

Statement: International Observatory on Mexico

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In response to Internal Security Law, international organizations form new coalition to draw global attention to rampant impunity in Mexico

Washington, D.C. /New York City/ Stuttgart/ Geneva, December 18, 2017 - The Mexican legislature's approval last week of the Internal Security Law marks a turning point for a country already reeling from unprecedented levels of violence and widespread human rights violations. In response, a coalition of ten international organizations committed to human rights and the rule of law are calling on President Enrique Peña Nieto to veto the bill and announcing the formation of an International Observatory on Mexico, whose mandate will be to observe and document the country's deteriorating human rights situation.

Far from addressing widespread impunity for crimes under international law—including those committed by military personnel in the context of Mexico's long running "war on drugs"—the Internal Security Law would further enshrine the role of the armed forces in the country's law enforcement. This militarized strategy has terrorized Mexico's population for over a decade through well-documented cases of extrajudicial execution, enforced disappearance, torture, including sexual violence, amongst other human rights violations. These crimes have been perpetrated with almost complete impunity as violence continues to grow; indeed, 2017 is on track to be Mexico's deadliest year yet.

The Internal Security Law provides legal cover for unfettered military action against everyone in the country. It represents a dangerous escalation that requires urgent action. The creation of the International Observatory—a permanent coalition of international organizations from across Europe, the United States, and the Americas—will serve to monitor the situation in Mexico, draw the attention of other nations to the human rights regression underway there, and support national civil society colleagues in the face of growing attacks against human rights defenders and journalists. The Observatory will also continue to advocate with Mexican authorities to remind them of their obligations under international law.

Inaugural members of the Observatory on Mexico include Amnesty International, the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), the German Network for Human Rights in Mexico, Latin America Working Group (LAWG), the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI), Peace Brigades International, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT); other international organizations are expected to join in the future. As Mexico moves further away from its democratic foundations, the world is watching.

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