murder, there have been more aggressions related to criminalization and harassment against organizations and communities opposed to the project.

On the other hand, on May 1, 2019, Otilia Martínez Cruz and her son, Gregorio Chaparro Cruz, were murdered outside their home with multiple bullet wounds. Otilia was the niece of Julian Carrillo, another defender of the environment, who was killed in 2018, and for years they had defended the territory of Chihuahua's Rarámuri indigenous people against illegal logging. It should be noted that these killings occurred in a context marked by the murders of at least ten other activists and defenders of territory in the Tarahumara region for defending forests and territory in recent years.¹⁸

Another prominent case involved Luis Álvarez Flores, violently murdered on June 10, 2019, in Palenque, Chiapas. Luis was a defender of the sanctuary of the howler monkey and the Usumacinta

¹⁷ J. Brito, "Consulta sólo con pueblos afectados, responden opositores a la termoelectrica en Huexca," *Proceso*, February 11, 2019, <https://www.proceso.com.mx/571321/consulta-solo-con-pueblos-afectados-responden-opositores-a-la-termoelectrica-en-huexca>

¹⁸ D. Ortega and M. Escogido "Asesinan a madre e hijo en zona de activistas". *El Diario Lealtad a Chihuahua*, August 20, 2019. Available at: <https://www.eldiariodechihuahua.mx/estado/asesinan-a-madre-e-hijo-en-zona-de-activistas-20190503-1510573/>

River and had denounced illegal extraction of sand and petrous material from the Usumacinta River.¹⁹

The same year saw the death of Isaias Cantu Carrasco by extrajudicial execution on October 11, 2019. Isaias was the president of the communal government of Paraje Montero, Municipality of Malinaltepec (Guerrero) and a member of the Regional Council of Agrarian Authorities in Defense of Territory (Spanish acronym Craadt). For seven years he had defended the right to territory against gold and silver mining concerns in his region.²⁰

B) Cases by state.

In the period from January 1 through December 31, 2019, 39 attacks on environmental human rights defenders were reported in 17 of Mexico's 32 states. Oaxaca was the state with the most attacks (6), followed by Puebla, Morelos, Chiapas, and the State of Mexico, with 4 cases each; Chihuahua with 3 cases; and Jalisco, Mexico City, and Zacatecas with 2. The remaining states, including Colima, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Nuevo Leon, Quintana Roo, Veracruz, Sonora, and Yucatan, had one case of aggression each.

State	Number of attacks
Oaxaca	6
Puebla	4
Morelos	4
Chiapas	4
State of Mexico	4
Chihuahua	3
Jalisco	2
Zacatecas	2
Mexico City	2
Colima	1
Guanajuato	1
Guerrero	1
Nuevo Leon	1
Quintana Roo	1
Sonora	1
Veracruz	1
Yucatan	1
Total	39

¹⁹ EFE, Sin Embargo, José Luis Álvarez, ecologista y defensor del santuario del mono saraguato es asesinado. June 11, 2019. Available at: <https://www.educaoxaca.org/asesinan-al-ecologista-jose-luis-alvarez-flores-defensor-del-rio-usumacinta/>

²⁰ REMA, Press release: "Justicia para el defensor asesinado en la Montaña de Guerrero," October 5, 2019. Available: <http://www.remamx.org/2019/10/comunicado-justicia-para-defensor-del-territorio-asesinado-en-la-montana-de-guerrero/>

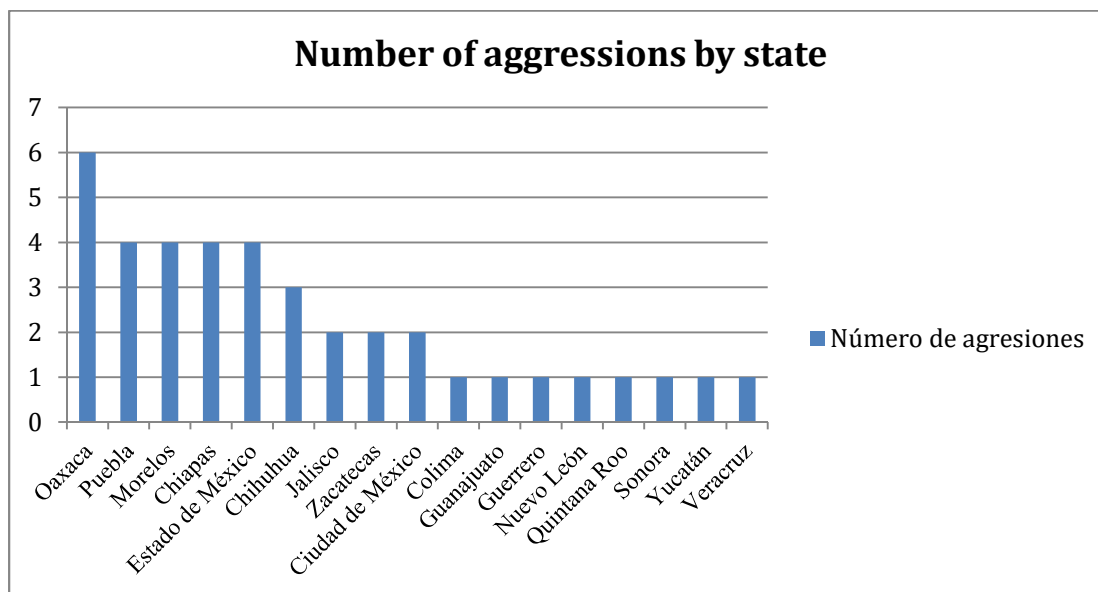
Table 3. Number of attacks by state, 2019.

In 2019, cases of aggression were reported in states which did not appear on the list for 2018. These new states are Quintana Roo, Nuevo Leon, Colima, Sonora, and Morelos. Sonora had had very high levels of aggressions in previous years, although in 2018 none were confirmed. However, in 2019, the state had one attack reported. Other states, like Morelos, had very low numbers of aggressions compared with previous years. However, this year, against the backdrop of promotion of the Morelos Integral Project, aggressions have increased to 4 cases. Also, this year Quintana Roo reported one case of aggression related to the planning of the Mayan Train project. We also observe that, unlike last year, there were no press reports of aggressions in Michoacan, San Luis Potosi, Nayarit, Baja California, and Durango.

In Oaxaca, a majority of cases are related to territorial disputes over invasion of land for illegal logging. Another example involved the murder of Luis Armando Fuentes Aquino, a human rights defender, for defending the territory of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and member of the Commission in Defense of Land and Territory of the of the Eastern Isthmus.

Of 4 cases in Puebla, 3 are related to hydroelectric projects and one to the textile industry. Some relevant cases were, on the one hand, the attempted murder of Salvador Sanchez Bolanos, who opposed the construction of the Coyolapa-Atzala hydroelectric station by the firm Minera Autlan and managed to escape his assailants, and in second place the attack on the family of Sergio Rivera Hernandez, currently disappeared, who was actively involved in opposition to the Coyolapa-Atzala hydroelectric station.

In the case of Morelos, the four aggressions reported are related to the defense of human rights over the implementation of the PIM. In this context, we find the killing of Samir Flores, member of the People’s Front in Defense of land and water of Morelos, Puebla, and Tlaxcala and the Amilcingo Assembly in Resistance.

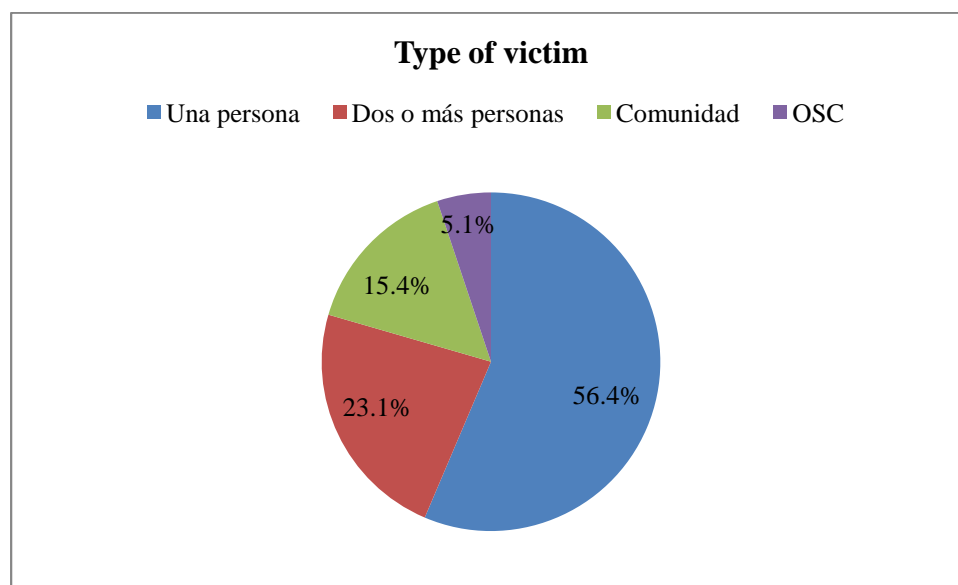


Graph 5. Number of attacks by state, 2019.

C) Victims.

In the data for the period from January 1 through December 31, 2019, we found that the majority of victims suffered individual attacks, specifically in 22 of 39 cases of attacks. This shows that, in 2019 as in previous years, the strategy aggressors used most was to focus their attacks one a single person (56% of attacks reported in 2019). Normally, such attacks targeted persons in positions of leadership, public relations, and high visibility in the defense of environmental human rights.

Regarding these attacks, we found that, of 22 cases of aggressions, 8 targeted women and 14 men. Also, there were 9 cases in which two or more people were attacked; in other words, in 23.1% of cases, attacks targeted two people or larger groups. In that situation, 16 if the victims were men and 5 were women. In one case, where aggression was directed at 12 individuals, the news report did not identify the gender of the victims. Aggressions against communities or civil society organizations were fewer in number, with six cases of aggressions against communities (15%) and two of aggressions against organizations (5% of aggressions committed).



Graph 6. Type of victim identified in attacks, 2019.

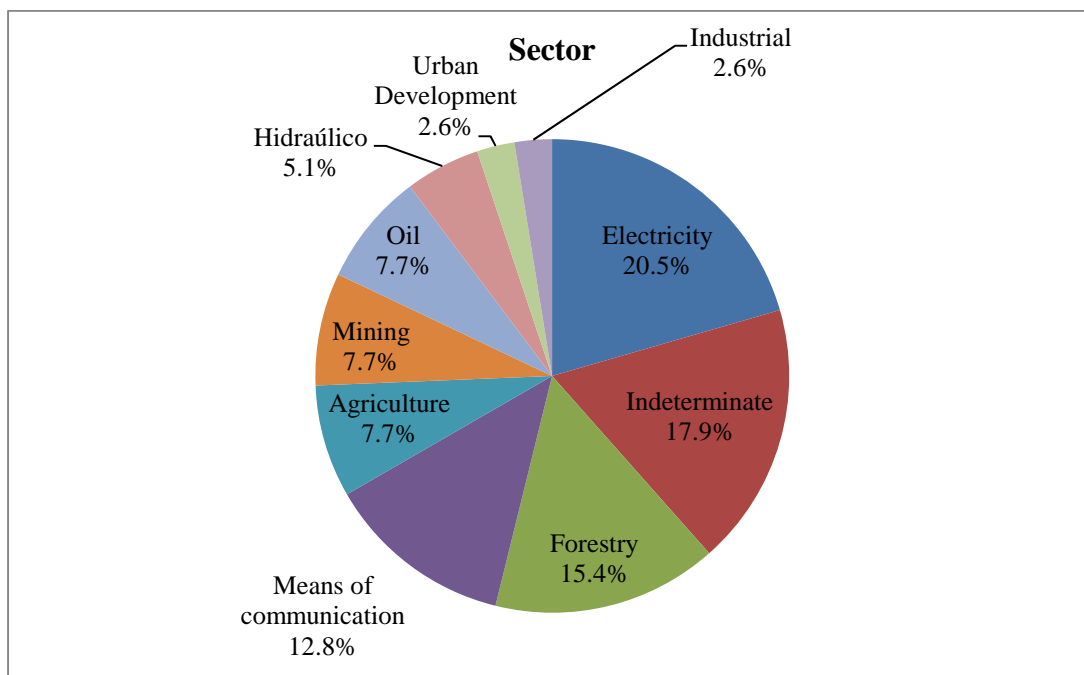
D) Attacks by sector.

Our analysis of the year 2019 found that of 39 attacks against environmental defenders reported by the CEMDA, 8 were related to electrical power projects, accounting for 20.5%. Those attacks

targeted defenders of land, territory, and environment, related to 4 cases: the PIM in Morelos, which involved the construction of a thermoelectric station, a water pipeline, and a gas pipeline. As in the previous seven years (2012-2018), in 2019 electrical projects were behind the greatest number of aggressions.

Successively, we found 7 cases of aggressions for which the economic sector involved could not be determined (17.9% of the total). Most cases classified as indeterminate involved defenders of land, territory, and environment who not only defend human rights against the implementation of mega-projects, but who have defended various human rights in different contexts. Such is the case of Sinar Corzo, who served on the Coloso de Piedra Citizen Committee for Defense of Human Rights and was murdered on January 3, 2019, making him the first environmental rights defender killed in the year. Like other defenders, he had also received prior threats.

The forestry sector reported 6 cases (15.4% of all attacks). We observed that, of those 6 cases, 5 involved people who reported illegal logging in their localities. On the other hand, in cases related to projects for construction of means of communication 5 aggressions were reported, of which two were related to the Mayan Train project and two more to the construction of a highway in San Francisco Xochicuautila, State of Mexico. The communications sector accounted for 12.8% of cases. Finally, mining, agriculture, and the oil industry accounted for 3 cases each, for a total of 7.7% of the attacks reported. Water projects accounted for 2 cases, representing 5.1%, and urban and industrial development one case each (2.6%).



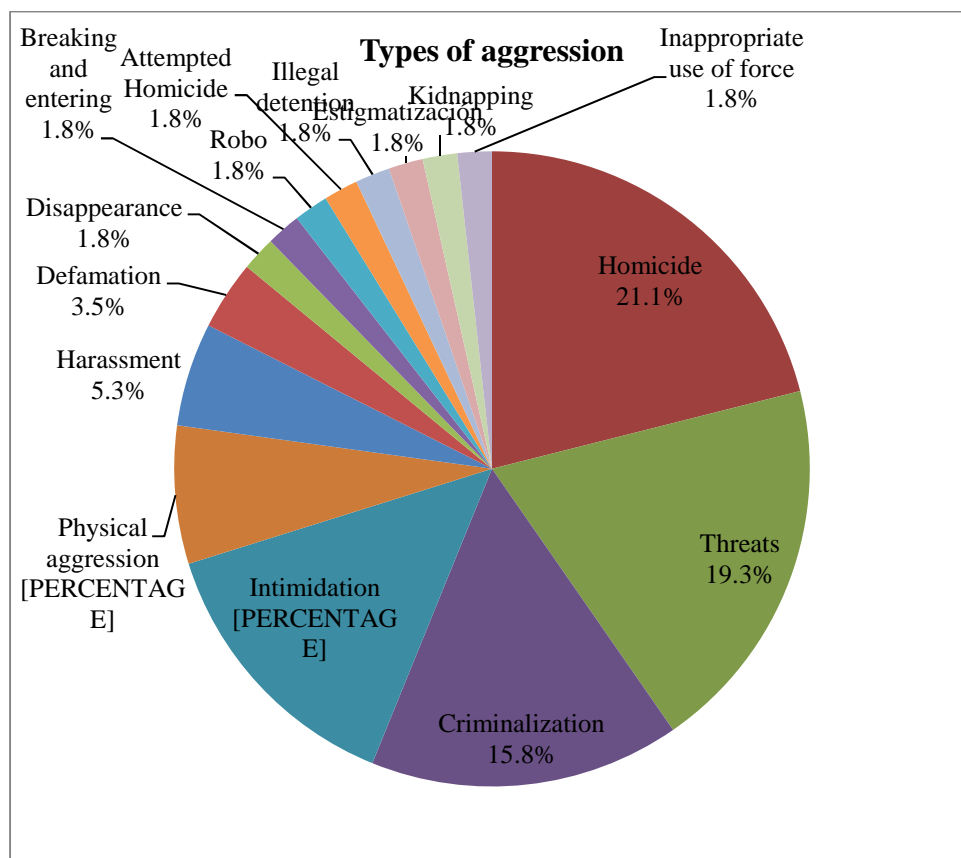
Graph 7. Sector related to attacks, 2019.

E) Types of aggression.

Of the 39 cases reported, 12 involved homicide and one attempted homicide. This was the leading form of aggression, with 21.1% of attacks against defenders of land, territory, and environment. Fifteen people were killed in these attacks, with one failed attempt at homicide. In most cases, when a fatality occurred, it was found that the victim had previously experienced other forms of aggression such as stigmatization, threats, and physical aggression, to mention only a few.

In second place among aggressions are threats, with 11 cases (19.3% of the total); in third place criminalization (9 cases), accounting for 15.8% of the total; and in fourth place intimidation (8) with 14%. Also, lower numbers were reported for physical aggressions (4 cases) representing 7%, harassment (3 cases) at 5.3%, and defamation (2 cases) at 3.5%. Finally forced disappearance, breaking and entering, larceny, illegal detention, stigmatization, kidnapping, and inappropriate use of force accounted for 1.8% each.

Like 2018, this year homicide was the most common form of aggression against defenders of the environment, a finding which is highly alarming.

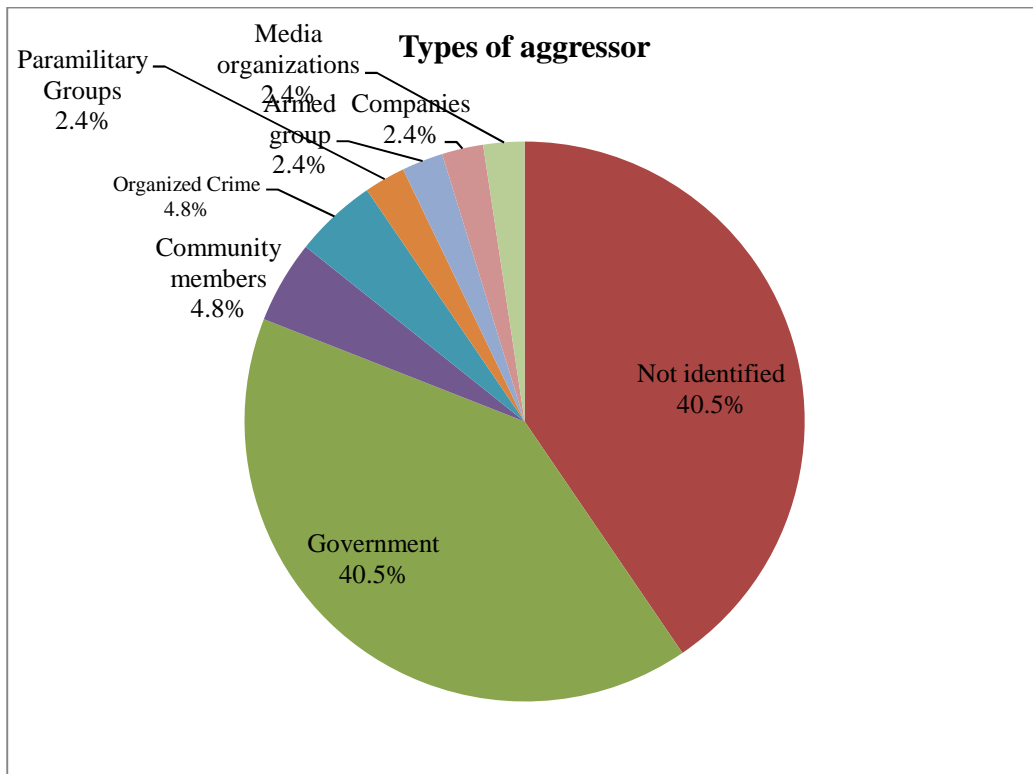


Graph 8. Types of aggression identified in attacks, 2019.

F) Types of aggressor.

Of the 39 attacks reported from January 1 through December 31, 2019, in 17 the perpetrator was not identified. This means that, in many of the aggressions reported, it is not known who committed them (40.5% of cases). In 17 other cases reported, the government was presumably responsible (40.5% of cases). Finally, members of the same communities were named as likely suspects in 2 of the 39 aggressions reported (4.8%), and organized crime groups in 2 cases (4.8%). One case each was also attributed to paramilitary groups, armed groups, companies, and media organizations, each accounting for 2.4% of the total aggressions.

In the year 2019 the government was again identified as the presumed primary aggressor. The institutions cited in aggressions were local law enforcement agencies, the National Guard, and state police.



Graph 9. Types of aggressor cited in attacks, 2019.

IV. Stigmatization, the path to violence against people who defend the environment.

Environmental human rights defenders are exposed to a series of aggressions, which may increase as they gain exposure in the public arena. For that reason, this chapter seeks to explain stigmatization, which is customarily used to delegitimize and belittle defense of human rights. This kind of aggressions create a hostile environment in which stigmatization is just the first step in a series of aggressions which range from smear campaigns through different media and biased news reporting, threats on social networks (cyberbullying), to physical aggression, forced disappearance of defenders and/or members of their families, and even murder, all fomented by a high degree of impunity where cases are not investigated exhaustively or diligently, and as a result acts of aggression against defenders, from low-intensity acts like stigmatization, go unpunished. In this context, government plays an important role in perpetuating, normalizing, and legitimizing stereotypes and acts of stigmatization which maintain discrimination and human rights violations against defenders²¹.

IV.I What is stigma?

It is important to know the origin of acts of stigmatization, as a means of understanding them. **Stigma** is a process of dehumanization, degradation, discreditation, and devaluation of members of certain population groups, due to a feeling of repugnance, which sees them as “inferior” or “abnormal.” Usually, the victims of stigmatization are people who do not conform to the “social norm.” Also, stigma is linked to inequality of power in relation to the ability to define patterns of what is “normal” and “acceptable.” Thus, stigma can be created to the detriment of some people, and at the same time benefit others. Those who are in positions of power can use it freely to impose such stigmas. Marginalization and ostracism reveal the origin of such stigma, which is linked to individual, social, cultural, and institutional factors²².

People in different spheres of life help to create and maintain stigma, as prejudices and stereotypes are transmitted from one generation to the next. Usually, people are unaware they are stigmatizing certain groups, since their stereotypes are so widespread in society that they are considered “normal” and “acceptable.”²³ An example of this is that some government or private sectors refer to defenders of environment, land, and territory as “opponents of development,” “hardline conservationists,” or “corrupt conservatives disguised as environmentalists who do not want progress.”²⁴ In some other cases, stigma is a common reaction to health problems like HIV/AIDS, types of disability, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, and cultural identity²⁵.

²¹ Amnesty International, “¡Defensoras Bajo Ataque!”, United Kingdom, December 2015, p. 10.

²² General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque,” July 2, 2012, pp. 5 and 6, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/149/01/PDF/G1214901.pdf?OpenElement>

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

²⁴ Ramos, Claudia, “Tren Maya: el beneficio social compensa el impacto ambiental, justifica FONATUR,” *Animal Político*, February 5, 2019, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2019/02/tren-maya-proyecto-construccion-comunidades-indigenas/>.

²⁵ Op. cit. 22, p. 5.

An example of the above is the case of environmental defenders like Maria Candelaria May Novelo, a Mayan indigenous woman, and other members of the Múuch' Xiinbal Assembly of Defenders of Mayan Territory, who suffered threats, harassment, and acts of defamation due to their legal defense against wind farms and photovoltaic power projects being implemented on the Yucatan Peninsula²⁶. Specifically, they suffered cyberbullying on social networks with the publication of a text accusing them of being “enemies of the planet and political mercenaries,” prompting them to file a criminal complaint for threats, despite which the authorities never investigated acts in question.²⁷

In this sense, stigma is associated with a host of civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights. Being a sociocultural phenomenon, in addition to placing entire groups in the population at a disadvantage, it also causes human rights violations. Therefore, identifying stigma in this context is essential to determine states' obligations to adopt measures to ensure nondiscrimination and prohibition of inhumane and degrading treatment, and to establish effective means of accountability.²⁸

IV.II What is stigmatization?

Stigmatization is the process whereby stigma discursively makes a person marginalized and contrary to the social norm, by virtue of rules that make it so. Such rules change over time and with society, and as a result certain actions go from being normatively acceptable to prohibited. A stigmatized person should be understood as someone who possesses the distinguishing mark which confers a negative social value²⁹.

Stigmatization is customarily used to delegitimize and undermine the right to defend human rights. This form of aggression can be committed by both state and non-state agents, who spread false rumors about defenders in the media, on social networks, and through other mechanisms or spaces where they operate; they also employ smear campaigns, in which the targets are portrayed as

²⁶ The project over which Maria Candelaria has suffered aggressions is the “Yucatan Solar Photovoltaic Park” operated by the company Lightening PV Park, which intends to generate photovoltaic solar energy with rated capacity of 70 MW, installing 313,140 photovoltaic solar modules, planned for construction on 255.4 hectares in the Municipality of Valladolid, Yucatan. Since April 22, 2019, the project is under a suspension order issued by the Fifth District Court in Yucatan. Consulted in: “Resumen Ejecutivo de la Manifestación de Impacto Ambiental Modalidad Regional para el Proyecto “Parque Fotovoltaico Yucatán Solar a Desarrollarse en el Municipio de Valladolid, Yucatán, Mexico,” SEMARNAT, October 2016, <https://apps1.semarnat.gob.mx:8443/dgiraDocs/documentos/yuc/resumenes/2016/31YU2016E0036.pdf> and in: National Indigenous Congress, “La Asamblea de Defensores del Territorio Maya Múuch' Xíinbal denuncia amenazas y hostigamiento dirigidos contra el defensor del territorio Gregorio Hau Caamal y otros miembros de la Asamblea,” August 8, 2019.

²⁷ National Indigenous Congress, “La Asamblea de Defensores del Territorio Maya Múuch' Xíinbal denuncia amenazas y hostigamiento dirigidos contra el defensor del territorio Gregorio Hau Caamal y otros miembros de la Asamblea,” August 8, 2019, <https://www.congresonacionalindigena.org/2019/08/08/la-asamblea-de-defensores-del-territorio-maya-muuch-xiinbal-denuncia-threats-y-harassment-dirigidos-contra-el-defensor-del-territorio-gregorio-hau-caamal-y-otros-miembros-de-la-asamblea/>.

²⁸ *Op. cit.* 22, p. 13.

²⁹ Nieves Quiles, Maria, “Estigmatización y marginación social de colectivos de jóvenes,” *Universidad de la Laguna*, pp. 33 and 34, <https://ruc.udc.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/2183/10692/CC%2042%20art%203.pdf>.

opposed to their country's progress or as criminals, instead of acknowledging that they are exercising a human right, inciting social discourse against them³⁰.

It is important to note that, in some cases, stigmatization may set the stage for the commission of more serious aggressions against human rights defenders. In this sense, there is a clear pattern in which the majority of people who are attacked verbally or physically have previously been the object of smear campaigns and defamatory publications which spread false information on their defense work. A clear case is that of Arnulfo Ceron, a human rights defender in the Guerrero Mountain region, who was the victim of forced disappearance from October 11 to November 2019, during which time he was murdered. Before his disappearance and murder, both he and other members of the Mountain Region Popular Front (*Frente Popular de la Montaña*) suffered constant attacks on their reputation and smear campaigns, as well as aggressions committed by the municipal authorities, all of which contributed to a social and discursive climate which contributed to their subsequent murder³¹.

Thus, environmental human rights defenders who question the government; legislation; and in general the social, economic, and political system under which they live and function, are exposed to a situation of vulnerability in which they can be outed, threatened, intimidated, persecuted, slandered, prosecuted, criminalized, discriminated against, and even murdered for their defense efforts. Usually, this kind of attacks are committed and reproduced through physical and psychological violence, official discourse, and mass media, among others³². This also depends on the kind of defense work they perform; for example, the type of attacks will depend on whether the person is involved in matters of forced disappearance; sexual and reproductive rights; defense of environment, land, and territory; or indigenous rights, a situation which may increase the risk of suffering attacks. Defense of the right to a healthy environment, land, and territory has become one of the most dangerous activities in defense of human rights. In 2018 alone, 21 environmental defenders were killed in Mexico³³.

Having clarified the concepts of stigma and stigmatization, it is necessary to identify the main means and strategies by which stigmatization is accomplished:

1. **Smear campaigns.-** Are one of the strategies most used by companies, governments, and media to delegitimize the work of people who defend land, territory, environment, and human rights in general³⁴. They are conducted mainly through print media, social networks, and official or public statements, among other means. A recent case of this type of aggression occurred in July 2019, against Estela Angeles Mondragon, a defender of land and territory in Chihuahua, who suffered a campaign of smears and criminalization, by

³⁰ Forst, Michel, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders relating to their mission in Mexico," February 12, 2018, *Human Rights Council*, paragraphs 43 and 44.

³¹ Tlachinollan, Repudiamos la desaparición y posterior asesinato del defensor Arnulfo Cerón," November 20, 2019, <http://www.tlachinollan.org/comunicado-repudiamos-la-desaparicion-y-posterior-asesinato-del-defensor-arnulfo-ceron/>.

³² Romero Leal, Laura Ximena and Gallo Numpaque, William Ferney, "La Estigmatización de los defensores de derechos humanos líderes de restitución de tierras, como fundamento de los obstáculos para el acceso a la justicia de los mismos, a partir de la Ley 1448 de 2011," *Universidad Santo Tomás-Bogotá*, p. 7.

³³ CEMDA, "Informe sobre la situación de las personas defensoras de los derechos humanos ambientales," Mexico, 2018, p. 9. https://www.cemda.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Informe_defensores.pdf.

³⁴ International Service for Human Rights, "El rol de las empresas y los Estados en las violaciones contra los defensores y las defensoras de los derechos de la tierra, el territorio y el ambiente (Joint Report by Civil Society Organizations)," October 2015, <http://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/article/files/informecoalicionempresastierraishr.pdf>.

means of a newspaper article entitled “Activists profit from litigation over communal lands,” which was published in *El Heraldillo de Chihuahua*. The full text of the printed version is even more alarming, declaring that: “They are threatened with death if they make a report. They strip indigenous people of their lands,” accusing Estela and the organization she leads of supposedly controlling and threatening indigenous people of the Tarahumara region and profiting lawsuits over communal lands in their communities. It also claims that there are charges pending against her for the supposed embezzlement of 16 million pesos (8 million dollars).

This information is completely false and came on top of an aggressive smear campaign against Estela, who is a recognized and experienced litigator, committed to the defense of the collective human rights of the Rarámuri people, with the aim of disqualifying her record of defense work. Likewise, it constitutes an attack on her person, image, reputation, and family, and on the communities she has served for decades³⁵. In that regard, 103 domestic civil society organizations, 5 international organizations, and 7 articulations or networks, as well as human rights centers, released a statement recognizing Estela’s work over more than twenty years on behalf of Rarámuri communities³⁶.

2. **Cyberbullying.-** Defenders have reported being the object of threats and acts of stigmatization on social media platforms or by email. Similarly, malware, piracy, denial of service attacks, and other forms of intimidation are increasingly common means employed to undermine defenders.³⁷ In that regard, some human rights defenders are stigmatized and threatened online by internet trolls. This kind of practices are more than a mere nuisance, because the perpetrators operate within sophisticated organized networks, and in some cases are financed by governments or private companies as a means of finding activists online and smearing them, intimidating them, and even sending them death threats. Networks of trolls also include misinformation campaigns, in some cases using people to generate trending topics designed to slander and stigmatize their targets. Methods like these affect human rights defenders, by forcing them to cope with a constant succession of scandals which harm their credibility and undermine their efforts to denounce and raise awareness of human rights violations³⁸.

IV.III Impact of stigmatization on defenders.

Stigmatization of defenders creates an unfavorable climate to exercise the right to defend human rights, by increasing the risks they face by making it easier not to see them as persons who are exercising a right and are entitled to respect and protection. On the contrary, it produces a climate of hostility and increasingly serious attacks which may start with discrediting their reputation as

³⁵ CEJIL, “Organizaciones de DDHH rechazan campaña de desprestigio en contra de Estela Ángeles Mondragón,” August 1, 2019, <https://www.cejil.org/es/organizaciones-ddhh-rechazan-campana-desprestigio-contra-estela-angeles-mondragon>.

³⁶ Olivares Alonso, Emir, “Denuncian ONG persecución contra la activista Estela Ángeles Mondragón,” La Jornada, August 2, 2019, <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2019/08/02/politica/010n2pol>

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, 30, p. 11.

³⁸ Amnesty International, “Defensores y defensoras de los derechos humanos bajo amenaza: la reducción de espacio para la sociedad civil,” United Kingdom, 2017, p. 16, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3060112017SPANISH.PDF>.

defenders and even endanger their personal safety and lives. This situation, tied to the lack of investigation of attacks against them, sends the message that defenders can be the object of stigmatization, discrimination, and violence on the part of state and/or non-state actors, in some cases with the acquiescence of government³⁹.

The main consequences defenders suffer due to acts of stigmatization are: damage to their reputation, good standing, position or status in the community, and psychological wellbeing. Such delegitimization of their work may be individual or collective, in their capacity as members of a civil society organization. Also, human rights defenders are exposed to more verbal and physical aggression, and even to murder at the hands of armed groups in collusion with the government or other non-state agents⁴⁰. Specifically, defenders of environment, land, and territory are characterized as anti-progress, terrorists, conspirators, or opposed to creation of jobs, among other things, which affects their ability to demand justice from the state. It also makes them more likely to be the object of other threats, aggressions, and obstacles, including criminalization, media blackouts, and loss of community, political, and even financial support⁴¹.

An emblematic case on the negative impact of stigmatization on defense of indigenous environment, land, and territory is that of Samir Flores, a Nahuatl indigenous defender from Amilcingo, Morelos, one of the strongest leaders of the organization against the Morelos Integral Project (PIM) -which includes the operation of a gas pipeline, water pipeline, and the commissioning of a thermoelectric station in Morelos- and founder of Amiltxinko Community Radio 100.7 FM⁴². Samir was murdered on February 20, 2019, prior to a public opinion poll on the project. It was public knowledge that, before he was killed, Samir had been the object of a smear campaign orchestrated from the federal government, which called the people mobilizing against the PIM “conservative ultra-radicals.”⁴³ Such statements contributed to a climate of impunity and future aggressions against the movement, leading to Samir’s murder. Notwithstanding, in the wake of the tragedy, the president continued the smear campaign against the movement, affirming that a possible motive for the killing was to disrupt the indigenous opinion poll on the project. Although the exact origin of the murder was not confirmed, the fact of the matter is that statements of that kind perpetrate stigmatization and delegitimization of the defense of los human rights⁴⁴ and, needless to say, produce a negative impact on other defenders who continue to oppose the project, by creating a hostile and intimidatory climate, which affects the freedom and security which should characterize the exercise of the right to defend human rights in Mexico.

³⁹ *Op. cit.* 21, p. 14.

⁴⁰ *Idem.*

⁴¹ *Op. cit.* 34, p. 28.

⁴² “Asesinan a balazos a Samir Flores, activista que se oponía a la termoeléctrica de Morelos,” *Animal Político*, February 20, 2019, <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2019/02/asesinan-balazos-samir-flores-activista-opositor-termoelectrica/>.

⁴³ “Statement by the People’s Front in Defense of Land and Water -Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala,” *Cencos*, July 9, 2019 <http://cencos.com.mx/2019/07/comunicado-del-frente-de-pueblos-en-defensa-de-la-tierra-y-agua-morelos-puebla-tlaxcala/>.

⁴⁴ El País, “Asesinan a un activista mexicano en vísperas de la consulta sobre una termoeléctrica,” February 20, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkVu8Y2am94>.

There are also differentiated impacts when defense actions are performed by women working in societies where patriarchal and male dominated dynamics predominate, with entrenched stereotypes on sexuality, gender roles, and in general women's place in the community, the family, work, and the home. Women are especially exposed to attack (physical and psychological). In case of physical attacks they may be victims of sexual aggression or rape; similarly, they are insulted, portrayed as prostitutes or lacking in moral values⁴⁵, flyers or memes of a sexual nature are circulated on social networks, and their performance is questioned, with epithets like "bad mothers or wives," who are unfaithful to their partners, denigrating their image and standing as wives, mothers, workers, and social activists⁴⁶.

This type of smear campaigns or slander against women defenders also has a powerful impact on their lives, producing a social stigma within their communities or living environments such as family, their children's schools, the workplace, and even within social movements, collectives, or organizations in which they take part. Such stigma can cause them to suffer rejection and lead them to eventually decide to abandon defense of human rights⁴⁷. These attacks not only affect women individually, but also have repercussions at the psychological level for their families, since many such attacks target their spouses, children, parents, and other family members or persons close to them, which is also a means of intimidation or harassment to force defenders to choose between protecting their families or defending human rights⁴⁸.

An example of this is the case of environmental human rights defender Claudia Zenteno, who struggles to protect the Protected Natural Area located between Xochimilco, Milpa Alta, and Tlahuac precincts in southern Mexico City. Her activities have made her the target of attacks in which her aggressors have used a photograph with her likeness to tell local residents that Claudia engages in actions against their interests, which has created personal problems where she lives. This kind of acts have exposed and affected her work as a defender of the environment, since Claudia has not only suffered aggressions in the form of stigmatization, but has also been the victim of verbal and physical aggressions such as: destruction of her vehicles; graffiti on her home; and dead animals left outside her home; she has been discriminated against by local authorities, who have taken reprisals against her; she and her family have suffered attacks, one of which caused her husband to lose the sight of one eye (the aggressor went unpunished). Also, in November 2010, her son was disappeared for nine days, and when he returned had injuries to his body, a dislocated arm, and warnings written on his stomach and back. As a result of the attack he is unable to speak. This type of acts weakened the struggle for the environment which Claudia initially undertook with her family and neighbors. With the passing of time her personal relationships and friendships ended, as her family and friends grew increasingly afraid of reprisals against her and her family, a situation which has deeply impacted Claudia emotionally and, needless to say, has made her work as an environmental defender more difficult⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.* 38, p. 15.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.* 34, p. 30.

⁴⁷ *Idem.*

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.* 30, p. 10.

⁴⁹ Defensor, "Los desafíos frente a la defensa del área natural protegida en Xochimilco," Monthly journal of the Federal District Commission on Human Rights, number 1, year XIV, January 2016, p. 32, https://cdhcm.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/dfensor_01_2016.pdf.

Identifying, denouncing, and punishing acts of stigmatization against environmental human rights defenders is indispensable to guarantee the right to defender human rights, since, in some cases we have seen that permitting acts of stigmatization against defenders creates an unfavorable climate for their activities, as occurred in the aforementioned case of Claudia Zenteno or in the case of Arnulfo Ceron Soriano, who -prior to his disappearance and murder- suffered an intense campaign of defamation for his defense work in the Guerrero Mountains. In this context, it is indispensable for citizens, civil society, the business sector, and government to produce a discourse which does not stigmatize the right to defend human rights and respects the activities that right entails, in addition to government's obligation to reject, denounce, investigate, and punish any and all aggressions committed against those who defend human rights.

V. The right to defend environmental human rights in Mexico.

According to Global Witness, countries like Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru⁵⁰ concentrate the majority of aggressions against defenders, and in response have adopted measures like implementation of protective mechanisms for human rights defenders. Efforts have been made to implement the standards contained in the United Nations *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*⁵¹.

It is noteworthy that this declaration states that the right to defend human rights is the right of everyone, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels. Thus, the aforementioned policies are necessary above all due to the present situation human rights defenders face, in which multiple aggressions are a constant, including attacks on their life and physical integrity, impunity from law enforcement, lack of investigations of aggressions, defamation, stigmatization, and criminalization, and the risks and impact to which women defenders specifically are exposed.

Consequently, the outlook for human rights defenders in Mexico is complex due to the aggressions they suffer for their work. Also, environmental defenders today face a situation aggravated by the defense of indigenous territories in the face of large scale development and infrastructure projects. Mexico, like other countries in the world, has an obligation to protect, respect, and promote the right to defend human rights and by extension to protect those who decide to take action in use of that right, to ensure that they can do so in a propitious and violence-free climate.

⁵⁰ Global Witness, "¿A qué precio? Negocios irresponsables y el asesinato de personas defensoras de la tierra y el medio ambiente en 2017." Available at: <https://www.globalwitness.org/es/campaigns/envirsonmental-activists/a-qu%C3%A9-precio/>

⁵¹ The Declaration on human rights of defenders was approved by the General Assembly in 1998. This Declaration is directed not only to states and human rights defenders but to everyone and anyone concerned with the defense of human rights. The Declaration is not a legally binding instrument. However, it contains a series of principles and rights which are based on the human rights standards enshrined in other international instruments which are legally binding, for example, the International Convention on Civil and Politic Rights. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sp/issues/srhrdefenders/pages/declaration.aspx>

V.I The need for an integral policy on protection.

The Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) has recognized that obligations of states in relation to protection of the right to defend human rights are closely interrelated and are independent to create a public policy for integral protection. Such public policy establishes the following obligations for the states⁵²:

- 1) Obligation to respect: adopt public policies, laws, and any other measure necessary to ensure that defenders can perform their activities freely.
- 2) Obligation to prevent: ensure that their agents abstain from infringing on or arbitrarily interfering with their rights and imposing administrative, legislative, or any other kind of measures that hinder their efforts.
- 3) Obligation to protect against a situation of risk: protect human rights defenders when their rights to life and personal safety are at risk.
- 4) Obligation to investigate, judge, and sanction: investigate with due diligence violations committed against defenders, and thus combat impunity.

An adequate and effective integral protective policy consists of urgent measures to protect the lives and safety of defenders, which would help positively advance fulfilment of the aforementioned obligations to ensure conditions free of violence and harassment for defenders. To that end, it is fundamental to recognize the efforts of human rights defenders. With such an approach, states must also have the will to make changes in legislation, policies, and programs which affect their situation. Authorities, in the different levels of government, need to address the sources of socioenvironmental conflicts in which human rights, weakened by conditions of insecurity and violence, are violated; in other words, they need to address the root causes and work on comprehensive public policies. This has spurred reflection on what an entity like the *Protective Mechanism* needs to effectively provide integral protection.

Such integral public policy has been defined as “a broad, comprehensive approach to effective protection of human rights defenders, which, focusing on general obligations to respect and guarantee rights, and to adopt measures for the effective realization of human rights, contemplates a series of obligations of a diverse nature to ensure the continuity of efforts to defend human rights securely and freely in the face of the various obstacles defenders confront”⁵³. The goal is to foment an integral public policy which can prevent aggressions against defenders.

⁵² *Op. cit.* 11, par. 10.

⁵³ *Op. cit.* 11, par. 27.

This has also been expressed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, in his last report, which affirms that “security must be understood holistically and [...] encompasses physical safety, digital security, environmental security, economic stability, the freedom to practice cultural and religious beliefs and the mental and emotional well-being of women defenders and their families and loved ones”⁵⁴. To accomplish this, it is important to address these situations integrally.

V.I.I The present situation of the *Protective Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists*.

There are analyses of mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists in Latin American countries⁵⁵, which focus on their implementation, operation, and effectiveness to guarantee the right to defend human rights and the right to freedom of speech, in accordance with the evolution of the various relevant international and regional standards. In this regard, they have evidenced the limitations of such mechanisms in guaranteeing those rights.

One of the conclusions has been that the mechanisms “do not produce adequate results because they have key deficiencies in several areas: transposing the international normative framework to the local context, coverage of what a public policy must really do to guarantee the right to defend human rights, the approach to the problem, and its design and implementation.”⁵⁶ In Mexico, despite the creation of the *Protective Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists* in 2012, the number of aggressions against environmental defenders has not fallen, as previous reports have shown. This proves that the Mechanism is insufficient to guarantee the rights of all defenders in accordance with the highest standards for their protection.

Civil society organizations have remarked on the numerous deficiencies in the Mechanism’s functioning in Mexico. These include a nonexistent response to stigmatization and criminalization, lack of implement protective measures which address the varied impact -in different spheres and at different levels- which aggressions have on environmental human rights defenders, and its failure to include a gender perspective and achieve cultural relevance. Another aspect noted has been deficient coordination by local authorities to effectively implement protective measures and

⁵⁴ See Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Situation of human rights defenders. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, A/HRC/40/60 (UN, January 10, 2019), <https://documents-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/005/00/PDF/G1900500.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵⁵ Countries in Latin America which have implemented this type of Protective Mechanisms include Colombia (1997); Brazil (2004); Mexico (2012); and Honduras (2015); Mexico and Honduras created their Mechanisms by means of laws, whereas Colombia and Brazil implemented them by decree. In general, these Mechanisms are structured within government. Defenders can apply for entry, after which they undergo a formal risk assessment and are assigned protective measures depending on their risk. Measures focus on individual and physical protection, which limits the level of security because they are not integral.

⁵⁶ CEJIL, Protection International, “Es Tiempo Ya, Políticas Públicas eficaces para el derecho a defender derechos humanos.” 2017, p. 128.

recognize defenders' work in the states, since it is at the local level that they operate and where they face situations of risk which endanger their lives and personal safety.⁵⁷

The situation reinforces the idea that defending environmental human rights in Mexico has become a high-risk activity, as the data presented in this report confirms.

On the other hand, the Mechanism in Mexico handles various requests for protection received from human rights defenders and journalists. From the creation of the Mechanism through October 2019, 694 protective measures have been approved, among them: I) evaluation; II) temporary relocation; III) escorts by specialized forces; IV) protection of property; V) installation of cameras, locks, lighting, and other security measures on the premises of a group or a person's home; VI) bulletproof vests; VII) metal detectors; VIII) armored cars; and IX) others as needed⁵⁸.

The Mechanism has also reported that, from its creation in December 2012 through October 31, 2019, it has received reports of 74 cases of human rights defenders related to environmental issues, indigenous communities, or land and territory. Of those, 17⁵⁹ cases involve collectives and three indigenous communities⁶⁰. The types of aggressions against human rights defenders related to environmental issues, indigenous communities, land and territory reported from 2012 through October 2019 were: physical aggression 18 cases; threats 55 cases; stalking 12 cases; injuries 4 cases; and others 30 cases (nonspecific)⁶¹.

Finally, it was reported that, in response to the recommendations from the diagnosis requested by the Undersecretary for Human Rights, Population, and Migration to the Mexico Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human rights (UN-HR Mexico) and presented in August 2019, the Protective Mechanism, almost 7 years since its creation, is in a process of institutional retooling to help it respond to the dimension of the challenge of protecting defenders and journalists with an integral approach. To achieve that, there is direct coordination with the Mexico UN-HR, both for follow-up on the recommendations and to ensure that they concur with the objectives established in the Government Council, the National Human Rights Program, and the instruments and capabilities currently deployed from the Ministry of the Interior (Segob) to guarantee their fulfilment⁶².

The aforementioned diagnosis identified best practices and areas of opportunity to orient an interinstitutional process to strengthen the Mechanism⁶³. It is noteworthy that, in the time it has operated, the Mechanism has established, in the *Law for the Protection of Defenders and Journalists*, a participative plan for governance which involves the Advisory Council, as well as

⁵⁷ Espacio OSC. "México necesita una política integral para proteger a las personas defensoras y periodistas." Available at: <http://espacio.osc.mx/mexico-necesita-una-politica-publica-integral-para-proteger-a-las-personas-defensoras-y-periodistas/>

⁵⁸ Segob. Request for information with folio number: 400406719

⁵⁹ These cases correspond to the following states and municipalities: Chihuahua: Chihuahua; Mexico City; Colima: Colima; Jalisco: Temacapulin, Villa Guerrero and Guadalajara; State of Mexico: Coyotepec, Lerma and Atizapan de Zaragoza; Michoacan: Morelia; Morelos: Amilcingo Temoac; Oaxaca: Isthmus of Tehuantepec Region, Salina Cruz, Huatulco, Copalita, and Barra de la Cruz; Puebla: Cuautlancingo; and Quintana Roo: Cancun. Segob. Request for information with folio number: 400407219.

⁶⁰ Segob. Request for information with folio number: 400407019.

⁶¹ Segob. Request for information with folio number: 400407419.

⁶² Segob. Request for information with folio number: 400406819.

⁶³ UNHRC-Mexico. " *Diagnóstico sobre el funcionamiento del Mecanismo a solicitud de la Subsecretaría de Derechos humanos de la Secretaría de Gobernación* ", Mexico City, July 2019.

proactive involvement of civil society organizations. The gradual development of the Mechanism represents part of the commitment the Mexican state has assumed to ensure effective protection of human rights defenders and journalists. An important point is that the Mechanism attends to any human rights defender or journalist exposed to risks associated with their work, which distinguishes it from other institutions of the state. Notwithstanding, the Mechanism's operation continues to present clear inadequacies for different reasons, some of which have been present since its creation.

These deficiencies, identified by UN-HR Mexico, include a lack of human resources, which are insufficient to handle the legal requisites and real needs for protection. This observable inadequacy is expected to worsen due to the growing tendency in requests for incorporation (*sic*). Also, the Mechanism lacks a clear message on prioritization of policy which guarantees its primary function of coordinating actions between the federal government and the states to protect human rights defenders and journalists. In this sense, such coordination between the federal government and the states has been seen only in some cases to respond to emergencies and coordinate certain measures, including preventive actions. Only 12 of Mexico's 32 states created their State Protective Units (Spanish acronym UEP), most of them without the staffing and resources necessary to operate adequately⁶⁴.

This is further compounded by a lack of participation in the Mechanism by several authorities and denotes the absence of a vision for integral protection and involvement of authorities. Both situations can cause the persons the Mechanism is supposed to benefit to receive limited protection from the risks they face, added to the insufficiency of funding and materials for them to operate effectively. Furthermore, the Mechanism's preferred approach continues to focus on preventing harm from materializing without prioritizing action on the causes which create risks, which should be addressed through political and preventive actions which seek to stop risks at the source. The absence of such a preventive approach is the main reason why in 2017 only 10 cases were closed due to reduction of risk and none could be closed in 2018.

Another challenge is internal coordination and streamlining its operating procedures due to the absence of an information system, which hinders the exchange of information both internally and externally. One more circumstance which has to do with changes in the situation of risk to beneficiaries, is that the monitoring exchange is operated by a company contractor and only handles situations reported through the help button. The contractor's personnel are unprepared to react to emergencies and lack the capacity for networking with the authorities to act immediately. Finally, in the statistics published by the Mechanism, in 55% of cases where presumed perpetrators were identified, the suspects are public officials, who are held to a higher standard of responsibility due to their obligation to respect journalists and human rights defenders and abstain from launching attacks against them. However, the Mechanism lacks criteria for action to publicly condemn such attacks by public officials, alert the proper law enforcement agencies to conduct criminal investigations, and initiate proceedings for control and administrative sanctions.

The deficiencies noted prevent the Mechanism from providing integral protection for human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico, and as a result such measures are unlikely to succeed in reducing violence and guaranteeing unrestricted exercise of the rights to defend human rights and to defend environment, land, and territory.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 9

V. II. The importance of the Escazú Agreement for the protection of environmental defenders.

In this context, support for the entry into force and implementation of the *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Escazú Agreement) is of vital importance. The Escazú Agreement constitutes a regional instrument of great relevance because it contains the most progressive standards for rights of access in environmental matters, which also encompass the rights of access to information, participation, and access to justice. It has also emerged as one of the instruments to prevent the spread of socioenvironmental conflicts in Latin America, having included the issue of protection for environmental human rights defenders. Thus, it is the first treaty in the world and the region to create an obligation for states to protect the work of environmental defenders, in Article 9, which states:

Article 9.- Each Party shall guarantee a safe and enabling environment for persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, so that they are able to act free from threat, restriction and insecurity. Each Party shall take adequate and effective measures to recognize, protect and promote all the rights of human rights defenders in environmental matters. Each Party shall also take appropriate, effective and timely measures to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidations that human rights defenders in environmental matters may suffer while exercising the rights set out in the present Agreement.

It is fundamental and necessary to have such an instrument in Mexico, and therefore both civil society organizations and the UN⁶⁵ have insisted on the need for Mexico to ratify the Escazú Agreement, which was signed on September 27, 2018. Such ratification would be a fundamental step toward recognizing the role of human rights defenders related to the environment.

The importance of an integral public policy for defenders within planning, legislation, policy, and other instruments which encompass contexts of prevention and protection for human rights defenders lies in the fact that it would provide recognition for their voices from a broader perspective and understand their real needs to exercise their rights. Thus, it is necessary for standards on the integral policy on protection developed by the CIDH and the jurisprudence of the International Court of Human Rights, which contemplate the obligation to respect, prevent, and protect in situations of risk, and to investigate and punish, to be taken as articulated pillars in designing public policies oriented toward creating a propitious environment for the defense of human rights.

⁶⁵ Expertos de la ONU urgen a México a ratificar Acuerdo de Escazú para la defensa del medio ambiente. Press release, July 24, 2019. Available at: <http://www.onu.org.mx/expertos-de-la-onu-urgen-a-mexico-a-ratificar-acuerdo-de-escazu-para-la-defensa-del-medio-ambiente/>

VI. Conclusions and recommendations.

Defenders are one of the cornerstones of the rule of law. Eliminating all forms of violence against them should be a priority. Those who defend the environment are one of the groups of defenders who are in a special situation of risk and vulnerability, since defending environment, land, and territory involves confronting a complex context where the gaps of inequality and power are more visible. This in turn is due to the economic interests which are disrupted and the fact that it is founded on a monocultural model and vision of development, which eliminates the pluriculturalism recognized in the Mexican Constitution⁶⁶.

In 2019, 39 attacks on environmental human rights defenders were reported. They occurred in 17 of Mexico's 32 states. The greatest number of attacks by state were in Oaxaca, with 6 cases, followed by Puebla with 4, and Morelos, Chiapas, and the State of Mexico with 4 cases each. A majority of victims are persons who were attacked individually and the sector where the most attacks were concentrated was electricity with 20.5%. Again, homicide was the leading form of aggression, accounting for 21.1% of the total, followed by threats with 19.3% and criminalization with 15.8%. In many of the aggressions reported, the presumed aggressor is not identified. However, in 40.5% of cases the government is named as presumably responsible. The data collected and analyzed by the CEMDA in 2019 confirms the continuity of violence, with homicide maintaining its position as the leading form of aggression.

On the other hand, stigmatization in the discourse of different actors is a constant threat which hinders social recognition of human rights defenders in Mexico. We have seen how this situation fosters an unfavorable climate to exercise the right to defender human rights and helps make various forms of violence and aggression against them permissible. Another cause for concern is the lack of exhaustive and diligent investigation by law enforcement, which prevents punishment of the perpetrators. In his recent report, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, states that: "States must not only develop a policy of zero tolerance towards attacks on human rights defenders but must also create the conditions for establishing a safe environment that is conducive to human rights defense efforts, which means building societies that resolutely support their work and where governmental institutions and processes promote the security and objectives of their activities⁶⁷."

Also, he proposes a series of what he considers the minimum essential guidelines for ensuring due diligence in the investigation of human rights violations against defenders. Such guidelines contemplate, among other elements, including defense of human rights as a key element of the investigative strategy; analysis of contextual and risk factors; develop methods of investigation which reflect the complexity of the violation; and even mentions that, in the case of companies

⁶⁶ When we refer to a pluricultural state, we refer to a new constitutionalism founded on 3 principles, to wit, plurinationality (reciprocal recognition), interculturalism (continuity in coexistence), and demodiversity (coexistence of different forms of deliberation, participation, and democratic representation). This type of state seeks to transform social relations, culture, and the economy, for which it requires the creation and promotion of intercultural democracy, in other words a diversification of governing structures and interlegalities which respect and support the established institutions of indigenous peoples and similar communities, those pertaining to the model of the nation state, and mixed institutions which act as vehicles for communication. Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2007). "La reinención del Estado y el Estado plurinacional," in OSAL (Buenos Aires, CLACSO), VIII(22): 25-46 in CEMDA, "Hoja de Ruta. Para la construcción del Estado pluricultural en México." Mexico, 2019.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.* 8, par. 6.

found to have committed human rights violations, sanctions like cancellation of concessions should be considered.

International standards on the right to defend human rights, and states' duties and commitments also imply obligations for other stakeholders like companies and society at large. Such standards establish the need to recognize the vital role human rights defenders play in strengthening the rule of law and democratic and pluricultural societies, and the need to create a climate free of violence where any person or group can demand observance of human rights. It bears noting that Mexico is a party to these commitments and as such is required to guarantee their fulfilment. Moreover, they are expressly recognized in Article 1 of the Mexican Constitution.

Notwithstanding, this report confirms unequivocally that violence against defenders of environment, land, and territory remains a social problem and is a sign of noncompliance with the aforementioned commitments.

In the CEMDA, we are of the view that dialog with environmental defenders is vital to identify needs in relation to each of these obligations, so that they can be an input and point of departure to start building an integral public policy for human rights defenders. Such a policy should be built on a foundation of recognition of differences, to ensure protection for everyone and create a favorable climate in which defending the environment does not become a death sentence.

Based on the needs of women and men who defend the environment, and the obligations assumed by the Mexican state, beyond the implementation of the *Federal Protective Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists*, an integral system must be constructed which encompasses all facets of the issue. To that end, we offer the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	TIMEFRAME
Implement an integral policy on adequate and effective protection consisting of urgent measures to protect the life and safety of defenders, and positive steps to ensure the construction of contexts and environments free of violence and harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage in dialogs convened from the Ministry of the Interior with different groups of human rights defenders to generate a participative diagnosis to establish a baseline for violence against them. - Take all needs into account, based on the specific context and differences among human rights defenders, including indigenous peoples and similar communities, and the context of violence against women defenders. -Construct an integral public policy with the involvement of different groups of human rights defenders, including defenders of environment, land, and territory. 	Short and long term.
Recognize the work of human rights defenders and the right to defend	- Implement broad campaigns at all levels of government to recognize the right to defend human rights, and specifically the legitimate defense of environment, land, and territory. Such campaigns should be culturally	Short term

human rights.	relevant and have a gender perspective.	
Create a culture of human rights which recognizes the fundamental role human rights defenders play to guarantee that democracy and the rule of law are publicly and unequivocally recognized.	<p>- Abstain, on the part of authorities of the three branches of government, from making statements which stigmatize human rights defenders or suggest that human rights organizations act inappropriately or illegally.</p> <p>-Establish disciplinary or other sanctions for authorities which fail to observe this obligation and stigmatize human rights defenders.</p>	Short and medium term.
Adopt suitable measures to ensure legal recognition of the right to defend human rights, and disseminate the contents of the relevant law in all spheres of the state, and in society at large, through promotional and educational activities.	-Conclude, on the part of the Mexican state, specifically the president and the senate, the process of ratifying the <i>Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean</i> (Escazú Agreement).	Short term
Remove obstacles and adopt the measures necessary to ensure free and unrestricted defense and promotion of human rights.	<p>- Ensure that authorities or third parties, in particular companies, do not use the punitive power of the state and its organs of justice to harass or hinder the work of human rights defenders, who engage in lawful and legitimate activities.</p> <p>- Revise and amend local and federal laws which criminalize defense of human rights, specifically defense of environment, land, and territory against the implementation of mega-projects.</p> <p>- Suspend legal proceedings and the implementation of development and infrastructure projects when there are cases of violence against environmental human rights defenders.</p>	Medium term
Recognize indigenous peoples and similar communities as subjects of public law as a means of preventing	- Amend the CPEUM (Arts. 2, 18, 26, 27, 50, 53, 73, 94, 115, and 116) to incorporate the agreements reached in the San Andres Larrainzar Accords and the advances of the so-called COCOPA Act, and in international organizations and international jurisprudence. This	Short term

<p>socioenvironmental conflicts.</p>	<p>reform should include recognition of traditional authorities, structural reform of constituted powers, and the creation of mixed authorities which can facilitate dialog among the aforementioned authorities.</p>	
<p>Guarantee the right to Prior, Free, and Informed Consultation and Consent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain, from the authorities, in all cases where human rights of indigenous peoples and similar communities may be affected, their prior, free, and informed consent. - Establish the process of consultation from a position of respect for the free determination and autonomy of indigenous peoples and similar communities by fomenting Protocols for Consultation and Prior, Free, and Informed Consent and their observance. 	<p>Short term</p>
<p>Right to territory and preferential access to natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize and promote systems for autonomous management of the territory and biocultural resources of indigenous peoples and similar communities. - Create legal frameworks which guarantee indigenous peoples and similar communities cultural control over their territories and biocultural resources, based on support and respect for their established organs of government and institutions. 	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Legal frameworks which guarantee cultural control of territory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend laws which establish legal figures like public usefulness of extractive activities, which include revision of permits, authorizations, and concessions which have caused or may cause a significant impact on the human rights of indigenous peoples and similar communities. 	<p>Medium term</p>
<p>Investigate and sanction perpetrators of violations against human rights defenders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institute and pursue investigations of aggressions committed against human rights defenders, recognizing the victim's status as a defender. - Conduct analysis of context as part of investigations of aggressions committed against defenders. - Create a specialized prosecutor to investigate crimes committed against human rights defenders. - Make full reparations for harm caused to human rights defenders, taking into account personal, family, social, and community impact. 	<p>Long term</p>

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VII. Annex

No	State	Municipality	Month	Type of victim	Sector	Physical aggressions	Aggressor
1	Chiapas	Arriaga	January	One person	Indeterminate	Homicide	Unidentified
2	Morelos	Temoac	February	One person	Electricity	Threats and homicide	Unidentified
3	Morelos	Yecapixtla	February	Organization	Electricity	Criminalization and stigmatization	Government
4	Oaxaca	Santiago Yaveo and San Juan Lalana	March	Two or more people	Agriculture	Physical aggressions, forced disappearance and homicide	Community
5	Morelos	Yecapixtla	March	Community	Electricity	Harassment	Government
6	Oaxaca	San Francisco Ixhuatan	April	One person	Indeterminate	Threats and homicide	Paramilitary groups and Government
7	Oaxaca	Juchitan	April	Two or more people	Indeterminate	Physical aggressions and threats	Community
8	Chihuahua	Guadalupe y Calvo	May	Two or more people	Forestry	Homicide	Armed group
9	Zacatecas	Jimenez de Teul	May	One person	Water	Threats	Unidentified
10	State of Mexico	Ixtapaluca	May	One person	Indeterminate	Criminalization, intimidation, and illegal detention	Government
11	Oaxaca	Santiago Yaveo	May	One person	Agriculture	Threats, harassment, robbery	Unidentified
12	Jalisco	Lagos de Morenos	May	Two or more people	Oil	Criminalization	Government
13	Puebla	San Pablo Zoquitlan	May	One person	Electricity	Threats and Attempted Homicide	Unidentified

No	State	Municipality	Month	Type of victim	Sector	Physical aggressions	Aggressor
14	Chiapas	Palenque	June	One person	Means of communication	Homicide	Unidentified
15	Puebla	San Pablo Zoquitlan	June	One person	Electricity	Breaking and entering	Government
16	Mexico City	Cuauhtemoc	July	One person	Desarrollo urbano	Homicide	Unidentified
17	State of Mexico	Lerma	July	Community	Means of communication	Harassment	Government and company
18	Colima	Cuautitlan de Garcia Barragan	July	Community	Mining	Criminalization	Government
19	State of Mexico	Ocuilan	July	One person	Forestry	Criminalization	Government
20	Nuevo Leon	Linares	July	One person	Water	Threats and intimidation	Unidentified
21	Chihuahua	Chihuahua	August	One person	Agriculture	Criminalization and defamation	Government and Media
22	Morelos	Temoac	August	Two or more people	Electricity	Criminalization	Government
23	Yucatan	Merida	August	One person	Electricity	Threats and intimidation	Organized crime
24	Chiapas	Palenque	August	One person	Indeterminate	Homicide	Unidentified
25	Jalisco	San Gabriel Municipality	Sep.	One person	Forestry	Threats and intimidation	Unidentified
26	State of Mexico	Lerma	Sep.	Community	Means of communication	Physical aggressions	Government
27	Guerrero	Malinaltepec	Oct.	One person	Mining	Homicide	Government
28	Guanajuato	San Miguel de Allende	Oct.	Two or more people	Forestry	Criminalization	Government
29	Mexico City	Tlalpan	Oct.	Two or more people	Indeterminate	Homicide	Unidentified
30	Chihuahua	Guazapares	Oct.	One person	Indeterminate	Homicide	Organized crime
No	State	Municipality	Month	Type of victim	Sector	Physical aggressions	Aggressor

31	Chiapas	Pijijapan	Oct.	One person	Means of communication	Defamation	Unidentified
32	Puebla	Santa Maria Zacatepec	Oct.	Community	Industrial	Physical aggressions and inappropriate use of force	Government
33	Zacatecas	Mazapil	Oct.	Two or more people	Mining	Criminalization	Government
34	Puebla	Ahuacatlan and San Felipe Tepatlan Municipalities	Oct.	Organization	Electricity	Threats and intimidation	Unidentified
35	Oaxaca	San Miguel Chimalapas	Nov.	Community	Forestry	Intimidation	Government
36	Oaxaca	San Esteban Atlatlahuca	Nov.	One person	Forestry	Intimidation	Unidentified
37	Quintana Roo	Solidaridad	Dec.	Two or more people	Means of communication	Threats and intimidation	Unidentified
38	Sonora	Bacum	Dec.	Two or more people	Oil	Kidnapping	Unidentified
39	Veracruz	Sayula de Aleman	Dec	One person	Oil	Homicide	Unidentified