

MEXICO 2021 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mexico is a multiparty federal republic with an elected president and bicameral legislature. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador of the MORENA party coalition won the presidential election in generally free and fair multiparty elections in 2018. In the June midterm elections, citizens voted for all members of the Chamber of Deputies, 15 governors, state legislators, and mayors across the country. The elections were generally free and fair.

The National Guard and state and municipal police are responsible for enforcing the law and maintaining order. The National Guard, which began operations in 2019, is a civilian institution reporting to the Secretariat of Public Security and Civil Protection. In 2019 the Federal Police was disbanded, and in May 2020 all remaining assets and personnel transferred to the National Guard. A 2019 constitutional amendment grants the president the authority to use the armed forces to protect internal and national security through 2024. Most National Guard personnel are seconded from the army and navy and have the option to return to their services after five years. State preventive police report to state governors, while municipal police report to mayors. The Secretariat of National Defense and Secretariat of the Navy also play a role in domestic security, particularly in combating organized criminal groups. The National Migration Institute, under the authority of the Interior Secretariat, is responsible for enforcing migration law. Although authorities generally maintained effective control over the security forces, there were instances in which security force elements acted independently of civilian control. There were credible reports that members of security forces committed some abuses.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful or arbitrary killings by police, military, and other governmental officials; forced disappearance by government agents; torture and degrading treatment by security forces; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; restrictions on free expression and media, including violence against journalists; acts of corruption; insufficient investigation of and accountability for gender-based

offices. Individual employees or unions may complain directly to inspectors or safety and health officials. By law workers may remove themselves from situations that endanger health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. The STPS has the authority to order labor inspections at any time in the event of labor law violations, imminent risk to employees, or workplace accidents. Penalties for law violations regarding occupational safety and health regulations were commensurate with those for other similar laws but were rarely enforced.

News reports indicated poor working conditions in some factories. These included low wages, contentious labor management, long work hours, unjustified dismissals, a lack of social security benefits, unsafe workplaces, and no freedom of association. Many women working in the industry reported suffering some form of abuse.

According to data from the Mexican Social Security Institute, in 2020 there were approximately 278,000 workplace accidents, resulting in 666 deaths.

Hundreds of thousands of workers continued to work in foreign-owned factories, mainly in northern border states, producing electronics, medical equipment, and auto parts. Several outbreaks of COVID-19 resulted in multiple deaths. Some companies reportedly did not implement effective protective measures for employees, and one factory, owned by Eaton Corporation in Baja California, was operating illegally and was closed after it placed chains on its doors to prevent 800 workers from leaving.

Informal Sector: According to INEGI informal workers represented 56 percent of total workers in the country as of the second quarter of the year. Labor inspections focused on the formal sector, leaving informal workers with no labor law protection. Informal workers were in every sector of the economy, with agriculture as the sector with the greatest number of informal workers. While on average informal workers earned less than the minimum wage, in some areas, such as near the northern border, informal employment could pay more than formal employment in the manufacturing sector. Informal workers lacked access to social protection mechanisms such as health care and retirement benefits.