

[New report shows Mexican law is failing to protect activists and journalists](#)

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A damning new report shows that three years since a protection law was created in Mexico, there has been no improvement in the protection of activists and journalists.

The 130-page analysis, published by a coalition of more than 20 human rights organisations (the Espacio OSC), highlights the many [flaws in implementation of the Mexican Federal Protection Mechanism](#) for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists.^[1] The report also demands urgent action by the Mexican State to improve the security of defenders and journalists.

Why has implementation failed?

The following problems with current implementation of the protection law are cited in the report:

- Lack of political support for the law;
- Lack of financial and human resources for its implementation;
- Lack of proper recognition of the work of human rights defenders and journalists;
- Lack of coordination and of political will from the relevant authorities at all levels of government, regardless of the fact that most states have signed cooperation agreements with the mechanism;
- Limited investigations into crimes against defenders;
- Lack of interest in activating the tools defined by the protection mechanism for preventing abuses and attacks against human rights defenders and journalists.

How should the Mexican State respond?

Mexico should take urgent action to pursue the proper and effective implementation of the law, the report says, including by:

- Guaranteeing a response to the fundamental flaws in implementation outlined by the civil society analysis;
- Providing more information to the public regarding the actions taken through the protection mechanism and what the results have been/are;
- Complying with the response times established by law;
- Ensuring there is a better specialised team in charge of carrying out risk analysis and determine adequate protection measures which respond to the gender, ethnicity, whether the subject is an individual or a collective, and other particularities of the beneficiary;

- Ensuring the relevant authorities, and particularly the analysts, are better trained and more sensitive in their attention to the beneficiaries;
- Establishing mechanisms to protect the identity and privacy of the beneficiaries.

ISHR's Ben Leather says this is not the first time the [failed implementation of the protection law has been heavily criticised](#).

'The report is damning, but sadly, not surprising,' said Mr Leather. 'It is apparent that implementing this important law has not been a priority for the Peña Nieto government thus far. That must change.'

'Human rights defenders and journalists play a crucial role in upholding a functioning democratic society and it is the State's job to ensure their protection and to visibly and publicly support their legitimate activity.'

Human Rights defenders and journalists in Mexico face grave risks. During the first nine months of 2014 the Mexican chapter of the international organisation Article 19 documented 222 attacks against members of the media; meanwhile, between January 2011 and December 2013, the National Human Rights Network "All Rights for All" documented 27 cases of human rights defenders who were killed as a result of their human rights work.

This September, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is set to present a report on national human rights policies to the Human Rights Council. A representative of the Espacio OSC will visit Geneva, working with ISHR to advocate for better implementation of the Mexican law.

The September Council session will also see the launch of the report of an international [civil society observation mission to Mexico](#), of which ISHR was a part, which aimed to better understand the risks faced by defenders in the country.

Photo: Flickr, Knight Foundation

[1] The Mexican Federal Protection Mechanism was mandated by the 2012 Law for the Protection of Journalists and Human Rights Defenders.