

*Report on the situation
of environmental human
rights defenders, persons
and communities,
in Mexico, 2023*



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1. Prologue

Eleven years ago, at the Mexican Center for Environmental Law (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, A.C.-CEMDA), we started to document attacks on environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities in Mexico. This is our tenth report and we continue to document acts of violence against persons and communities that defend the environment, land, and territory. This effort contributes, among other things, to reflection and the search for possible solutions, but also contributes to collective memory, since our reports have created a written record of the names of persons and communities that have even given their lives to defend our mother Earth and their territories.



Violence perpetrated against defenders, persons and communities, represents one of the greatest challenges facing governments and humankind¹. Such violence not only continues but is rising and is present in almost every corner and territory of our biodiverse and pluricultural nation. In Mexico, violence does not stop. Our country is part of the most dangerous region in the world for defenders of the environment² and territory. The violence perpetrated against environmental human

rights defenders, persons and communities is disturbing,³ above all for men and women living in the territories, since it seeks to silence, disarticulate, kneecap, discourage, and undermine resistance. Nevertheless, in the face of ongoing violence and adverse conditions, defenders, persons and communities, resist.

The gravity of this situation is magnified if we focus on the ecological crisis we are experiencing today. In the words of Victor M. Toledo, Mexico's

¹ Human Rights Council Resolution 40/11, entitled "Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development," expresses alarm over the serious situation affecting defenders of environmental human rights, including women and indigenous persons, who are increasingly the victims of killings; violent acts, including gender violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, slander, criminalization, and judicial harassment, forced eviction, and displacement. Available at: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_s.aspx?si=A/HRC/40/L.22/Rev.1

² Global Witness, *Siempre en pie, personas defensoras de la tierra y el medioambiente al frente de la crisis climática*, 2023; available at: <https://www.globalwitness.org/es/standing-firm-es/>

³ I/A Court HR, CIDH advierte persistencia de la alarmante violencia contra personas defensoras en el segundo cuatrimestre de 2023; October 20, 2023; available at: <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2023/248.asp>

former Minister of Environment, Mexico is a particular, peculiar, and cruel case of what is happening globally. Its tragedy, stagnation, and deterioration are the expression, on our piece of the planet, of a greater crisis, a crisis of civilization.⁴ Taking this into account, we find ourselves facing the need to recognize and honor the work of persons and communities that preserve their good ways of life, protect their territories, and promote organizational processes for the defense of the environment and natural resources that sustain life on our Mother Earth.

We present this report in hopes that it will contribute to reflection and action for prevention and access to justice as a means of guaranteeing safe and enabling environments to practice the work of defending environmental human rights freely and safely. In particular, we hope that the information it contains will be useful for communities and civil society organizations, that on this path they will find strength in the face of conditions that are extremely adverse.

The report starts with an introductory section where we address issues related to defense work, which are central to our

ongoing discussions, such as the causes that produce the present context for violence. Next we present the methodology that was used in preparing this report and the results of the process of documentation applied to the forms of violence perpetrated against defenders in the year 2023. The last chapter summarizes our conclusions and recommendations.

This report would not have been possible without the collaboration and information shared by many defenders, persons, communities, and organizations. We want to thank them all for sharing their experiences and for placing their trust in the team which, over several months, has documented, drafted, and now published this text.

This report is also part of the Initiative *Protegiendo a las Personas, Protegiendo a la Naturaleza* (Protecting Persons, Protecting Nature) (P3N), in which CEMDA is a contributor and from which we aim to provide tools and support for the promotion of a culture and practices of safety.

**Centro Mexicano de Derecho
Ambiental, AC-CEMDA**
México City, Abril 2024

⁴ Toledo, V. Manuel, *Ecocidio in Mexico, la batalla final es por la vida*, México, Grijalbo, 2016, p. 15.

2. Introduction

Protecting the environment requires, in the first place, **protecting those who defend it.**⁵ The persons, groups, and organizations that defend human rights in environmental matters are among the most at risk of suffering human rights violations. In its resolution 40/11 of 2019, the United Nations Human Rights Council expressed its concern regarding the situation of these persons worldwide, forcefully condemned the killings and all other human rights violations committed against them, and emphasized that such acts may violate international law and undermine sustainable development at the local, national, regional, and international levels.⁶



Defense is a right is the rallying cry of movements, communities, and organizations human rights level when they take to the streets in Mexico. The declaration of human rights defenders affirms this by stating that all persons have the right to defend human rights in conditions of equality and non-discrimination⁷.

Environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, have the same rights; they also have the right to conduct their

work in a **safe and enabling environment**, as set forth in the *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Escazú Agreement).

This regional agreement, and its effective application, is indispensable for our time, especially for those who defend the environment, natural resources, and territories since it is the first regional treaty for Latin America and the

⁵ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish acronym CEPAL), *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. Implementation guide* (LC/TS.2021/221/Rev.2); Santiago, 2023; p. 193.

⁶ Human Rights Council, Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development, A/HRC/RES/40/11; New York, 2019.

⁷ United Nations, Declaration on the right and the duty of individuals, groups, and institutions to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms (A/RES/53/144), New York, 1999, Article 1.

Caribbean on the environment that contains specific provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters. Because Mexico is a party to this agreement, we all should demand that it be observed.⁸

In this context, we speak of a safe and enabling environment when we refer to the general, structural, or systemic characteristics of a given context that facilitate the full exercise of rights.

Such an environment allows people to enjoy their rights freely and without discrimination, threats, restrictions, or insecurity.⁹

Today, instead, such a context poses massive challenges and difficulties for those who work to defend the environment, land, and territory. This has been amply documented by domestic and international organizations¹⁰ and, first and foremost, is experienced day after day by the persons and communities that inhabit and care for biocultural territories.

For these reasons, we reiterate our demand for the Mexican state to fulfil its obligations to respect and protect the rights of environmental defenders given that, as this report confirms, the violence perpetrated in Mexico against

those who defend water, forests, biodiversity, and life is not ending.¹¹

Why should environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, be protected? Because they seek out and disseminate information, fight against irregular infrastructure projects, investigate and question, make demands, assist in organizing their communities to defend themselves, participate in meetings, dialog, meet with authorities, confront companies that destroy territories, file lawsuits, denounce pollution and illegal logging, care for territories, protest and organize demonstrations, safeguard their culture, care for their communities, preserve their sacred sites, cultivate their fields, fertilize the land, protect rivers, seas, and lagoons, conserve water, care for plants, fight for forests and jungles, care for bees, collect rainwater, and demand justice, among many other things. These persons are the great guardians of the Earth.

Environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, are the custodians of biocultural heritage and life.¹² The violence perpetrated against them outrages us. We remind all the authorities of the Mexican state of their duty to prevent aggressions against them. From CEMDA, we believe that this duty includes addressing the root causes

⁸ The Inter-American Human Rights System has also developed important resolutions and documents, such as *Cuadernillo de Jurisprudencia de la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos No. 30: Personas defensoras de derechos humanos (2020)*, which documents the most relevant contentious cases and provisional measures in which the I/A Court HR has addressed the issue. Available at: <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/sitios/libros/todos/docs/cuadernillo30.pdf>

⁹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish acronym CEPAL), *Op. cit.* p. 196.

¹⁰ In their last report from 2023, Global Witness found that in the year 2022 at least 177 persons lost their lives as a result of their efforts to protect our planet; since 2012, at least 1,910 homicides of environmental defenders have been committed, and in 2022 Colombia, Brazil and Mexico accounted for 70% of killings of persons defending the environment. Global Witness, *Siempre en pie, personas defensoras de la tierra y el medio ambiente al frente de la crisis climática*; available at: <https://www.globalwitness.org/es/standing-firm-es/>

¹¹ I/A Court HR, *Persiste la violencia contra personas defensoras en el primer cuatrimestre de 2023*; June 27, 2023; available at: <https://www.oas.org/es/CIDH/jsForm/?File=/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2023/138.asp>

¹² See Eckart Boege, *El patrimonio biocultural de los pueblos indígenas de México, hacia la conservación in situ de la biodiversidad y agrobiodiversidad en los territorios indígenas*, INAH - CDI, 2008.

of violence against the environment and communities, which are directly linked to the **imposition of massive infrastructure projects and the pillaging** of natural resources that are indispensable for peoples and for life.

The results presented in this report confirm that environmental defense is one of the

most dangerous undertakings in Mexico. The information we have collected in the year 2023 is the result of documenting 123 events of aggression against environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, which in turn encompass 282 aggressions. Further, we documented 16 events of lethal aggression in which 20 defenders lost their lives.



3. Methodology

There is no formal definition of environmental human rights defenders, but we can say that they are men and women who, collectively or individually, act in favor of the environment, land, and territory. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders has called them “the persons and groups that, in a personal or professional capacity, peacefully work to protect and promote human rights related to the environment, in particular water, air, land, plants, and animals.”¹³ Accordingly, this report documents their situation in Mexico through monitoring and annual documentation of aggressions committed against them as a result of their defense activities.



The purpose of this report is to draw attention to the situation of structural violence human rights defenders, persons and communities, of the environment, land, and territory in Mexico face, through monitoring and analysis of aggressions perpetrated in the context of their work, documenting aggressions from January 1 through December 31, 2023.

Part of the work CEMDA has done over the last 11 years has entailed reflection and research to document the various forms of violence perpetrated against environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities. Therefore, each year we implement adjustments and modifications to our methodology to offer better information.

At present, the organization has a *Guide to documenting incidents of attacks against human rights defenders, persons and communities, of the environment, land, and territory*, which gives our research team a standardized model in the process of documenting events of aggression and specific aggressions.

As it has in years past, the report distinguishes events of aggression from aggressions. **Events of aggression** involve cases where, over a given time, specific aggressions take place. In the case of **aggressions**, we refer to the behavior of the aggressor that constitutes a specific type of aggression. In other words, an event of aggression may encompass several behaviors, and therefore more than one aggression and

¹³ Report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in relation to the situation of environmental human rights defenders, A/71/281; August 3, 2016, par. 7; available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/247/12/PDF/N1624712.pdf?OpenElement>

more than one victim. An example is that there are cases where various types of aggression occur in a single event of aggression, such as a threat followed immediately by physical aggression against one or more persons.

The report requires a process of documentation that is based on a review of press reports as the primary source of information. For that purpose, we conducted a search and compilation of articles with information on possible events related to aggressions against persons and communities engaged in the defense of the environment and territory. Then, we conducted an itemized review of press reports, which allowed us to identify events of aggression, and a review of and search for sources of information.

After gathering such information, it was systematized and subject to data analysis based on the components listed below (e.g. events of aggression, aggressions, aggressions by state, types of victims, sectors, and aggressors).

In sum, the main sources of information that support our research are as follows:

- ▶ Press reports.
- ▶ Information obtained through the initiative *Protegiendo a las Personas, Protegiendo a la Naturaleza* (P3N).
- ▶ Information shared directly by domestic and international human rights organizations.

- ▶ Public information obtained from requests for access to information using the National Platform for Transparency.
- ▶ Information received from defenders, persons and communities, in the course of CEMDA's activities as a civil society organization, in defense and protection of the environment and territory.
- ▶ Documents, interviews, and testimonies received directly from defenders, persons and communities, and civil society organizations.

This report is the product of a collaboration with many defenders, persons, communities, and organizations, which, in this time, have shared their experiences, recommendations, and information with CEMDA. It was assembled, for the most part, based on information that has been made public in some way.

Nevertheless, while recognizing that not all cases of aggression are public, information may be under-reported, and as an organization we cannot have access to or knowledge of all cases of aggression, this report does not claim to encompass all the aggressions committed against defenders, persons and communities, but it does seek to offer a sufficiently representative sample.

4. Aggressions against environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, in Mexico in 2023



The situation of human rights defenders, persons and communities, in Mexico in the year 2023 continued to be one of high risk, since the work in defense of environmental human rights undertaken by persons, communities, and collectives often takes place under conditions of violence, corruption, and impunity. In environmental matters, several studies rate Mexico as a country with medium to high levels of impunity, with discouraging data on environmental degradation and crime, as one of the countries with the most environmental conflicts in the region and, alongside other countries, the highest numbers of killings of environmental activists.¹⁴ In other words, the conditions in which they operate are adverse and intimidating.

¹⁴ Cedillo Celeste, Le Clercq Juan Antonio, and Chaidez Azucena, *Índice Global de Impunidad Ambiental Latinoamérica 2023, Un acercamiento a la problemática de la justicia ambiental*, UDLAP, México, 2023.

4.1 Aggressions

In the year 2023, CEMDA documented 123 events of aggression against environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, in Mexico. In these events of aggression, 282 aggressions were documented,

including homicides, physical aggressions, sexual aggressions, property damage, harassment, intimidation, and others.

Of the last 10 years, 2023 had the second highest number of documented events of aggression, behind 197 documented in 2022.

Image 1. Comparative table of lethal events of aggression in the last 10 years

Year	Events of aggression	Lethal aggressions
2014	78	4
2015	107	11
2016	85	1
2017	53	29
2018	49	21
2019	39	15
2020	65	18
2021	108	25
2022	197	24
2023	123	20

282

aggressions were documented in 2023, including homicides, sexual attacks, property damage, harassment, and intimidation



4.2 Types of aggression

Based on an analysis of reports on the **123 events of aggression** documented in the year 2023, we identified **282 specific aggressions** against environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities.¹⁵

The most frequently reported forms of aggression in 2023 were threats (33), followed by intimidation (28), physical aggression (26), criminalization (21), homicide (19)¹⁶, and harassment (19).

We can see that, although the total number of aggressions reported in 2023 (282) fell compared with the year 2022 (582 aggressions), the figure remains high and is cause for concern.

Also, lethal aggressions unfortunately matched the previous year, with 20 in 2023. The same occurs with aggressions like criminalization and disappearance, figures for which remained in a range similar to that reported last year.

Image 2. Total aggressions documented in 2023

Total number of aggressions by type			
Threats	33	Breaking and entering	6
Intimidation	28	Torture and other mistreatment	5
Physical aggression	26	Disappearance	4
Criminalization	21	Disappearance by civilians	5
Homicide	19	Larceny	4
Harassment	19	Gender violence	3
Slander	18	Sexual aggression	3
Damage to property	14	Forced eviction	3
Stigmatization	14	Forced disappearance	2
Illegal or arbitrary detention	10	Discrimination	2
Inappropriate use of force	9	Extrajudicial execution	1
Forced displacement	8	Espionage	1
Illegal detention	7	Kidnapping	0
Dispossession	6	Others	11

¹⁵ Based on the CEMDA's methodology, an event of aggression, depending on the circumstances, may comprise more than one specific aggression. This is the reason why numbers for events of aggression and specific aggressions vary.

¹⁶ Fifteen events of aggression were reported, in which 19 defenders were killed.

As regards cases of disappearance, in the year 2023, 11 events of aggression were documented, in which 8 defenders were victims of disappearance,¹⁷ 4 of forced disappearance

and 7 of disappearance by civilians. With these figures, at least 19 environmental human rights defenders were victims of some form of disappearance in 2023.

Image 5. States with the most events of aggression in 2023

State	Events of aggression	Aggressions
Campeche	4	7
Chiapas	9	23
Chihuahua	6	18
México City	12	22
Durango	4	14
Guerrero	7	16
Hidalgo	1	2
Jalisco	20	25
State of México	2	7
Michoacán	7	15
Morelos	2	4
Nayarit	1	1
Oaxaca	19	50
Puebla	3	5
Querétaro	2	7
Quintana Roo	3	9
San Luis Potosí	1	2
Sinaloa	1	2
Sonora	5	15
Tlaxcala	3	5
Veracruz	4	8
Yucatán	7	25
Total	123	282

¹⁷ When, based on the facts and information obtained in the process of documentation, it proves impossible to identify if a case of disappearance involves a forced disappearance or disappearance by civilians, such aggressions are listed under the generic heading of disappearance.

4.3 Lethal aggressions

The UN Human Rights Committee has established that the duty to protect the right to life demands that the states parties adopt special measures to ensure protection for persons in situations of vulnerability whose lives are in situations of particular risk due to concrete threats or preexisting patterns of violence.¹⁸ In the case of environmental human rights defenders, the Mexican state fails to fulfil this obligation.

For CEMDA, it is of vital importance to recall that defenders who are victims of lethal aggression as a result of violence perpetrated against them are not mere numbers. These persons constantly remind us of governments' obligation to take urgent action to end this terrible situation. Those who have lost their lives protecting what is most valuable to us as humans are also guides and examples for us all, supporting with their memory the processes of struggle, resistance, and defense. We honor and remember them.

In the year 2023, 16 events of lethal aggression were documented, in which 20 defenders of the environment, land, and territory lost their lives. Of these cases, 19 defenders were victims of homicide and one more of probable extrajudicial execution.¹⁹ **The figure of 20 lethal aggressions in the year 2023 is the fifth highest documented by CEMDA in the last 10 years.** It is necessary to remember that in 2017, 29

The figure of 20 lethal aggressions in the year 2023 is the fifth highest documented by CEMDA in the last 10 years

lethal aggressions were documented, while 25 were registered during 2021, 24 in 2022 and 21 in 2018.

These numbers confirm that Mexico continues to record very high numbers of lethal aggressions and evidence the severity of the present situation, which unquestionably is contrary to the government's obligation to guarantee the right to life, as well as safe and enabling environments in which to carry out the work of defending the environment, land, and territory.

Including this year's figures, Mexico has reached a total of **102 environmental defenders killed for reasons related to their work during the current federal administration.**²⁰

As regards lethal aggressions in states, Michoacan reported the highest number of killings of defenders, reaching a total of 7. It was followed by Guerrero with 6 killings, then Oaxaca and the State of Mexico with 2 each, and the states of Hidalgo, Sonora, and Jalisco, each with one killing.

¹⁸ Human Rights Committee, General Observation No. 36. Article 6: right to life, CCPR/C/GC/36, 2019, par. 23.

¹⁹ We refer to probable extrajudicial executions given that, based on the documentation in each case, elements were identified indicating that they involved that form of aggression, and therefore should be investigated under that category.

²⁰ In the year 2019, 15 lethal aggressions were documented, in 2020: 18; in 2021: 25; in 2022: 24; and in 2023: 20.

Image 4. Map of states where lethal aggressions were committed in 2023



4.3.1 Homicides

In Mexico, in the year 2023, at least 19 persons were victims of homicide due to their work in defense of environmental human rights. Below, we list and provide the particulars of the documented cases of homicide against defenders.

📍 Isaul Nemesio Zambrano, Miguel Estrada Reyes, and Rolando Magno Zambrano

On January 12, 2023, at a checkpoint near the municipal seat of Aquila, members of a criminal organization murdered the three members of the Communal Guard of Santa María Ostula and of the Aquila

Municipal Community Guards.²¹ The defenders were killed while performing functions of patrol and protection of communal territory.²² The community of Ostula, on the coast of Michoacan state, has engaged in a process of defending its territory against relentless pressure and intentions to expand a mining project.²³

📍 Abisai Perez Romero

Abisai, age 27, disappeared February 12 and his lifeless body was found two days later on a side street in Tula, Hidalgo. He combined activities as a journalist, activist, and senior-year student majoring in Communication and Culture at the UACM. He was working

²¹ Pie de Página, Nuevo ataque en Ostula deja 3 guardias comunales asesinados; January 13, 2023; available at: <https://piedepagina.mx/nuevo-ataque-a-la-community-de-ostula-deja-3-guardias-comunales-asesinados/>

²² Quadratin, Aquila: Denuncia Ostula impunidad, a un año de triple asesinato; January 14, 2014; available at: <https://www.quadratin.com.mx/justicia/aquila-denuncia-ostula-impunidad-a-un-año-de-triple-asesinato/>

²³ Radio Zapote, "Nuestra comunidad se encuentra de luto": Isaul Nemesio Zambrano, Miguel Estrada Reyes y Rolando Magno Zambrano, miembros de la Guardia Comunal de Ostula; January 13, 2023; available at: <https://radiozapote.org/pronunciamiento-por-el-asesinato-de-los-comuneros-e-integrantes-de-la-guardia-comunal-de-santa-maria-ostula-isaul-nemesio-zambrano-miguel-estrada-reyes-y-rolando-magno-zambrano/>



on an investigation for the *Atlas of Environmental Justice* on different kinds of impact in the Tula River caused by various projects. Also, he had denounced several irregularities in the region.²⁴

In the previous months he conducted journalistic investigations related to the wastewater treatment plant in Atotonilco and work on the Eastern Discharge Tunnel in the Mezquital Valley, both of which had been questioned by the local inhabitants.

Although the exact circumstances of his death are unknown,²⁵ his family ruled out the possibility that he had been killed in a robbery²⁶ and several collectives expressed the belief that his killing may have been directly tied to his work.²⁷

▲ Alfredo Cisneros Madrigal

The night of February 21, 2023, indigenous leader Alfredo Cisneros, age 60, was killed by armed men as he was

²⁴ El País, La doble condena de Abisai Pérez, un activista en un “infierno ambiental”; March 9, 2023; available at: <https://elpais.com/mexico/2023-03-10/la-doble-condena-de-abisai-perez-un-activista-en-un-infierno-ambiental.html>

²⁵ IFJ, México: hallaron muerto al periodista y activista Abisai Pérez Romero; February 22, 2023; available at: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/mexico-hallaron-muerto-al-periodista-y-activista-abisai-perez-romero>

²⁶ Educa, Colectivos condenan asesinato del periodista y defensor ambiental Abisai Pérez Romero en Hidalgo; February 17, 2017; available at: <https://www.educaoaxaca.org/colectivos-condenan-asesinato-del-periodista-y-defensor-ambiental-abisai-perez-romero-en-hidalgo/>

²⁷ CLACSO, Por la verdad y la impartición de justicia en la muerte de Abisai Pérez Romero; February 22, 2023; available at: <https://www.clacso.org/por-la-verdad-y-la-imparticion-de-justicia-en-la-muerte-de-abisai-perez-romero/>



arriving at his home in the community of Zicuicho, Municipality of Los Reyes, Michoacán. Alfredo served as president of the communal commission in Zicuicho. The community had elected him by unanimous vote 5 months before his death.²⁸

Alfredo was a tireless defender of the Purépecha forests.²⁹ With other members of his community, he had reported illegal logging in pine forests to change the established land use and plant avocado orchards to the authorities.³⁰

▲ Eustacio Alcalá Díaz

On Saturday, April 1, 2023, Eustacio Alcalá was transporting a group of nuns on the road leading from the community of Huitzontla to the Coalcoman federal highway, when he was captured by a group of persons.³¹

On April 4 he was found dead. Eustacio, or “Tacho,” age 66 years, was an indigenous community defender who, with the community of San Juan Huitzontla,

²⁸ Puntual, Asesinan a líder indígena defensor de bosques en Michoacán ASESIN4N a líder indígena defensor de bosques en Michoacán; February 23, 2023; available at: <https://www.diariopuntual.com/nacional/2023/02/23/28757/asesin4n-lider-indigena>

²⁹ La Lista, Alfredo Cisneros, líder indígena defensor de bosques, es asesinado en Michoacán; February 22, 2023; available at: <https://la-lista.com/mexico/2023/02/22/alfredo-cisneros-lider-indigena-defensor-de-bosques-es-asesinado-en-michoacan>

³⁰ Diario de Cuernavaca, Asesinan a Alfredo Cisneros Madrigal, líder comunero en Sicuicho, Michoacán; February 22, 2023; available at: <https://www.elsoldemexico.com.mx/republica/sociedad/asesinan-a-alfredo-cisneros-madrigal-lider-comunero-en-sicuicho-michoacan-9663798.html>

³¹ El País, Eustacio Alcalá, un defensor del territorio asesinado: radiografía de una zona de guerra en Michoacán; April 5, 2023; available at: <https://elpais.com/mexico/2023-04-05/eustacio-alcala-un-defensor-del-territorio-asesinado-radiografia-de-una-zona-de-guerra-en-michoacan.html>

pursued legal action in defense of their territory and against mining operations,³² and had succeeded in stopping mining projects.³³

San Juan Huitzontla is a Nahuatl indigenous community located in the mountains along the Michoacán coast, adjacent to the communities of Aquila, Ostula, Coire, and Ashotán. Residents have faced repeated threats for defending their territory.³⁴

Felix Vicente Cruz.

On April 13, 2013, Zapotec defender Felix Vicente Cruz, head of the municipal administration in his community, was murdered on November 20 in San Francisco Ixhuatán, Oaxaca. The killing took place while he was working at the municipal offices.³⁵

He was head of the municipal administration in his community, located

on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, in Oaxaca.³⁶ He was a defender of land and territory, participant in peaceful civil resistance against high electrical rates, and opponent of the Interoceanic Corridor project. Days before his killing, Felix had participated in roadblocks on the Isthmus as part of a National Indigenous Resistance Campaign.³⁷

Juan Medina

Juan Medina, age 56, was killed in an armed assault the night of April 14, 2023, while working at a restaurant with his wife in the municipality of Chinicuilá.³⁸

Juan was a leader committed to the defense of territory and the rights of his community.³⁹ He served as Chief Tenancy Officer in the year 2022, was a communal council member, charged with maintaining public order, he participated in the communal charter, was a communal guard, and worked closely with

³² Ojarasca La Jornada, Eustacio Alcalá Díaz, otro asesinato más del modelo extractivo minero; April 6, 2023; available at: <https://ojarasca.jornada.com.mx/2023/05/12/eustacio-alcala-diaz-otro-asesinado-mas-victima-del-modelo-extractivo-minero-1092.html>

³³ Centro Prodh, Esclarecimiento y justicia por el asesinato del defensor del medio ambiente Eustacio Alcalá Díaz, de Huitzontla, Michoacán; April 4, 2023; available at: <https://centroprodh.org.mx/2023/04/04/esclarecimiento-y-justicia-por-el-asesinato-del-defensor-del-medio-ambiente-eustacio-alcala-diaz-de-huitzontla-michoacan/>

³⁴ Red TDT, Acción urgente actualizada: asesinan al defensor comunitario nahua Eustacio Alcalá Díaz en San Juan Huitzontla, Michoacán; April 3, 2023; available at: <https://redtdt.org.mx/archivos/18126>

³⁵ ONU-DH México; April 14, 2023; available at: https://twitter.com/ONUJDHmexico/status/1647037885500256260?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1647037885500256260%7Ctwgr%5Eb7b52f9f45393184ad4eb83f3030f1bd-123821f9%7Ctwcon%5Es1_%ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Ffaroinforma.com.mx%2F2023%2F04%2F15%2Fcondena-la-onu-dh-el-asesinato-de-felix-vicente-cruz-en-oaxaca%2F

³⁶ Greentology, Asesinan a otro defensor de la tierra, a Félix Vicente Cruz; April 17, 2023; available at: <https://greentology.life/2023/04/17/asesinan-a-otro-defensor-de-la-tierra-a-felix-vicente-cruz/>

³⁷ La Jornada, Matan a tiros en Oaxaca a Vicente Cruz, agente municipal y activista; April 15, 2023; available at: <https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2023/04/15/estados/matan-a-tiros-en-oaxaca-a-vicente-cruz-agente-municipal-y-activista/>

³⁸ El Sol de Morelia, ¿Quién era Juan Medina, el líder asesinado en Chinicuilá? April 18, 2023; available at: <https://www.elsoldemorelia.com.mx/local/municipios/quien-era-juan-medina-el-lider-asesinado-en-chinicuilá-9933810.html>

³⁹ SERAPAZ, Justicia para Juan Medina: ALDEA condena el asesinato del defensor del territorio; April 18, 2023; available at: <https://serapaz.org.mx/justicia-para-juan-medina-aldea-condena-el-asesinato-del-defensor-del-territorio/#:~:text=Juan%20Medina%20fue%20un%20%C3%ADder.de%20la%20Comisi%C3%B3n%20de%20Comunicaci%C3%B3n>

Alvaro

Arvizu was a tenacious activist against exploitation of water by transnationals. He died following an attack with firearms in Tlalmanalco (State of Mexico)

the Commission on Communication in the community of Santa María Ostula. He was an honest, hardworking man, who always displayed unyielding devotion and care for his community.⁴⁰

Cuauhtemoc Marquez Fernandez

On Monday, June 12, 2023, at around 9:00 PM, in Cañada del Agua, Tlalmanalco, apiarist and doctor by Benemérita Autónoma Universidad de Puebla, Cuauhtemoc Marquez Fernandez, was attacked in his home. He later died at Zentlalpan hospital, in the Municipality of Amecameca, State of Mexico.⁴¹

Doctor Cuauhtemoc was a researcher in agroecology and apiculture, who devoted

his life to teaching and environmental protection. He was a distinguished researcher and apiarist, who advocated for better management of water, fought for the approval of the New General Waters Act to protect underground streams from spreading pollution from open-air sewage canals and poultry and hog farms,⁴² in addition to engaging in activism in defense of food sovereignty.⁴³

Alvaro Arvizu Aguiniga

The environmental defender worked with the Incalli Ixcahuicopa Center for Sustainability (Spanish acronym CENTLI), a project promoted by Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana and other organizations. He was a

⁴⁰ Centro de Medios Libres, Asesinato del compañero comunero Juan Medina de la Comunidad Indígena de Santa María Ostula; April 22, 2023; available at: <https://www.centrodemedioslibres.org/2023/04/22/asesinato-del-companero-comunero-juan-medina-de-la-comunidad-indigena-de-santa-maria-ostula/>

⁴¹ Municipios Puebla, Asesinan en el Edomex a investigador egresado de la BUAP; June 20, 2023; available at: <https://municipiospuebla.mx/nota/2023-06-20/puebla/asesinan-en-el-edomex-investigador-egresado-de-la-buap>

⁴² Excelsior, Jean-Michel Cousteau condena el asesinato de activistas; posicionamiento; June 22, 2023; available at: <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/jean-michel-cousteau-condena-el-asesinato-de-activistas-posicionamiento/1593695>

⁴³ El Portal de Chicoloapan, Pide Congreso mexicano justicia para defensores ambientales asesinados en Tlalmanalco; August 23, 2023; available at: <https://sanvicentechicoloapan.com.mx/2023/08/29/pide-congreso-mexicano-justicia-para-defensores-ambientales-asesinados-en-tlalmanalco/>



persistent activist who opposed the exploitation of water by transnational corporations.⁴⁴ On June 19, Alvaro died at 62 years of age, after suffering a shooting at the hands of unidentified persons who entered the Centli Center, in Tlalmanalco, State of Mexico, by force.⁴⁵

The assailants also threatened his wife and colleague and another of his fellow activists.⁴⁶

Alvaro's death was the second of a defender in the region of the Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl volcanoes. On June 12, 2023, in Cañada del Agua, Tlalmanalco, the BUAP researcher in agroecology and apiculture, Cuauhtemoc Marquez

Fernandez, was attacked in his home and later died at Zentlalpan General Hospital in Amecameca.⁴⁷

Gabriel Trujillo

Gabriel Trujillo was a botanist, age 31, a US citizen of Mexican descent,⁴⁸ and a doctoral student at University of California, Berkeley. He had traveled to Sonora state to collect plants for a research project.⁴⁹

He wanted to apply his research to build a garden in Mexico and use the buttonbush for restoration of wetlands. Gabriel was found dead on June 22 in a ravine near the highway leading from the town

⁴⁴ Sdpnoticias, ¿Quién es Álvaro Arvizu? El ambientalista que murió por lesiones sufridas durante ataque en Tlalmanalco; June 20, 2023, <https://www.sdpnoticias.com/mexico/quien-es-alvaro-arvizu-el-ambientalista-que-murio-por-lesiones-sufridas-durante-ataque-en-tlalmanalco/>

⁴⁵ López-Dóriga Digital, Asesinan en Tlalmanalco al ambientalista Álvaro Arvizu; June 20, 2023; available at: <https://lopezdoriga.com/nacional/edomex-asesinan-tlalmanalco-ambientalista-alvaro-arvizu/>

⁴⁶ CDHZZ, Acción Urgente; June 26, 2023; available at: <https://www.zeferinoladrillero.org/acci%C3%B3n-urgente>

⁴⁷ En 15 días, ¿Quién fue (es) Álvaro Arvizu Aguiñiga? Available at: <https://en15dias.com/quien-fue-es/quien-fue-es-alvaro-arvizu-aguiniga/>

⁴⁸ El País, Gabriel Trujillo, el botánico estadounidense asesinado en Sonora cuando trabajaba en su tesis; July 6, 2023; available at: <https://elpais.com/mexico/2023-07-06/gabriel-trujillo-el-botanico-estadounidense-asesinado-en-sonora-cuando-trabajaba-en-su-tesis.html>

⁴⁹ Sdpnoticias, ¿Qué le pasó a Gabriel Trujillo, estudiante universitario en Estados Unidos? Viajó a México para recolectar plantas, pero lo mataron en Sonora; June 30, 2023; available at: <https://www.sdpnoticias.com/estados/sonora/que-le-paso-a-gabriel-trujillo-estudiante-universitario-en-estados-unidos-viajo-a-mexico-para-recolectar-plantas-pero-lo-mataron-en-sonora/>



of San Nicolás to Tepoca, in Yécora. The authorities determined that his death had been caused by several gunshot wounds.⁵⁰

🚩 Noel Lopez Gallegos

The activist Noel Lopez Gallegos, a member of the group *Resistencia Civil Pacífica* (Peaceful Civil Resistance), was found dead on July 4, 2023, in a vacant lot in the municipality of Santa María Mixtequilla, in Oaxaca's Isthmus of Tehuantepec region. He had been reported missing since Monday, July 3.⁵¹

Noel Lopez was 52 years of age; he opposed the expropriation of land for the construction of an industrial park on the Isthmus, which is part of the Isthmus

of Tehuantepec Interoceanic Corridor (Spanish acronym CIIT)⁵².

🚩 Lorenzo Froylan de la Cruz Rios

Age 28, Lorenzo was a communal guard in the community of Santa María Ostula, municipality of Aquila, Michoacan. Lorenzo and two other Ostula residents were kidnapped in Coalcoman by suspected members of a criminal organization while attending to commercial and family matters in the municipal seat; two of them were riding in a pickup truck and Lorenzo was on a motorcycle.⁵³

His body, lifeless and with signs of torture, was found on the Coalcoman-Aquila highway, in the municipality of Chinicuila,

⁵⁰ Animal Político, Asesinan en Sonora a un estudiante de la Universidad de California; viajó para recolectar plantas para una investigación; June 30, 2023; available at: <https://animalpolitico.com/estados/asesinan-sonora-estudiante-universidad-california>

⁵¹ EDUCA, Condenan asesinato de Noel López Gallegos, integrante de la Resistencia Civil Pacífica de Mixtequilla; July 5, 2023; available at: <https://www.educaoaxaca.org/condenan-asesinato-de-noel-lopez-gallegos-integrante-de-la-resistencia-civil-pacifica-de-mixtequilla/>

⁵² La Onda Oaxaca, Encuentran sin vida a Noel López Gallegos, activista en Oaxaca reportado como desaparecido; July 6, 2023; available at: <https://www.laondaaxaca.com.mx/2023/07/encuentran-sin-vida-a-noel-lopez-gallegos-activista-en-oaxaca-reportado-como-desaparecido/>

⁵³ La Jornada, "Dolor y rabia" por policía comunal de Ostula; August 13, 2023; available at: <https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2023/08/13/estados/dolor-y-rabia-por-policia-comunal-de-ostula/>

Esteban

Xochitempa, a peasant leader, and his son Juan, age 16, were murdered in August 2023, in a rural area in Chilapa (Guerrero)

Michoacan, on August 10, having gone missing 9 days earlier.⁵⁴ In the context of Lorenzo's recent and violent killing, the threats have not ceased, in a state known for particularly high levels of violence against defenders of land and territory.

In the history of Santa María Ostula's autonomy, the community has seen 40 defenders murdered and 5 persons missing, with no meaningful response from law enforcement, reparations, or cessation of aggressions.⁵⁵

The violence afflicting the region is centered on an area of 19 thousand hectares which, by law, belongs to the Nahua community, comprising beaches of interest to both tourist developers and criminal organizations, forests teeming with trees of high

value for logging, and iron ore deposits concessioned to mining companies.⁵⁶

Estaban Xochitempa Tepexco and Juan Xochitempa Macario

Belonging to the community of Xochitempa, the members of the Emiliano Zapata Indigenous and Popular Council of the State of Guerrero (Spanish acronym CIPOG-EZ), Esteban, age 40, and his son Juan, age 16, were murdered the morning of August 13, 2023.⁵⁷ The killings occurred in the municipality of Chilapa, Guerrero, in an area near a gas station.⁵⁸

The CIPOG-EZ, made up by members of the Na savi, Me'pháá, Nahua, and Ņamnkúé peoples of Guerrero state, has a history of resistance and struggle

⁵⁴ Centro Prodh, Asesinan a guardia comunal de Ostula, Lorenzo Froylán; August 14, 2023; available at: https://centroprodh.org.mx/sididh4_0/2023/08/14/asesinan-a-guardia-comunal-de-ostula-lorenzo-froylan/

⁵⁵ CENCOS, Amenaza de desalojo en Ostula tras asesinato de Lorenzo Froylán; August 15, 2023; available at: <https://cencos.com.mx/2023/08/threat-de-desalojo-en-ostula-tras-asesinato-de-lorenzo-froylan/>

⁵⁶ La Jornada Maya, Ostula, la costosa libertad; August 13, 2023; available at: <https://www.lajornadamaya.mx/opinion/219163/santa-maria-de-ostula-la-costosa-libertad-lorenzo-froylan-de-la-cruz-rios-cjng>

⁵⁷ National Indigenous Congress, CIPOG-EZ statement on the murder of comrades Esteban Xochitempa Tepexco and Juan Xochitempa Macario; August 17, 2023; available at: <http://www.congresonacionalindigena.org/2023/08/17/comunicado-del-cipog-ez-por-el-asesinato-de-los-companeros-esteban-xochitempa-tepexco-y-juan-xochitempa-macario/>

⁵⁸ Milenio, Sepultan a integrantes del CIPOG-EZ asesinados en gasolinera de Guerrero; August 17, 2023; available at: <https://www.milenio.com/policia/sepultan-a-integrantes-del-cipog-ez-asesinados-en-guerrero>



for autonomy. Their demands and needs include defense of their territory, food, information, and community healthcare.⁵⁹

🚩 Albertha Santos Tomas and Jose Juan Hernandez Fiscaleno

Albertha, age 40, and Jose Juan, age 43, were both residents of the community of Alcozacán, municipality of de Chilapa de Álvarez. They had lived together as a couple for a year and were also members

of the Emiliano Zapata Indigenous and Popular Council of the State of Guerrero (Spanish acronym CIPOG-EZ),⁶⁰ from which they fought for the defense of their territory. On September 26, 2023, Alberta and Jose Juan were visiting the community of San Jerónimo Palantla, in the same municipality. That same day they went missing after leaving the community for Alcozacán on a gray motorcycle.⁶¹ Their bodies were found the next day near the entrance to San Jerónimo Palantla.⁶²

⁵⁹ CIPOG-EZ, Indigenous and Popular Council of Guerrero – Emiliano Zapata, ¿Quiénes somos? April 10, 2014; available at: <https://cipogez.wordpress.com/>

⁶⁰ Réplica El Diario Digital de Guerrero, Asesinan a pareja de indígenas en Chilapa; se acusan entre pueblos de Alcozacán y San Jerónimo Palantla del doble crimen; September 29, 2023; available at: <https://replaguerrero.com/2023/09/29/asesinan-a-pareja-de-indigenas-en-chilapa-se-acusan-entre-pueblos-de-alcozacan-y-san-jeronimo-palantla-del-doble-crimen/>

⁶¹ La Lista, Si te matan, Juan, yo le doy de comer a los perros; October 12, 2023; available at: <https://staging.la-lista.com/opinion/2023/10/12/guerrero-si-te-matan-juan-yo-le-doy-de-comer-a-los-perros?amp>

⁶² Camino al Andar, CIPOG-EZ denuncia desaparición y asesinato de Albertha Santos Tomás y José Juan Hernández Fiscaleno; September 29, 2023; available at: <https://staging.la-lista.com/opinion/2023/10/12/guerrero-si-te-matan-juan-yo-le-doy-de-comer-a-los-perros?amphttps://www.caminoalandar.org/post/cipog-ez-denuncia-desaparicion-c3%B3n-y-asesinato-de-albertha-santos-tom-c3%A1s-y-jos-c3%A9-juan-hern-c3%A1ndez-fiscale-c3%B1o>

🔺 Bonifacio Xochitempa Tlalxintli

Bonifacio, from the community of Xochitempa in the Guerrero foothills, and member of the Emiliano Zapata Indigenous and Popular Council of the State of Guerrero (Spanish acronym CIPOG-EZ), was murdered on September 12, 2023. The killing was committed in the municipality of Chilapa de Álvarez, by armed persons at a bus stop for public transportation to the community of Alcozacán.⁶³

*To date,
these aggressions
have not ceased and are
a reflection of harsh
conditions for communities
defending their territory
in that part of
Guerrero state*

This was one of numerous documented lethal attacks in the year 2023 targeting CIPOG-EZ members.⁶⁴ To date, these aggressions have not ceased⁶⁵ and are a reflection of harsh conditions for communities defending their territory in that part of Guerrero state.⁶⁶

🔺 Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz

Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz was a well-known environmentalist and indigenous defender of the Manantlán mountain range,⁶⁷ an environmental defender of the community of Ayotitlán, Jalisco, and member of the State Indigenous Council. He fought for the defense of territory and against illegal mining. He also denounced appropriation of lands for illegal activities.⁶⁸

On the morning of November 24, Higinio was kidnapped leaving an appointment at the municipal government offices of Cuautitlán de García Barragán, Jalisco. He was found dead after being reported missing a day before in of Ayotitlán.⁶⁹

⁶³ Radio Zapatista, CIPOG-EZ denuncia desaparición y asesinato de la compañera Albertha Santos Tomás y el compañero José Juan Hernández Fscaleño; September 29, 2023; available at: <https://radiozapatista.org/?p=46359>

⁶⁴ El Sol de Chilpancingo, CIPOG-EZ anuncia que asesinatos de sus simpatizantes no cesan; September 29, 2023; available at: <https://www.elsoldechilpancingo.mx/2023/09/29/cipog-ez-denuncia-que-asesinatos-de-sus-simpatizantes-no-cesan/>

⁶⁵ Since December 11, inhabitants of some communities in the municipality of Chilapa de Álvarez, who are members of the CIPOG-EZ, have been under provisional measures ordered by the National Human Rights Commission. Information available at: <https://www.cndh.org.mx/documento/cndh-emite-medidas-cautelares-en-favor-de-habitantes-de-las-comunidades-tula-y-xicotlan-e>

⁶⁶ Desinformémonos, Guerra contra los pueblos "se va a poner peor": CIPOG-EZ; January 28, 2021; available at: <https://desreportmonos.org/guerra-contra-los-pueblos-se-va-a-poner-peor-cipog-ez/>

⁶⁷ Causa Natura Media, Exigen investigación y seguridad tras el asesinato del defensor Higinio Trinidad; December 11, 2023; available at: <https://causanaturamedia.com/periodismo-cn/exigen-investigacion-y-seguridad-tras-el-asesinato-del-defensor-higinio-trinidad>

⁶⁸ Periódico Correo, Asesinan a Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz líder indígena y defensor del medio ambiente en Jalisco; November 26, 2023; available at: <https://www.periodicocorreo.com.mx/nacional/asesinan-a-higinio-trinidad-de-la-cruz-lider-indigena-y-defensor-del-medio-ambiente-en-jalisco-20231126-86663.html>

⁶⁹ Animal Político, Asesinan a Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz, ambientalista y líder indígena en Jalisco; estaba desaparecido; November 27, 2023; available at: <https://animalpolitico.com/estados/higinio-trinidad-de-la-cruz-ambientalista-indigena-jalisco>

Since the year 2021, Higinio was a beneficiary of the Protective Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and had received constant threats.⁷⁰ In February 2023, after giving interviews to media outlets on the defense of the territory and having been in contact with the Federal Protective Mechanism, armed men entered his home and threatened him.⁷¹

Ayotitlán is located in a mountainous area in the south of the Western Sierra Madre with high levels of biodiversity and an abundance of forest, mineral, and water resources. The mountains contain massive iron ore deposits. Notwithstanding, the community is subject to constant threats and invasion of its lands.⁷²

4.3.2 Probable extrajudicial executions

The right to life is inherent to all people. No one's life can be taken arbitrarily.⁷³ An extrajudicial execution occurs when a person is killed arbitrarily by agents of the state or with their complicity, tolerance, or acquiescence.⁷⁴

An extrajudicial execution can be said to exist when an agent of a public law enforcement organization, acting individually and in their official capacity, arbitrarily ends the life of one or more persons.

Even if there is no prior institutional involvement, after the fact the agent may seek to avail themselves of the protection afforded by their official standing, as a means of concealing the facts or to hinder or block possible investigations or criminal charges.⁷⁵

In Mexico, different organizations specialized in the matter have reported that, since the year 2006, when the government implemented a security policy based on the use of armed and military force, extrajudicial executions have risen.⁷⁶

This situation has repercussions when we refer to environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, since cases of probable extrajudicial executions have been identified and documented each year. In 2023, we identified one case:

⁷⁰ Mongabay, México: Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz, defensor ambiental de la Sierra de Manantlán es asesinado pese a estar bajo el Mecanismo de Protección para Personas Defensoras; November 30, 2023; available at: <https://es.mongabay.com/2023/11/mexico-higinio-trinidad-de-la-cruz-defensor-ambiental-sierra-de-manantlan-asesinado/>

⁷¹ PRODESC, Exigimos justicia para Higinio y las personas defensoras de la vida en Ayotitlán; December 7, 2023; available at: <https://prodesc.org.mx/exigimos-justicia-para-higinio-y-las-personas-defensoras-de-la-vida-en-ayotitlan/#:~:text=Para%20su%20protecci%C3%B3n%2C%20el%20Mecanismo.fueron%20agresivamente%20interrogados%20y%20threatdos>

⁷² El Financiero, Asesinan en Jalisco a Higinio Trinidad de la Cruz, defensor ambientalista y líder indígena; November 26, 2023; available at: <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/estados/2023/11/26/asesinan-en-jalisco-a-higinio-trinidad-de-la-cruz-defensor-ambientalista-y-lider-indigena/>

⁷³ Article 6.1, International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

⁷⁴ Humberto Henderson, La ejecución extrajudicial o el homicidio en las legislaciones de América Latina, Revista IIDH, Vol. 43, 2006, pp. 284-284.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 287.

⁷⁶ CMDPDH, Intervención oral para el Relator especial sobre Ejecuciones Extrajudiciales y Sumarias; July 28, 2021; available at: <https://cmdpdh.org/2021/07/28/intervencion-oral-para-el-relator-especial-sobre-ejecuciones-extrajudiciales-y-sumarias/>



Marcelino

Hernandez Tecorral was detained by armed and uniformed persons while en route to Chilapa (Guerrero), and was later found dead

▲ Marcelino Hernandez Tecorral

On August 17, 2023, CIPOG-EZ members Nicolas Rodríguez Díaz, Marcelino Hernandez Tecorral, and Angel Villalba Salvador were returning from Sinaloa to their communities.⁷⁷

They were detained by armed and uniformed persons on the highway between Chilpancingo and Chilapa, in the state of Guerrero.⁷⁸ The same day, at night, Marcelino's lifeless body was found in the municipality of Tixtla.⁷⁹ People from several towns assembled on the Chilapa-Hueycantenango highway to demand that the other missing persons be found.⁸⁰

4.4 Disappearances

The situation regarding missing persons in Mexico is serious. In the year 2023, a total of **11 events of aggression** involving some form of disappearance were documented. Of these, 4 events of aggression with disappearance had 8 victims; 2 events of forced disappearance had 4 victims; and 5 events of aggression involving disappearance by civilians had 7 victims. In total, we can affirm that in the year 2023 at least **19 environmental human rights defenders were victims of disappearance.**⁸¹

The states where aggressions with disappearance were documented are Durango, with one case of 4 missing persons;⁸² Oaxaca with 4 defenders; Michoacan with 3 defenders;

⁷⁷ EDUCA, Exigen aparición con vida de tres integrantes del CIPOG -EZ desaparecidos en camino a Chilapa, Guerrero; August 18, 2023; available at: <https://www.educaoaxaca.org/exigen-aparicion-con-vida-de-tres-integrantes-del-cipog-ez-desaparecidos-desde-ayer-en-camino-a-chilapa-guerrero/>

⁷⁸ Centro de Medios Libres, Continúa la emergencia por asesinatos, desaparecidos y ataques contra el CIPOG-EZ en Guerrero; August 22, 2023; available at: <https://www.centrodemedioslibres.org/2023/08/22/22-ago-continua-la-emergencia-por-asesinatos-desaparecidos-y-ataques-contra-el-cipog-ez-en-guerrero/>

⁷⁹ Proceso, Hallan cadáver de uno de los jornaleros desaparecidos camino a Chilapa; August 23, 2023; available at: <https://www.proceso.com.mx/nacional/2023/8/23/hallan-cadaver-de-uno-de-los-jornaleros-desaparecidos-camino-chilapa-313424.html>

⁸⁰ El Sur, Periódico de Guerrero, Apareció muerto en Tixtla uno de los tres indígenas desaparecidos, informa Cipog-EZ; August 24, 2023; available at: <https://suracapulco.mx/impreso/tag/marcelino-hernandez-tecorral/>

⁸¹ It bears noting that of this total we count cases where the victims of disappearance were found alive, others where victims' bodies were found dead, and others where they have not been found to date.

⁸² The defender and 3 members of her family.

Guerrero with 4, and lastly, Jalisco, Hidalgo, Chiapas, and Puebla with one missing defender each. In total, 11 events of aggression with 19 victims of some form of disappearance were documented.

A noteworthy example involves the disappearance of Antonio Díaz Valencia and Ricardo Lagunes Gasca,⁸³ who were victims of disappearance on January 15, 2023. Both were defenders of territory working in the community of Aquila, Michoacan.⁸⁴

Antonio and Ricardo were traveling aboard a pickup truck to Tecomán, in Colima state, following a meeting in the Aquila, communal auditorium, which discussed issues related to a mining project.

On January 15, 2023, the vehicle they had been traveling in was found abandoned in an area known as *Topes de Cerro de Ortega*, on Highway 200 leading to Manzanillo,⁸⁵ in Colima state.

January 15, 2024, marked the anniversary of the disappearance of the two defenders. Before their disappearance, Ricardo and Antonio were handling the legal defense of Aquila, demanding guarantees for the free election of its communal authorities and fulfillment of agreements

regarding the mining project, which has been identified as a factor of division and fragmentation of the community's social fabric.⁸⁶

4.5 Aggressions by state

In the year 2023, Jalisco was the most dangerous state for environmental defenders, persons and communities, with 20 documented events of aggression. It was followed by Oaxaca, with 19 events; Mexico City, with 12; Chiapas, with 9; and Chihuahua, with 8.

Although in 2023 Jalisco was the most dangerous state to defend environmental rights and territory, the results likewise show that, in the last 3 years, Oaxaca has been the most constant state in number of aggressions reported, positioning it as one of the most dangerous states to engage in defense of the environment, land, and territory.

Chiapas is another of the country's most dangerous states, and in the last three years has been among the 5 states with the most events of aggression.

Similar cases are Jalisco, Mexico City, and Chihuahua state, which in the last two years have ranked among the 5 states with most aggressions.

⁸³ A dónde van los desaparecidos, Desaparecen a defensores de Aquila tras amenaza de minera y persecuciones, acusan comuneros; January 31, 2023; available at: https://adondevanlosdesaparecidos.org/2023/01/31/desaparecen-a-defensores-de-aquila-tras-threat-de-minera-y-persecuciones-acusan-comuneros/?fbclid=IwAR1gWoH_3lLuRIHPwkvoKldz6EWFESVP6vvhHCHO-zX-mGxOT6VfWZwVU_us

⁸⁴ Mexican Senate, Condena Senado desaparición de activistas Ricardo Lagunes Gasca y Antonio Díaz Valencia; February 15, 2023; available at: <https://comunicacionsocial.senado.gob.mx/informacion/comunicados/5009-condena-senado-desaparicion-de-activistas-ricardo-lagunes-gasca-y-antonio-diaz-valencia>

⁸⁵ Front Line Defenders, Disappearance of human rights defenders Antonio Díaz Valencia and Ricardo Arturo Lagunes Gasca; January 19, 2023; available at: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/disappearance-human-rights-defenders-antonio-d%3ADaz-valencia-and-ricardo-arturo-lagunes-gasca>

⁸⁶ Red TDT, A un año de la desaparición de Ricardo Arturo Lagunes Gasca y Antonio Díaz Valencia; January 15, 2023; available at: <https://redtdt.org.mx/archivos/18737#:~:text=El%20domingo%2015%20de%20enero,Ortega%2C%20regi%C3%B3n%20que%20limita%20las>

Image 5. States with the most events of aggression in 2023

State	Events of aggression	Aggressions
Campeche	4	7
Chiapas	9	23
Chihuahua	6	18
México City	12	22
Durango	4	14
Guerrero	7	16
Hidalgo	1	2
Jalisco	20	25
State of México	2	7
Michoacán	7	15
Morelos	2	4
Nayarit	1	1
Oaxaca	19	50
Puebla	3	5
Querétaro	2	7
Quintana Roo	3	9
San Luis Potosí	1	2
Sinaloa	1	2
Sonora	5	15
Tlaxcala	3	5
Veracruz	4	8
Yucatán	7	25
Total	123	282

Image 6. States with the most events of aggression in the last 3 years

2021	2022	2023
Oaxaca: 24	Oaxaca: 34	Jalisco: 20
Yucatán: 10 and Sonora: 10	México City: 27	Oaxaca: 19
Guerrero: 8 and Morelos: 8	Chihuahua: 21	México City: 12
Puebla: 7	Jalisco: 20	Chiapas: 9
Chiapas: 5	Chiapas: 19	Yucatán, Guerrero and Michoacán: 7 each

Jalisco. In the year 2023, the state of Jalisco had more documented events of aggression. Twenty events were reported, with a total of 25 specific aggressions targeting defenders of territory, persons and communities. Most events of aggression were related to mining, with 19 cases, and only one was related to a hotel project. The most common specific aggressions were intimidation (7 aggressions), harassment (5 aggressions), and threats (4 aggressions). Also, a case of homicide, against defender Higinio Trinidad, was documented.

Oaxaca. Oaxaca is the state with the second most documented events of aggression: 19 events of aggression, with the highest number of specific aggressions, including 50 documented aggressions against defenders of territory, persons and communities. The sectors that accounted for the most aggressions were industry, with 4 events of aggression, and mining, with 3. On the other hand, the most documented types of aggression were 6 cases of criminalization, 5 threats, 5 physical aggressions, 4 cases of intimidation, and 4 of inappropriate use of force. We cannot fail to mention that there were 2 documented cases of homicide.

Mexico City. Persons and communities defending water, land, plants, and animals were victims of at least 12 events of aggression and 22 specific aggressions. These aggressions occurred in the context of projects for means of communication (8 cases) and commercial construction. The most widely documented aggressions were slander and stigmatization, with 8 aggressions each, followed by threats,

with 2 cases, and espionage, dispossession, intimidation, and criminalization, with one case each.

Chiapas. Nine events of aggression were documented, with a total of 23 specific aggressions. The events of aggression were related to mining projects and protection of biodiversity. The most commonly documented aggressions were physical aggressions and threats, present in 4 events of aggression each, and intimidation, reported in 3 events of aggression.

Yucatan, Guerrero and Quintana Roo. Persons and communities defending the territory were victims of at least 7 events of aggression in each of these states, of which 56 specific attacks occurred⁸⁷. Between these three States there were 9 lethal attacks. Between these three States there were 9 lethal attacks (8 cases of homicide and 1 probable extrajudicial execution). For its part, in terms of non-lethal aggressions, physical aggression (5 cases), criminalization (4 cases), threats (3 cases) and intimidation (3 cases) were the most common.

For its part, the sectors that presented the greatest number of aggressions against defenders were the forestry sector, with 2 events of aggression, and the water and agricultural sectors, both with 5 events of aggression.

4.6 Victims of aggression

Based on the methodology, in the year 2023 there were reports of a total of **1,317 persons affected by events of aggression**. Of this number, **416 persons were identified as**

⁸⁷ Yucatan counted 25 attacks, Guerrero 16, and Michoacan 15.

defenders of the environment, land, and territory. Of this total, 898 persons were adults, 344 were children and adolescents, and the age of 75 persons could not be determined.

344 *of documented cases of victims involved children and adolescents of both genders*

It bears noting that this figure is not exhaustive, given that, in multiple cases of aggressions, the number of persons affected could not be counted and the figure given refers to cases that could be quantified.

On the other hand, of the 123 events of aggression, 79 were cases where the victims were members of a community, comprising 64.22%.

Also, in 16 cases the persons targeted were members of civil society organizations (13%), 10 against ejido members (8.13%), 7 against communal officers (5.7%), 5 against academics (4.06%), 5 against students (4.06%), 3 against attorneys (2.43%), 2 against journalists (1.62%), 2 against independent defenders (1.62%), and 5 against other types of victims (4.06%). It is noteworthy that the number of types of victims exceeds the number of events of aggression given that, in at least 6 cases, there were 2 or more different types of victims.

Image 7. Table of types of victims in events of aggression in 2023

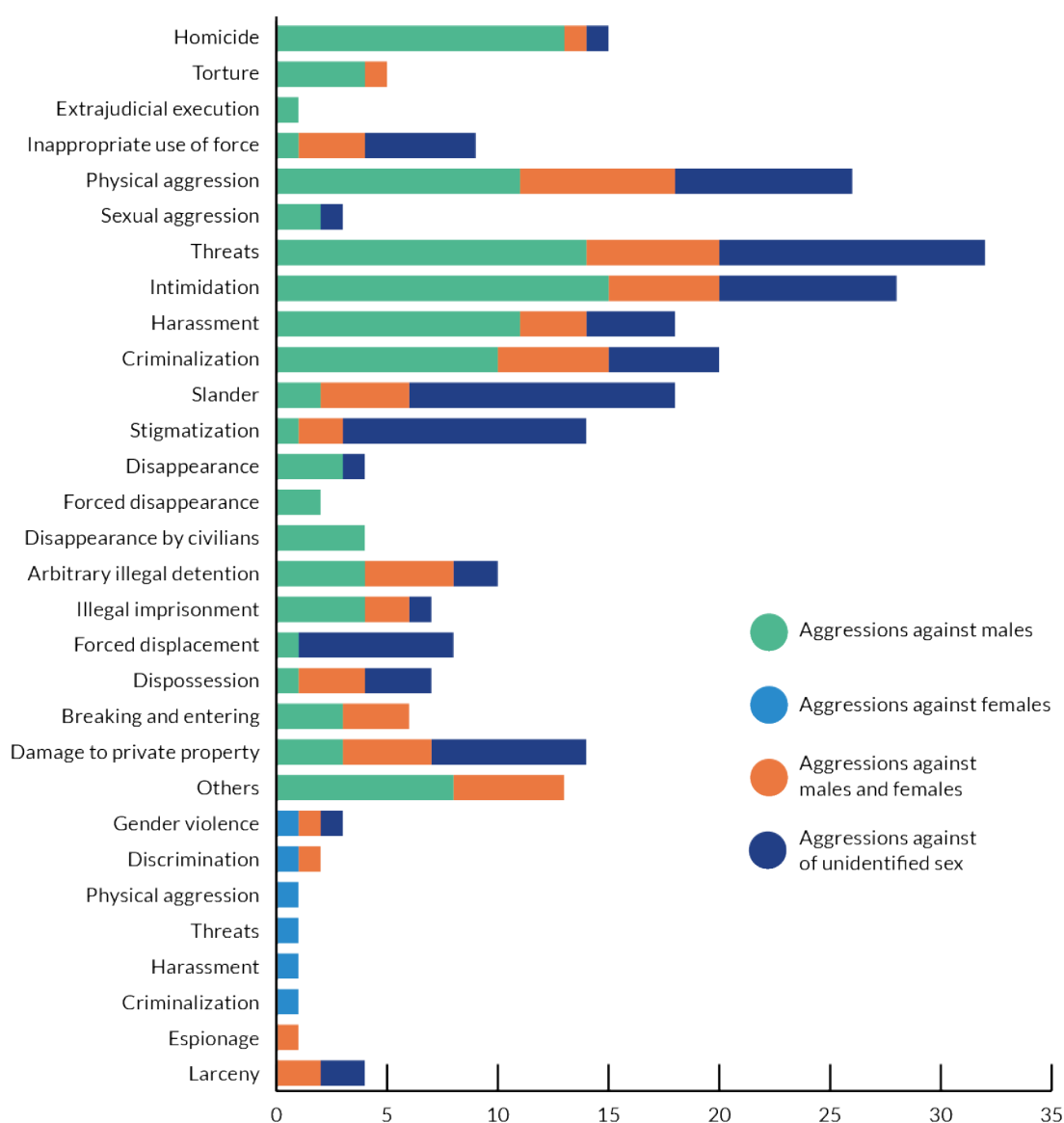
Community members:	79
SCO::	16
Ejido members:	10
Communal officers:	7
Academics:	5
Students:	5
Attorneys:	3
Journalists:	2
Independent defenders:	2
Others:	5

4.6.1 Aggressions by age, sex, and gender

Of the total persons affected by events of aggression documented in the year 2023, it was possible to ascertain that,

by reason of sex, 170 (12.9%) were male and 68 female (5.16%). For the rest of the 1,079 (81.92%) persons, their sex could not be determined due to the number of persons in some cases of aggression and the methodology used.

Image 8. Sex of victims in events of aggressions in 2023



By reason of gender, it was found that 140 persons (10.63%) identified as male; 48 persons (3.64%) identified as female; 1 person (.075%) identified as non-binary; and for 1,128 persons (85.64%) gender identity could not be determined.

Of the 123 events of aggression documented in 2023, in 60 events of aggression (48.8%) the persons targeted were exclusively male (48.78%); in 3 (2.44%) they were exclusively female; 24 (19.51%) involved victims of both sexes; and in 36 cases (29.27%) the sex of the persons targeted could not be ascertained.

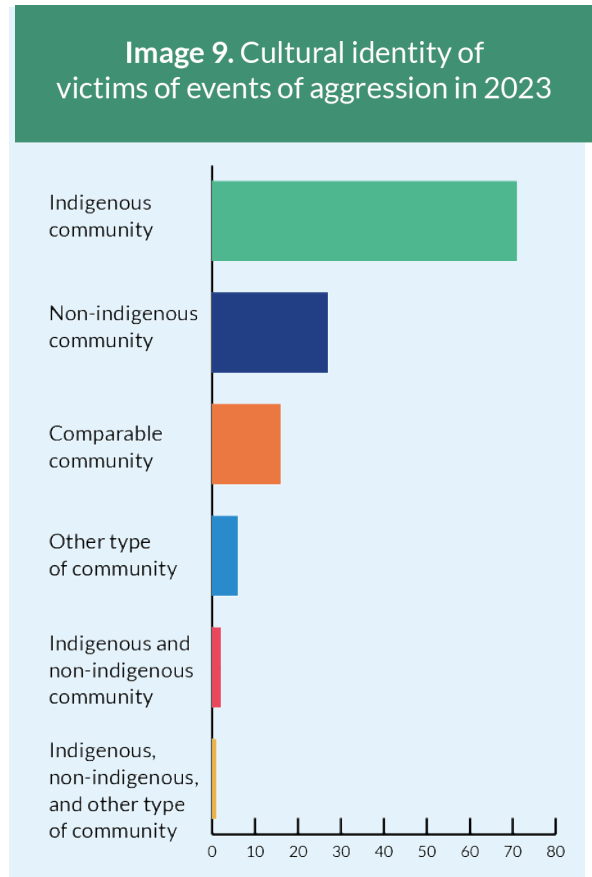
At CEMDA we are working to adapt and improve our documentation methodology

to identify and reflect in our report the differentiated aggressions committed against women defenders of the environment, land, and territory.

4.6.2 Cultural identity

In the year 2023, aggressions were documented against defenders belonging to indigenous peoples and communities. There were 71 documented aggressions against persons and communities pertaining to an indigenous people, 2 aggressions against groups of indigenous and non-indigenous persons, and 16 events of aggression against persons from a community comparable to an indigenous community.

71 aggressions targeted indigenous persons and communities, aside from two cases against groups in that social segment



4.6.3 Indigenous communities targeted

Image 10. Events of aggression against indigenous communities in 2023

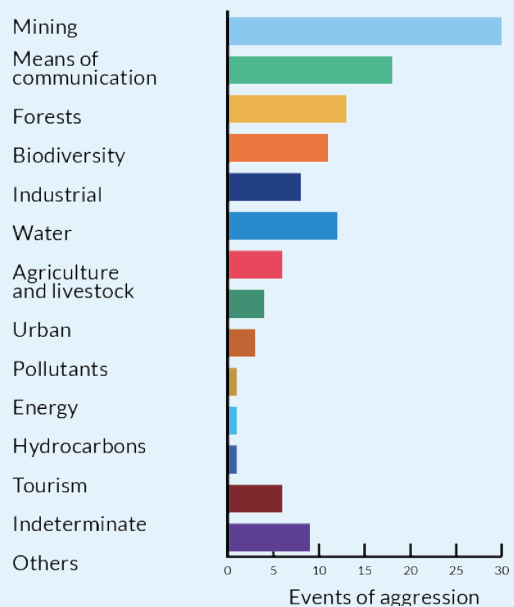


*In 15 events of aggression, it was found that members of indigenous peoples were targeted, but it was not specified to which group they pertained.

In the year 2023, the indigenous peoples that suffered the highest numbers of aggressions were Nahuas, with 20 events of aggression. Many of these aggressions occurred in the context of mining and forest projects. Next, we find the Mayan peoples of the Yucatan peninsula, with 7 cases. Several of the aggressions against them were related to the *Tren Maya* infrastructure project; They were followed by the Tzeltal and Odami peoples, with 5 cases each; and the Mixe people, with 4 cases.

4.7 Sectors and areas where aggressions occurred

Image 11. Aggressions by sector in 2023



In this report, we use the term **sector** in reference to an infrastructure project, work, or activity that is in progress or planned and provides the context for aggressions against defenders.

In 2023, the sector most strongly identified with events of aggression was **mining, with 30**; it was followed by **means of communication, with 18 cases** and in third place the **forest sector, with 13 cases**.

It bears noting that of the 18 events of aggression linked to infrastructure projects and works related to means of communication, all



110 events were related to the defense of territory, the activity linked to the highest number of aggressions

involved the activation of rail lines. Of these, 12 events of aggression were related to the *Tren Maya* infrastructure project and 6 to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Interoceanic Corridor.

On the other hand, we use **area** when referencing the natural element that persons and communities seek to defend. It bears noting that there are cases where areas of defense are related and as a result there are more than one.⁸⁸

In this regard, the area of defense where the highest number of aggressions occurred was the defense of **territory**, with 110 events, followed by **water**, with 39, and in third place **plants**, with 33 events of aggression. A breakdown of the relevant data is presented below.

As regards the sectors where lethal aggressions occurred, in 2023 mining, forests, and water headed the list. Of 20 lethal aggressions

Image 12. Aggressions by area of defense in 2023

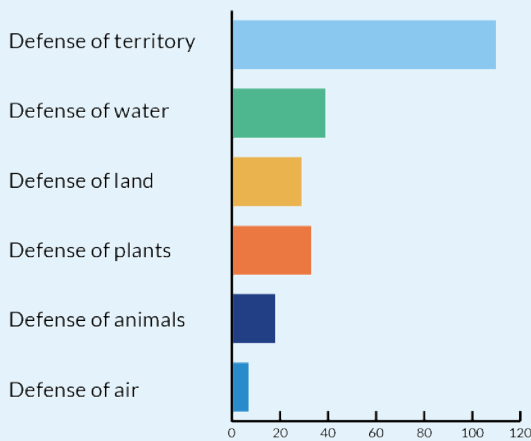


Image 13. Map of sectors and states where lethal aggressions occurred in 2023

Sector	Lethal aggressions
Mining	6
Forests	1
Water	8
Biodiversity	2
Industrial	1
Pollutants	1
Means of communication	1
Total	20

⁸⁸ As a result, the total exceeds 123 events of aggression reported.

Image 14. Map of Mexico with lethal aggressions in each state and by sector

State	Lethal aggressions	Sector
Guerrero	6	Esteban Xochitempa: Water Juan Xochitempa: Water Marcelino Hernández: Water Bonifacio Xochitempa: Water Albertha Santos: Water José Hernández: Water
Hidalgo	1	Abisaí Pérez Romero: Water
Jalisco	1	Higinio Cruz: Mining
Estado de México	2	Cuauhtémoc Márquez: Water Álvaro Arvizu: Water
Michoacán	7	Isaúl Nemesio: Mining Miguel Estrada: Mining Rolando Magno: Mining Eustacio Alcalá: Mining Juan Medina: Mining Lorenzo Froylán: Mining Alfredo Cisneros: Forests
Oaxaca	2	Noel López Gallegos: Forests Félix Vicente Cruz: Means of communication
Sonora	1	Gabriel Trujillo: Biodiversity
	Total: 20	

documented, 6 defenders were murdered in the context of mining, and 8 in matters related to water. These were followed by the area of biodiversity with 2 killings. Finally, the areas means of communication, industrial, forests and pollutants accounted for 1 murdered defender each.

4.8 Aggressors

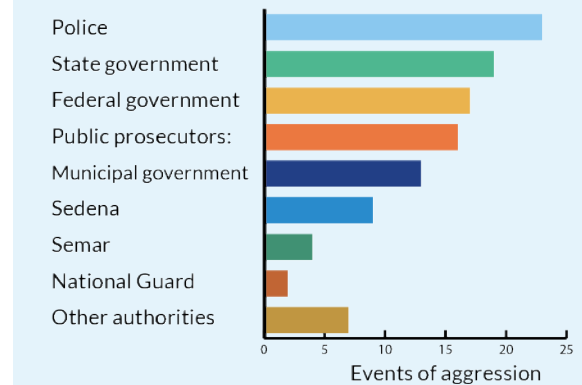
In this section we present data on the agents that perpetrate acts of violence against environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ The total number is greater than 123 (aggression events) because in some aggression events it was possible to identify the participation of more than one type of aggressor agent.

Image 15. Aggressor identified in events of aggression in 2023



Image 16. Events of aggression with government involvement in 2023



Documentation confirms that, in the 123 events of aggression recorded in 2023, **the leading aggressor was government, being involved in 61 events of aggression (49.59% of cases)**. Next were criminal organizations, with documented involvement in 37 cases (29.6%). In third place were private companies, which were involved in 19 cases (15.45%). Note that in 22 cases the aggressor could not be identified.

Government authorities at all levels have a crucial role in this regard, in light of their constitutional obligation to promote, respect, protect, and guarantee human rights. In this

context, it is their obligation to conduct (sic) all their official acts⁹⁰.

As regards aggressions committed by government agents, of 61 events of aggression in which their involvement was documented, in 23 there was participation by police (9 municipal and 14 state police officers), in 19 by state governments, in 17 by the federal government, in 16 by public prosecutors, in 13 by municipal governments, in 9 by the Ministry of National Defense (Spanish acronym Sedena), in 4 by the Ministry of the Navy (Spanish acronym Semar), in 2 by the National Guard, and in 7 by other authorities⁹¹.

⁹⁰ Article 1 of the Mexican Federal Constitution, entitled Human Rights and their Guarantees, states that: "All authorities, in their area of competence, have an obligation to promote, respect, protect, and guarantee human rights in accordance with the principles of universality, interdependence, indivisibility, and progressivity. Accordingly, the state must prevent, investigate, sanction, and remedy human rights violations, under the terms established by law."

⁹¹ The total number is greater than 61 (aggression events) because in some aggression events it was possible to identify the participation of various types of authorities.



5. Conclusions and recommendations

In the year 2023, defenders of the environment, land, and territory, persons and communities, were again subject to aggression at the hands of various agents seeking to repress their efforts in defense of environmental human rights.

The year 2023 was not the exception to lament a new events that included forced disappearance, criminalization, stigmatization, physical aggression, and gender violence, among others, with consequences extending even to loss of life.



Against this backdrop of aggressions, we cannot overlook the fact that they affect persons and communities differently.

In addition to the individual impact on persons defending the environment, they also often have an intimidating effect on other persons who engage in the defense of human rights. This social effect of intimidation, given the importance of human rights defenders' work, causes severe harm to the community as a whole.⁹²

The documentation gathered allowed us to confirm that, **in Mexico, in the year 2023, at least 123 events of aggression took place, with 282 different aggressions and 20 lethal aggressions against persons and communities**

defending the environment, land, and territory. Based on this documentation, we arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

This year, the state with the highest number of events of aggression was Jalisco, with 20 events, followed closely by Oaxaca state, with 19, and Mexico City, with 12. Taken together, these three states accounted for 40.8 % of events of aggression nationwide in the year 2023.

In Mexico, 20 environmental human rights defenders lost their lives as a result of their work in the year 2023.

⁹² I/A Court HR, Escaleras Mejía et al. vs. Honduras, sentence of September 26, 2018, Series C, No. 361, par. 70.

The non-lethal forms used most widely against defenders in 2023 were: threats, with 33 aggressions; intimidation, with 28; physical aggression, with 26; criminalization, with 21; and harassment, with 19.

It is alarming that, in the last year, aggressions involving some form of disappearance increased. In all, 11 events of aggression involving some form of disappearance were documented, with 19 defenders as victims.

There were reports of 1,317 persons affected by aggressions perpetrated in 2023 in the context of their actions in defense of the environment, land, and territory. Of this total, 416 persons were actively engaged in defense and identified as defenders. The rest were persons who were attacked in the context of environmental defense, being linked to defenders by ties of kinship, friendship, and community or for other reasons that directly implicated them in defense activities undertaken by a given person or community.

In the year 2023, environmental defense in opposition to large-scale infrastructure projects, works, and activities cost the lives of 20 defenders. The most lethal sectors to engage in environmental defense were water, with 8 killings; mining, with 6 deaths; and biodiversity, with 2 killings. The sectors of industry, means of communication, and mitigation of pollution reported one death each.

It is important to emphasize that the most dangerous sectors for environmental defenders were mining, with 30 events of aggression; means of communication, with 18; and forests, with 13. For the third consecutive year, mining has been the most perilous sector of defense,

reporting the highest numbers of aggressions in general. A majority of aggressions related to mining occurred in the state of Jalisco, those related to means of communication in Mexico City and Oaxaca, and those related to the forests sector in Chihuahua.

In the sector means of communication, most of the aggressions reported were related to the infrastructure projects *Tren Maya*, *Tren Transistmico*, and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Inter-oceanic Corridor. In other words, in 2023 the federal government's insignia projects have been cited as the cause for attacks on defenders of the environment and territory.

Likewise, it is deeply concerning that, based on the documentation examined, 57.7% of cases of aggression in 2023 were against members of indigenous communities, which indicates that the persons most vulnerable to experiencing aggression due to their work in defense of natural resources, land, and territory are the very people who inhabit and care for such territories.

Aggressions against indigenous and comparable persons and communities accounted for more than half the events of aggression documented in 2023. This figure underscores the environmental racism and structural discrimination prevalent in Mexico, where the lands and territories of original peoples are targeted for appropriation by business and government.



In the year reported, highest number of events of aggression were perpetrated against the Nahua people, with a total of 20. Next were the Maya, with 7, and behind them the Tzeltal and Odami peoples, with 5 respectively.


With the information collected, it was reported that government, at its three levels, acted as perpetrator in 49.59% of aggressions against defenders, persons and communities, disregarding its constitutional obligations to protect and guarantee human rights.


Recommendations

Our recommendations are a series of demands and duties which, over the course of these 10 years, we have identified working alongside environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, as well as civil society organizations involved with the issues, and therefore, while it is true that several are repeated, the reason is that the conditions defenders, persons and communities, face have not improved.


I. To all orders of government

-  Implement comprehensive public policies and fulfil the general and specific obligations established in Articles 4.1, 4.2, and 9 of the Escazú Agreement, so that the defense of environmental rights is guaranteed as a right that should be exercised freely and safely by any person, above all by those pertaining to groups in situations of vulnerability, such as members of original peoples, women and children.
-  Implement appropriate and targeted measures to recognize the efforts and contributions of environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities.


-  Adapt the domestic normative framework, adopting administrative, legislative, and judicial measures to effectively incorporate the standards that the Mexican state has recognized in the Escazú Agreement and in other international conventions on the environment to which Mexico is a signatory.

-  Implement actions to ensure proper recognition for the work of environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities, and their contribution to the effective observance of environmental human rights.

II. To the Mexican Federal Congress

-  Adapt the domestic normative framework to guarantee that Mexican laws adhere to the standards recognized by the Mexican state, in accordance with Article 4.3 of the Escazú Agreement.

III. To the state agencies and offices involved in implementing development projects

-  In their areas of competence, order the suspension of projects or activities that have direct and concrete links to aggressions against defenders of the environment and territory, in

particular groups in conditions of vulnerability such as women, children, and original peoples.

- ❁ **Oversee and sanction projects that are or may be causing negative impact on the environment and for which the corresponding environmental impact statement has not yet been authorized.**
- ❁ **In their areas of competence, investigate, prosecute, and sanction development projects that have or may have negative impact on the environment and territory and are in violation of standards established in domestic and international laws, regulations, and norms.**
- ❁ **In their areas of competence, apply provisions relating to the obligation to guarantee access to information, participation, and justice for persons and communities affected by development projects, in accordance with Articles 5, 7, and 8 of the Escazú Agreement, which state that the signatories must guarantee the public's right of access to environmental information and assure the right of participation, which must be open and inclusive in environmental decision-making processes, on the basis of the domestic and international normative frameworks, including mechanisms of public partici-**



pation in processes of decision making, audits, reexaminations, or updates related to projects and activities, and in other processes of environmental authorizations that have or may have a significant impact on the environment, including cases where they may affect human health.

- ❁ **In their areas of competence, use consultations with original peoples on projects that have not received their prior, free, informed, and culturally appropriate consent, in accordance with Clause 7.14 of the Escazú Agreement and ILO Convention 169.**



IV. To the Mechanism for Protection of Defenders and Journalist of the Ministry of the Interior


- ❁ **Implement a comprehensive public policy of protection, with gender and intercultural perspectives, that includes the design of measures for collective de protection suited to the specific contexts of defenders, persons and communities.**
- ❁ **Implement suitable public policies seeking to prevent aggressions against defenders, persons and communities, and address their causes.**
- ❁ **Redouble efforts to effectively address the recommendations issued in 2019 by the Mexico Office of the**


UN High Commissioner for Human Rights through its Diagnosis of the operation of the Mechanism for Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists.

-  Implement comprehensive public policies in the application of effective and efficient measures for defenders of the environment and territory that allow them to continue their work and their lives in freedom and safety.
-  Strengthen actions of coordination among institutions and between the different levels of government, and with autonomous organizations, to improve measures for the protection of defenders of the environment and territory.


V. Federal and State Prosecutors


-  Adopt appropriate, effective, and timely measures to prevent, investigate, and sanction any kind of crime that defenders of the environment and territory have suffered or may suffer when engaging in their defense work or exercising their rights in general.
-  Review pending case files and prosecutions against defenders who have been criminalized in the course of their activities and examine the possibility of withdrawing charges that hinder or inhibit the defense of their rights.


-  Adopt the measures deemed necessary to investigate and sanction public officials who, in performing their functions, have incurred in actions that arbitrarily and illegally intimidate, threaten, or criminalize human rights defenders.


-  Implement training activities to prevent criminal law from being used, through statutes that are ambiguous or unclear, to hinder the defense of environmental rights.

VI. To the National and State Commissions on Human Rights

-  Initiate ex officio investigations on probable human rights violations against defenders of the environment and territory, and issue the provisional measures deemed necessary to protect them.

-  Issue the pertinent recommendations on complaints that have been initiated ex officio or on request, in relation to any aggression against defenders of the environment and territory, that come to their attention.

-  Adopt public policies to promote the rights of defenders of the environment and territory.

-  Propose to the various national authorities that, in their sole areas of competence, they promote changes and amendments to

legislative and regulatory ordinances, and administrative practices, which, in the opinion of the National Commission, help to ensure greater protection of human rights.

VII. To the Feder and State Executive Commissions for Attention to Victims

- Provide accessible, high quality, culturally appropriate and context-specific legal advice for victims of aggressions, when such aggressions may constitute crimes or human rights violations.

VIII. To the Federal and State Judiciaries

- Guarantee that the judicial means and remedies for the

protection of human rights and/or of other kinds are effective and guarantee access to justice, both for environmental defenders challenging projects that are harmful to the environment and in cases of where they are victims of aggression or crimes of any kind.

- Avoid the application of restrictive criteria for defenders of the environment and territory for the application of ambiguous or unclear criminal statutes that hinder their defense efforts due to their sanctioning and constraining effect.
- Train judges in matters related to their obligations to implement the Escazú Agreement for cases related to the environment and the persons that defend it.

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7. Annexes



General table of events of aggression 2023

No	Mes	Estado	Tipo de víctima	Sexo	Identidad cultural	Sector	Agresión(es) identificadas	Agente agresor
1	Enero	Oaxaca	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	contaminantes	criminalización	agente de agresión específico
2	Enero	Chiapas	pobladores de comunidad	masculino	comunidad equiparable	minería	tortura/malos tratos, agresión física, amenaza intimidación, privación ilegal de la libertad	paramilitares
3	Enero	Jalisco	estudiantes	masculino	no indígena	turístico	criminalización	empresa privada, gobierno estatal, fiscalía, otra autoridad
4	Enero	Michoacán de Ocampo	abogado	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	agresión física, desaparición por particulares, daño a propiedad	empresa privada, no identificado
	Enero	Michoacán de Ocampo	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	agresión física, desaparición por particulares, daño a propiedad	empresa privada, no identificado
5	Enero	Michoacán de Ocampo	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	homicidio	delincuencia organizada, guardia nacional, Sedena
6	Enero	Oaxaca	comuneros	masculino	comunidad indígena	industrial	intimidación, criminalización, despojo	gobierno federal, gobierno estatal, fiscalía
7	Enero	Durango	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad equiparable	industrial	intimidación, criminalización, detención ilegal arbitraria	empresa privada, fiscalía
8	Enero	Oaxaca	comuneros	masculino y femenino	comunidad equiparable	forestal	amenaza, intimidación, despojo	delincuencia organizada

9	Febrero	Durango	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad equiparable	industrial	agresión física, intimidación, hostigamiento, criminalización, allanamiento, daño a propiedad	empresa privada, fiscalia, no identificado
10	Febrero	Chiapas	miembros de la comunidad	masculino y femenino	comunidad indígena	otro	violencia de género, discriminación, uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física, daño a propiedad, otro	gobierno municipal, no identificado, agente de agresión específico
	Febrero	Yucatán	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	agropecuario	difamación y estigmatización	empresa privada
11	Febrero	Yucatán	miembro de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	agropecuario	difamación y estigmatización	empresa privada
	Febrero	Hidalgo	estudiante	masculino	otro	contaminantes	desaparición y homicidio	no identificado
12	Febrero	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	allanamiento	delincuencia organizada
13	Febrero	Oaxaca	ejidatarios	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física, intimidación, criminalización, detención ilegal arbitraria, despojo	empresa privada, gobierno federal, Semar
14	Febrero	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación y estigmatización	gobierno federal
15	Febrero	Yucatán	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	agropecuario	uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física, criminalización, difamación, estigmatización, daño a propiedad, robo	empresa privada, gobierno estatal, policía, fiscalia
16	Febrero	Guerrero	miembro de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	indeterminado	hostigamiento, desplazamiento, daño a propiedad, robo	delincuencia organizada, gobierno estatal
17	Febrero	Yucatán	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	agropecuario	intimidación y hostigamiento	policia

19	Febrero	Michoacán de Ocampo	comuneros	masculino	comunidad indígena	forestal	homicidio	delincuencia organizada
20	Febrero	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	hostigamiento	delincuencia organizada
21	Febrero	Chihuahua	integrante de OSC	masculino y femenino	otro	biodiversidad	intimidación, privación ilegal de la libertad	delincuencia organizada
22	Febrero	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación y estigmatización	gobierno federal
23	Febrero	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	hostigamiento	delincuencia organizada
24	Febrero	Chiapas	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	desaparición por particulares, privación ilegal de la libertad	paramilitares
25	Febrero	Oaxaca	miembros de la comunidad	masculino y femenino	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	uso indebido de la fuerza, hostigamiento, criminalización, difamación, detención ilegal arbitraria, otro	gobierno estatal, policía
26	Marzo	Oaxaca	miembro de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	amenaza, hostigamiento, difamación, estigmatización	delincuencia organizada, Sedena, Semar
27	Marzo	Durango	abogado	masculino y femenino	comunidad indígena	biodiversidad	desaparición	no identificado
28	Marzo	Michoacán de Ocampo	otro	masculino y femenino	otro	otro	agresión física, otros	delincuencia organizada
29	Marzo	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación y estigmatización	gobierno federal

30	Marzo	Guerrero	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	contaminantes	amenazas, intimidación	persona de comunidad, policía
31	Marzo	Quintana Roo	miembro de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	intimidación, amenazas y hostigamiento	policía, Sedena
	Marzo	Quintana Roo	otro	femenino y masculino	otro	vías de comunicación	intimidación, amenazas y hostigamiento	policía, Sedena
32	Marzo	Quintana Roo	académico	femenino	comunidad no indígena	vías de comunicación	intimidación, amenazas y hostigamiento	policía, Sedena
	Marzo	Yucatán	miembro de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad indígena	agropecuario	criminalización	empresa privada, gobierno estatal, fiscalía, otra autoridad
33	Marzo	Sonora	pescador	masculino	buzo-pescador	pesca	Tortura/malos tratos, agresión física, amenaza, privación ilegal de la libertad, desplazamiento forzado	delincuencia organizada
34	Marzo	Ciudad de México	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	Urbano	amenaza, intimidación	empresa privada, no identificado
	Marzo	Yucatán	defensor independiente	femenino y masculino	comunidad indígena	agropecuario	uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física, criminalización, estigmatización, detención ilegal arbitraria, privación ilegal de la libertad	gobierno estatal, policía, fiscalía, no identificado
35	Marzo	Yucatán	integrante de OSC	femenino, persona no binaria	comunidad no indígena, comunidad LGBT+	agropecuario	uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física, criminalización, estigmatización, detención ilegal arbitraria, privación ilegal de la libertad	gobierno estatal, policía, fiscalía, no identificado
	Marzo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	amenaza	delincuencia organizada
37	Marzo	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación y estigmatización	gobierno federal

38	Marzo	Ciudad de México	otro	se desconoce	otro	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación y estigmatización	gobierno federal
39	Marzo	Oaxaca	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	agresión física	Sedena, Semar, no identificado
40	Marzo	Morelos	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	industrial	criminalización, otro	gobierno estatal, otra autoridad
41	Abril	Michoacán de Ocampo	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	minería	homicidio	empresa privada, delincuencia organizada
42	Abril	Guerrero	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	otro	otro	forestal	amenaza, desplazamiento forzado y desalojo	delincuencia organizada
43	Abril	Sinaloa	periodista	femenino y masculino	otro	otro	agropecuario	amenaza, difamación	empresa privada
44	Abril	Jalisco	miembros de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	minería	agresión física, allanamiento, daño a propiedad	persona de comunidad, gobierno municipal
45	Abril	Oaxaca	defensor independiente	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	homicidio	no identificado
46	Abril	Michoacán de Ocampo	comunero	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	homicidio	no identificado
47	Abril	Campeche	ejidatario	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	forestal	amenaza	persona de comunidad
48	Abril	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	femenino y masculino	otro	otro	otro	espionaje	gobierno federal, Sedena

49	Abril	Ciudad de México	ejidatario	femenino y masculino	otro	otro	despojo y amenazas	persona de comunidad
50	Abril	Oaxaca	miembro de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	agresión física, detención ilegal arbitraria, daño a propiedad, robo	policía, Guardia Nacional, Semar
51	Abril	Campeche	ejidatario	masculino	comunidad indígena	forestal	hostigamiento y otro	no identificado
52	Mayo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	intimidación	delincuencia organizada, gobierno municipal, policía
53	Mayo	Chiapas	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	biodiversidad	criminalización	gobierno federal, fiscalía
54	Mayo	Tlaxcala	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	hídrico	uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física intimidación, otro	gobierno estatal, gobierno municipal, policía
55	Mayo	Sonora	integrante de OSC	femenino y masculino	comunidad quiparable	minería	amenaza, intimidación, hostigamiento, despojo, otro	empresa privada, gobierno federal, otra autoridad
56	Mayo	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	difamación y estigmatización	gobierno federal
57	Mayo	Durango	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad equiparable	industrial	agresión física, hostigamiento, criminalización, detención ilegal arbitraria	fiscalía
58	Mayo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	intimidación	delincuencia organizada
59	Mayo	Chiapas	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	otro	criminalización, otros	gobierno estatal, fiscalía

60	Mayo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	intimidación	delincuencia organizada
61	Mayo	Oaxaca	integrante de OSC	masculino	comunidad no indígena	vías de comunicación	amenazas, intimidación, hostigamiento	delincuencia organizada, gobierno estatal
62	Mayo	Chiapas	otro	masculino	comunidad indígena	otro	agresión física, otro	paramilitares
63	Mayo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	intimidación	gobierno municipal, policía
64	Mayo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	hostigamiento	delincuencia organizada
65	Mayo	Veracruz	miembros de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad no indígena	forestal	criminalización, detención ilegal arbitraria	empresa privada, gobierno estatal, fiscalía
66	Mayo	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	agresión física, intimidación, desaparición forzada	delincuencia organizada, gobierno municipal, policía
67	Mayo	Sonora	integrante de OSC	femenino y masculino	otro	biodiversidad	daño a propiedad	empresa privada, policía
68	Junio	Quintana Roo	ejidataria	femenino	comunidad no indígena	urbano	violencia de género, discriminación, hostigamiento, privación ilegal de la libertad, otro	cacique, persona de comunidad, empresa privada, gobierno municipal, agente de agresión específico
69	Junio	Chihuahua	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	forestal	desplazamiento forzado y daño a propiedad	delincuencia organizada
70	Junio	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	amenaza	gobierno municipal, policía

71	Junio	Chiapas	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	biodiversidad	amenaza, intimidación	no identificado
72	Junio	Chihuahua	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	desplazamiento forzado, daño en propiedad, desalojo	delincuencia organizada
73	Junio	Chihuahua	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	forestal	amenaza, desplazamiento forzado, daño en propiedad	delincuencia organizada
74	Junio	Querétaro	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	otro	hídrico	amenazas, intimidación y hostigamiento	delincuencia organizada, paramilitares
75	Junio	Sonora	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	biodiversidad	difamación	no identificado
76	Junio	Estado de México	académico	masculino	comunidad no indígena	hídrico	allanamiento, homicidio	no identificado
77	Junio	Querétaro	miembros de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad no indígena	otro	agresión física, criminalización, detención ilegal arbitraria, otros	gobierno estatal, policía, fiscalía
78	Junio	Estado de México	académico	masculino y femenino	comunidad no indígena	hídrico	homicidio (1), tortura/malos tratos, agresión física, amenaza, allanamiento,	no identificado
79	Junio	Chiapas	otro	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	agresión física, amenaza, intimidación	paramilitares
80	Junio	Sonora	estudiante	masculino	comunidad no indígena	biodiversidad	homicidio	delincuencia organizada
81	Junio	Chiapas	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	minería	amenazas	delincuencia organizada

92	Julio	Chihuahua	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	forestal	amenaza, desplazamiento forzado, daño en propiedad	delincuencia organizada
93	Julio	Veracruz	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	urbano	difamación, estigmatización	gobierno estatal
94	Julio	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación, estigmatización	gobierno federal
95	Julio	Tlaxcala	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	otro	hídrico	amenaza	persona de la comunidad
96	Agosto	Michoacán de Ocampo	comunero	masculino	comunidad indígena	biodiversidad	homicidio (1), tortura/malos tratos, agresión sexual, desaparición por particulares (1)	delincuencia organizada
97	Agosto	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	amenaza	empresa privada
98	Agosto	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	intimidación	delincuencia organizada
99	Agosto	Guerrero	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	homicidio	delincuencia organizada, Sedena
100	Agosto	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	amenaza	policía municipal
101	Agosto	Guerrero	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	comunidad indígena	ejecución extrajudicial (1) y desaparición	delincuencia organizada, policía, Sedena
102	Agosto	Yucatán	ejidatarios	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	urbano	agresión física, uso excesivo de la fuerza, criminalización, represión, despojo	empresa privada, gobierno no estatal, gobierno municipal, policía, fiscalía

82	Junio	Chihuahua	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	forestal	violencia de género, agresión sexual, amenaza, desplazamiento forzado dano a propiedad	delincuencia organizada
83	Junio	San Luis Potosí	abogado	masculino	comunidad indígena	biodiversidad	difamación, estigmatización	persona de comunidad, agente de agresión específico
	Junio	San Luis Potosí	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	biodiversidad	difamación, estigmatización	persona de comunidad, agente de agresión específico
84	Junio	Puebla	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	hidrocarburos	detención ilegal arbitraria	policía, fiscalía
85	Junio	Oaxaca	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	industria	amenaza	persona de comunidad
86	Junio	Oaxaca	estudiante	masculino	otro	biodiversidad	otro	persona de comunidad, agente de agresión específico
87	Julio	Oaxaca	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	se desconoce	industrial	desaparición, homicidio	no identificado
88	Julio	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	hostigamiento	no identificado
89	Julio	Ciudad de México	integrante de OSC	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	difamación, estigmatización	gobierno federal
90	Julio	Yucatán	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	hídrico	amenaza, intimidación	gobierno municipal
91	Julio	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	hostigamiento	no identificado

103	Septiembre	Tlaxcala	miembro de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad no indígena	hídrico	agresión física	persona de la comunidad
104	Septiembre	Campeche	ejidatario	masculino	comunidad indígena	forestal	amenazas	no identificado
105	Septiembre	Oaxaca	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	otro	minería	uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física	gobierno municipal, otra autoridad
106	Septiembre	Guerrero	miembros de la comunidad	masculino y femenino	comunidad indígena	hídrico	desaparición por particulares, homicidio	delincuencia organizada
107	Septiembre	Guerrero	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	hídrico	homicidio	delincuencia organizada
108	Octubre	Ciudad de México	académico	femenino	comunidad no indígena	otro	criminalización	otra autoridad, agente de agresión específico
109	Octubre	Veracruz	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	otro	vías de comunicación	agresión física	empresa privada
110	Octubre	Puebla	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad equiparable	otro	agresión física, difamación, desaparición por particulares	gobierno estatal, no identificado
111	Octubre	Campeche	ejidatario	masculino	comunidad indígena	forestal	amenaza, intimidación, daño en propiedad	no identificado
112	Octubre	Quintana Roo	ejidatarios	se desconoce	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	criminalización	gobierno federal
113	Octubre	Oaxaca	comuneros	masculino	comunidad indígena	industrial	criminalización	gobierno federal

114	Octubre	Oaxaca	ejidatarios	masculino	otro	minería	amenaza	gobierno estatal
115	Octubre	Morelos	académico	masculino	comunidad indígena	energía	hostigamiento, otros	gobierno estatal
116	Octubre	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	intimidación	delincuencia organizada
117	Noviembre	Oaxaca	comunero	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	allanamiento, robo	no identificado
118	Noviembre	Oaxaca	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	vías de comunicación	criminalización	gobierno federal, agente de agresión específico
119	Noviembre	Oaxaca	miembros de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	indeterminado	Tortura/malos tratos, uso indebido de la fuerza, agresión física, agresión sexual, desaparición forzada (3), detención ilegal arbitraria	empresa privada, gobierno estatal, policía, fiscalía
120	Noviembre	Jalisco	miembro de la comunidad	masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	homicidio, privación ilegal de la libertad	delincuencia organizada
121	Diciembre	Veracruz	miembros de la comunidad	se desconoce	comunidad equiparable	forestal	amenaza, intimidación, despojo	policía, no identificado
122	Diciembre	Puebla	periodista	femenino	comunidad indígena	hídrico	agresión física	gobierno municipal
123	Diciembre	Nayarit	miembros de la comunidad	femenino y masculino	comunidad indígena	minería	privación ilegal de la libertad	delincuencia organizada



Protegiendo a Personas, Protegiendo a la Naturaleza

This report is part of the Initiative Protegiendo a las Personas, Protegiendo a la Naturaleza (Protecting Persons, Protecting Nature) (P3N), which seeks to provide tools and support in promoting a culture and practices of safety for organizations, collectives, and communities devoted to the protection of land, territory, and the environment, by means of the following components:

- Documenting the conditions of environmental human rights defenders, persons and communities
- Training in comprehensive safety
- Rapid Response Fund

This report is the product of a collective effort. If you are a defender or are part of a collective or community in defense of the environment and territory and you want to contribute to this report or share information on a possible situation of risk or aggression, you can contact CEMDA by email at: contacto@cemda.org.mx and fromero@cemda.org.mx.



Este es el décimo Informe del Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, A.C. (CEMDA) donde continuamos evidenciando las violencias que se ejercen en contra de quienes defienden el medio ambiente, la tierra y el territorio. Este esfuerzo contribuye, entre otras cosas, a la reflexión y búsqueda de posibles soluciones, pero también contribuye a la memoria colectiva, pues en nuestros informes han quedado escritos los nombres de personas y comunidades que incluso han dado su vida por defender a nuestra madre tierra y sus territorios.

Este Informe es parte de la Iniciativa Protegiendo a las Personas, Protegiendo a la Naturaleza (P3N), la cual busca proveer herramientas y apoyo en la promoción de una cultura y prácticas de seguridad a organizaciones, colectivos y comunidades dedicadas a la protección de la tierra, el territorio y el medio ambiente por medio de los siguientes componentes:

- ✿ Documentación de la situación de las personas y comunidades defensoras de los derechos humanos ambientales.
- ✿ Formación en seguridad integral.
- ✿ Fondo de respuesta rápida.

Si eres una persona defensora o eres parte de un colectivo o comunidad defensora de los derechos humanos ambientales y del territorio, y deseas compartir información sobre una posible situación de riesgo o agresión, puedes entrar en contacto con el CEMDA a los siguientes correos: contacto@cemda.org.mx y/o fromero@cemda.org.mx