



- **International organizations denounce that proposed National Guard model in Mexico violates international law**
- **Organizations call on the Mexican president to follow recommendations for the strengthening of the civilian security forces and the justice system in the country**

**Geneva, Mexico City, New York, Paris, San José, Stuttgart and Washington DC
February 21, 2019**

The undersigned organizations, part of the International Observatory on Human Rights in Mexico, express our deep concern about the possible reform of the Mexican constitution to create a National Guard as a new public security body, a measure that would aggravate the militarization of security in Mexico.

The armed forces participation in citizen security tasks the last two six-year presidential terms has resulted in a considerable increase in human rights violations committed in this context. As our organizations have documented, members of the armed forces have committed crimes under international law that have remained in almost absolute impunity.

Furthermore, the proposal under debate in Congress violates international standards and the jurisprudence of the Inter-American System of Human Rights and the United Nations System,

which for a range of reasons establish that the work of maintaining public security and order should be reserved to the civilian police forces, including that the military is not trained to perform citizen security tasks from a human rights perspective.

In 2010, the judgments of the Inter-American Court in the Rosendo Cantú and Fernández Ortega cases evidenced cases in which the participation of the armed forces in citizen security tasks in Mexico resulted in human rights violations. More recently, the judgements against Mexico issued by the Court at the end of 2018 in the cases of sexual torture against 11 women in San Salvador Atenco by police officers and the enforced disappearances in the Alvarado Espinoza case by members of the Army in Chihuahua not only demonstrate the urgency of issuing a legal framework to regulate the use of force in accordance with international standards, but also the importance of strengthening civilian bodies in order to establish a security policy based on international standards.

In addition, in the case of Cabrera García and Montiel Flores, the Court stated that the intervention of the armed forces in public security tasks must meet criteria of strict proportionality and exceptionality. Likewise, the sentence in the Alvarado Espinoza case reaffirms that citizen security should be reserved primarily to civilian police forces. In the Atenco case, the Court reiterated what many international organizations have urged the Mexican government to do: strengthen the civilian security forces. The UN Committee against Forced Disappearance also issued a recommendation in this regard in November 2018.

As a coalition of 10 international organizations committed to human rights, we call on President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to look for alternatives to the plan of replacing the federal civil police with a new force that will primarily be controlled by the Ministry of National Defense.

The International Observatory considers the fight against impunity and the development of a sustainable plan for national security to be essential: the strengthening of civilian institutions and the judicial sector are the basis for the structural changes that Mexico needs and are key elements to strengthen the rule of law.

ACAT France
Amnesty International
Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional, CEJIL
German Network for Human Rights in Mexico
Due Process of Law Foundation, DPLF
Latin America Working Group, LAWG
Open Society Justice Initiative, OSJI
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Washington Office on Latin America, WOLA
World Organisation Against Torture, OMCT