



Mexico Country Report August 2022

In 1969 US President Nixon declared an American “War on Drugs.” Since then, the US has spent over one trillion dollars on this “war.” In [2006](#), Mexico joined the “war” to take political control away from drug cartels. Through its Mérida Initiative the US appropriated \$1.4 billion from 2008 to 2010 to Mexico for military and law enforcement training and equipment. The “War on Drugs” has failed. The cartels have taken over whole Mexican states and have corrupted many others. Mexico has recorded more than [300,000](#) homicides since 2006. Mexico has one of the world’s highest rates of femicide and attacks on journalists. In the US, the “War on Drugs” has resulted in mass incarceration of drug offenders, especially black men.

Mexico’s populist president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador has actively undermined democratic institutions. He verbally attacks critics of his administration, including [journalists](#), [feminists](#), and human rights defenders. Impunity and corruption pervade all levels of government and law enforcement. [Over 98% of crimes](#) in the country go unsolved. Human rights violations seldom result in arrests. Many crimes go unreported.

Since the rise of drug cartels in the 1970s, it is estimated that between [40% and 65% of all homicides](#) in Mexico are related to organized crime. Violence caused by turf wars between cartels has displaced [tens of thousands](#) of people. Cartels regularly engage in extortion, kidnapping, rape, torture, murder, and massacres of [civilians](#). [Migrants](#) from Central America are particularly vulnerable to cartel violence. [Corruption and collusion](#) with cartels among law enforcement personnel has ensured that those involved in organized crime are treated with impunity.

In 2021 Mexico had at least [1,004 cases of femicide](#) – the murder of a woman because of her gender. Femicide is inherently genocidal because it constitutes the intentional destruction of part of a national group. Femicides are not [isolated incidents](#) but rather the product of a “macho” society that has normalized violence against women. A [femicide unit](#) formed in Mexico City in 2020 has reopened hundreds of cases. The number of [disappeared and missing](#) people in Mexico since 1990 has reached 100,000, 25% of whom are women and girls.

Indigenous peoples in Mexico continue to face discrimination, violence, dispossession of land, and lack of access to housing and healthcare, which has left their communities especially vulnerable to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). An estimated 70% of Indigenous people in Mexico are [living in poverty](#). 70% of human trafficking victims are [Indigenous women](#). The [Zapatista Army of National Liberation](#) (EZLN) was organized in Chiapas in 1994 to support Indigenous empowerment.

Mexico is one of the [most dangerous](#) countries in the world to practice journalism. [At least 15 journalists](#) have already been murdered in 2022. Since Obrador became president, attacks on journalists have [increased by 85%](#). In 2021, there were 664 documented attacks, with government officials directly linked to 274 incidents and organized crime linked to 42. Obrador verbally attacks journalists during his morning briefings.

The domination by drug cartels in many states, the prevalence of violence against women and femicide, the routine impunity that follows human rights abuses, the systemic oppression of Indigenous peoples, and official attacks on journalists are evidence of **Stage 3: Discrimination, Stage 4: Dehumanization, Stage 5: Organization, Stage 6: Polarization, and Stage 8: Persecution.**

Genocide Watch Recommends:

- The Organization of American States should establish an OAS Criminal Court and international police force with the authority to arrest and try international criminals and corrupt officials and police.
- The Mexican government should establish femicide units in each state police force.
- Mexico should establish women’s shelters where women can escape from domestic violence.
- Mexico should establish safe corridors for Central American migrants seeking asylum in the United States.
- Mexico should devote resources to help Indigenous people gain access to housing and healthcare.