



Plenary sitting

B9-0156/2022

8.3.2022

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on **the situation of journalists and human rights defenders in Mexico**
(2022/2580(RSP))

Pedro Marques, Andrea Cozzolino, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of journalists and human rights defenders in Mexico
(2022/2580(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Mexico, in particular that of 18 July 2019 on the situation at the USA-Mexico border and of 23 October 2014 on the disappearance of 43 teaching students in Mexico,
 - having regard to the EEAS Statement of 5 November 2020 on First High Level Dialogue of the EU with Mexico
 - having regard to the EEAS Statement of 14 November 2019 - EU High Level Meeting with Mexico,
 - having regard to the EEAS Statement of 11 September 2019 - strengthening strategic partnership with Mexico,
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of 4 May 2020 on the modernisation of the Global Agreement,
 - having regard to the modernisation of the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Mexican States,
 - having regard to the statements made by the European External Action Service on 2022 following the assassination of the journalists: Heber López Vásquez (issued on February 15), María de Lourdes Maldonado López (issued on January 25), José Luis Gamboa Arenas and Alfonso Margarito Martínez Esquivel (issued on January 20),
 - having regard to EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline, and the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, as well as commitments in the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy,
 - having regard to the joint statements by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Mexico Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued the 28 January, 2022 condemning the assassination of María de Lourdes Maldonado López,
 - having regard to Rules 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Mexico and the European Union share common values that find expression in our democratic and pluralist societies, defending fundamental freedoms, human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, and a shared commitment to

consolidating democracy, the rule of law, equitable economic and social development and fighting corruption and poverty;

- B. whereas our democratic systems have the duty and obligation to safeguard the operation of the rule of law and respect for human rights, and whereas the enjoyment and full exercise of freedoms and the right to the integrity of the human person are thus one of the basic pillars of the rule of law;
 - C. whereas the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership has enabled closer cooperation between the EU and Mexico on issues of global importance, and in particular enhanced dialogue, coordination and exchanges in areas such as security, human rights, electoral reform, regional development and regulatory and trade policies; whereas the EU and Mexico are currently in a process to update their Global Agreement;
 - D. whereas the EU-Mexico human rights dialogue in 2020 culminated in an agreement on joint work in Mexico to step up protection for human rights defenders;
 - E. whereas 2022 has proved to be a deadly year for journalists in Mexico; From 2012 to 2022, 78 journalists have been killed in the country and 33 among them were killings where could be proved a link to their work and violence against
 - F. journalists and human rights defenders is rarely investigated or prosecuted;
 - G. whereas despite some institutional steps, such as the creation of an autonomous National Prosecutor's Office, the level of impunity in Mexico is extremely alarming, with over 90,000 people disappeared, mostly since 2006; whereas as the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has reiterated, the lack of punishment for those responsible for murders, aggressions, threats and attacks related to the exercise of journalistic activity and the human rights defence in Mexico. Whereas in January 2022, the Ministry of Interior of Mexico started a process to promote a "National System of Prevention and Protection for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists", informing that this National System would be based on a law which would also contemplate the creation of a "National Prevention Model", a "National Registry of Aggressions" and a "National Protection Protocol";
 - H. Whereas last week, a proposal of legislation barring any NGO that receives foreign funding from attempting to influence legislation or from participating in strategic litigation was presented in the Congress;
1. Condemns all killings and acts of violence and intimidation against journalists and human rights defenders in Mexico, expresses deep concern over the high level of impunity for such and calls on the Mexican authorities to uphold commitments to investigate and resolve these crimes and prosecute perpetrators to the full extent of the law.
 2. Expresses its deepest sympathy, solidarity and condolences to all the victims and their families.

3. Calls for the Mexican government to strengthen protections for journalists and human rights defenders who are at risk or under threat, including by implementing all of the recommendations made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in her 2019 evaluation of the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. Calls the Mexican authorities to fully implement international resolutions, recommendations and precautionary or urgent measures relating to human rights defenders and journalists.
4. Underlines the need to reduce the high level of impunity by tackling the causes, which include corruption, inadequate training and resources and complicity of some officials strengthening the human resources both at police forces and among justice staff.
5. Calls the Mexican Government to publicly underline the pivotal role played by human rights defenders and journalists in democratic societies and condemn any public expressions discrediting them and human rights violations committed against them.
6. Welcomes the creation of the National Search Commission (CNB) with the goal of searching mass graves across the country and taking steps to determine and publish the true number of people disappeared (as of September 2021 90,000 people disappeared according to the platform), acknowledging that the real number is likely higher. However, regrets that the 2018 reform intended to make the attorney general more independent and accountable has not been properly implemented and has brought little results on the investigation of disappearances or identifying those responsible.
7. Stresses the necessity to better coordinate protective measures of the 2013 Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, both at federal and regional levels, providing sufficient organisational and human resources and establishing clear procedures as raised in a 2019 study by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which should include a gender perspective as recommended by the Inter-American Commission on human rights. Deeply regrets the elimination in October 2020 of the independent fund to pay for protection measures, putting the mechanism in a difficult financial situation.
8. Expresses serious concern regarding any legislative proposal that would prevent NGOs from conducting advocacy or engaging in strategic litigation if they receive international funding;
9. Stresses the urgency of tackling femicides and violence against women in Mexico as femicides rose in 2021, according to government data. Welcomes the comprehensive legislative framework, such as General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence and Gender Violence Alert, but underlines the need to strengthen both the financial and human resources to carry out investigations and the improve the implementation of the legislation as well as the monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

10. Welcomes the recent visit of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances to Mexico and the recognition by the government of the committee's jurisdiction to consider cases from Mexico, allowing families of victims to submit cases to the committee once they have exhausted their legal options domestically.
11. Underlines the fact that Mexico is a strategic partner for the EU. Encourages the Mexican Government to continue with its efforts to strengthen state institutions and consolidate the rule of law, with a view to tackling some of the structural problems that are at the root of the human rights violations, specifically: the establishment of an independent, autonomous national forensics institution with sufficient resources; the transformation of the Federal General Attorney's Office (in particular the office of the Federal Special Prosecutor for Attention to Crimes committed against Freedom of Expression, which operates under its auspices) into a solid, independent, autonomous institution; and the adoption with prior consultation with civil organizations involved in the process, of the National Program for the Prevention and Punishment of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
12. Calls for the Mexican authorities to ensure that law and order is maintained, to the greatest extent possible, by civilian rather than military authorities, refraining to the militarisation of public security and the impunity for human rights violations committed by the armed forces.
13. Welcomes the inclusion of a robust human rights clause in the new Global Agreement, currently being modernised, between the EU and Mexico, and calls for an active involvement and participation of civil society in its implementation.
14. Urges the EEAS, the Commission and EU member states to ensure full implementation of the EU action plan of human rights and democracy and of all EU guidelines on human rights, including in particular those on freedom of expression and on human rights defenders.
15. Highlights the fact that the modernisation of the trade agreement between the EU and Mexico includes a provision on the fight against corruption and money laundering
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States, the *pro tempore* presidency of CELAC, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Eurolat Parliamentary Assembly and the President and Congress of Mexico.