



Plenary sitting

B9-0157/2022

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))

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on behalf of the Renew 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,
 - having regard to the EU-Mexico Global Agreement that is in force since 2000,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders and on freedom of expression online and offline,
 - having regard the Local statement by the European Union, Norway and Switzerland on the murder of journalist Heber Lopez Vasquez on 15th February 2022,
 - having regard to the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity,
 - having regard to Rules 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the United Nations Charter Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- A. whereas violence, human rights violations and attacks against journalists and human rights defenders are dramatically rising in Mexico; whereas journalists and human rights defenders, particularly those who investigate corruption from public officials or expose the work of criminal drug cartels, especially at local level, are often killed, warned, harassed, threatened, raped, attacked, enforcedly disappeared and surveyed by government authorities and criminal groups; whereas several of them flee abroad as the only way to ensure their survival;
- B. whereas according to Reporters Without Borders, in 2021 for the third consecutive year, Mexico was the most dangerous country for journalists in the world and ranked 143 out of 180 in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index;
- C. whereas 2022 marks the deadliest beginning of the year for journalists in Mexico with at least six journalists assassinated; whereas the killing of Lourdes Maldonado Lopez, Margarito Martínez, José Luiz Gamboa, Heber Lopez Vasquez or Roberto Toledo are only few dramatic examples of attacks against journalists and media workers; whereas journalists', labour conditions are poor and many lack access to health and mental care services; whereas since the election of President López Obrador three years ago, at least 47 journalists have been assassinated according to official sources;

- D. whereas on 27 January 2022, human rights defender Ana Luisa Garduno was killed in Temxico, Morelos, while fighting for justice for the feminicide of her daughter; whereas on 14 February 2022 water rights defender Francisco Vazquez was killed; whereas according to interior ministry from December 2018, at least 68 human rights defenders were killed in Mexico;
- E. whereas since the beginning of his mandate President López Obrador has maintained an extremely hostile attitude against journalists stating that "with honourable exceptions", the profession is going through "a moment of darkness and decadence"; whereas among other names, he has accused the local press of being "biased, beating, defending corrupt groups and constantly lying";
- F. whereas in September 2021, a letter signed by 650 journalists and academics accused the President of actions harmful to freedom of expression, including a series of public statements undermining the press, permitting an environment conducive to censorship, administrative sanctions and misuse of the law to intimidate the press; whereas in February 2022 journalists staged protests in 13 out of 33 states of Mexico demanding greater security and investigations into the attacks targeting journalists;
- G. whereas the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists maintained protection measures for 1.455 people, 988 human rights defenders and 467 journalists in April 2021; whereas there are serious deficiencies in the amount of funds and number of staff in the mechanism, a lack of adequate accompaniment, lack of coordination with state governments and delays in the implementation of protection measures that often cost lives as in the case of Lourdes Maldonado; whereas at least five journalists who were under the program's protection were killed;
- H. whereas the Mexican State has said it is working on the creation of a National Prevention and Protection System for human rights defenders and journalists that will rest on a General Prevention and Protection Act on Attacks on Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and will include the adoption of a National Prevention Model, the creation of National Attack Records, and the implementation of a National Protection Protocol;
- I. whereas in Mexico more than 95% of homicides remain unpunished and the Mexican government has not carried out the reforms needed to reduce violence and impunity including for crimes against journalists and human rights defenders;
- J. whereas in November 2020, Mexico ratified the Escazú Agreement, which includes strong protection for environmental defenders;
1. Condemns the threat, harassment and killing of human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico and underlines that free media is an essential part of a functioning democratic society;
 2. Calls on the authorities to investigate the killings in a prompt, thorough, independent and impartial manner, and in the case of the journalists and media workers in accordance with the approved protocol for the investigation of Crimes against Freedom of Expression;

3. Expresses its deepest sympathy, solidarity and condolences to all the victims and their families; reiterates its concern about the climate of insecurity and hostility faced by human rights defenders and journalists and stands in solidarity with them, as they are often the ones who provide key information to the authorities on serious human rights violations.
4. Is concerned about the lack of results in the investigations and the high levels of impunity; calls on the Mexican authorities to effectively fight against impunity, in order to achieve a safe environment for defending human rights and for practicing independent journalism; reminds both state and federal authorities of their obligations to prevent attacks against the human rights defenders and press, effectively protect them and investigate the murders.
5. Condemns the frequent attacks by President Lopez Obrador to media freedom and in particular, journalist and media workers including by publishing sensitive personal information; reminds that journalism can only be practised in an environment free from threats, physical, psychological or moral aggression, or other acts of intimidation and harassment.
6. Calls on the authorities, and in particular President Lopez Obrador, to refrain from issuing any communication which could stigmatise human rights defenders, journalists and media workers, exacerbate the atmosphere against them or distort the lines of investigation.
7. Urges the Mexican government to take concrete, prompt and effective measures to strengthen national, state and local institutions and the implementation of a set of urgent, comprehensive and coherent strategies for prevention, protection, reparation and accountability in order to guarantee that human rights defenders and journalists continue their activities without fear of reprisals and without restrictions, in line with the recommendations made by the UN High Commissioner on Human rights and the Inter-American commission on human rights; recommends Mexico to integrate a gender perspective when addressing the safety of journalists.
8. Urges the federal Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists to meet their promises to increase its funding and resources and to establish more expeditious processes to integrate defenders and journalists as beneficiaries in view to save lives and safety of those under threat including granting security measures to their families, colleagues and lawyers; underlines that public protection policies effectively involve governmental bodies and institutions of each state and also the local level.
9. Recalls that freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are basic human rights; Calls on Mexico to uphold Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which clearly states that everyone has the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers and through any media of his or her choice; calls on Mexican authorities to uphold and safeguard the highest standards on protection of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of choice and freedom of belief;
10. Calls on all Member States, the EEAS and its delegation in Mexico to raise human rights concerns with the Mexican counterpanes and to put at the centre of EU-Mexico dialogues the protection of journalists and human rights defenders; urges on the EU Delegation and the Member States to fully implement the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and

on freedom of expression online and offline to provide all appropriate support to the work of human rights defenders and journalists.

11. Underlines the importance of Mexico as an vital partner; recalls the importance of a strong and deep EU-Mexico relationship and reaffirms its commitment to foster these relations through the modernised EU-Mexico global agreement, based on full respect for common values such as respect for human rights, democracy, rule of law, and freedom of the media, both online and offline.
12. Instructs its President to forward this Resolution to the Commission, the Council, and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government and the Parliament of Mexico.