



Brussels, 12th October 2020

Dear **Mr. Oscar Eduardo Ramírez Aguilar**, Presidente de la Mesa Directiva de la Cámara de Senadores del Congreso de la Unión

Dear Members of **Junta de Coordinación Política del Senado de la República**,

We are writing to express our concern about the proposal to eliminate two key trust funds devoted to the protection of human rights in Mexico. One of them is the trust fund of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. The other is the Fund for the Help, Assistance and Integral Reparation of victims of human rights violations. If these funds are scrapped, there will be deadly delays in the assistance provided to beneficiaries who acutely need them.

We welcome the Mexican Congress and the Mexican government efforts to reallocate public resources to alleviate the impact that the pandemic has had on the health care system and on the socio-economic situation at large. However, all measures must respect the human rights of all and they should leave no one behind.

The trust fund of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists is crucial in a country, which has seen a steady rise in the number of attacks, including killings, against these groups. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Mexico is the second country in the world with the highest number of killed journalists, behind Irak. If we only take into account 2019 and 2020, Mexico concentrates 18 of the 94 cases of killings of journalists. [...] In 2019, the UN recorded 20 human rights defenders killed and 2 disappeared. During 2020, the UN has documented the killing of 7 human rights defenders.”<sup>1</sup>

The Fund for the Help, Assistance and Integral Reparation of victims of human rights violations serves more than 30,000 people who have been registered by the Executive Commission for the Assistance of Victims (Comisión Ejecutiva de Atención a Víctimas). They have relatives

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<sup>1</sup> Letter sent by the Representative in Mexico of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights to the Mexican Chamber of Deputies on the occasion of the debate about the future of these funds, 29 September 2020.



who have disappeared in Mexico, largely since 2006 when the country launched the “war on drugs”. There are more than 73,000 missing or disappeared people in Mexico, according to official figures. The vast majority of cases remain unresolved and the whereabouts of the victims is yet to be established.

Regarding this context, we would like to know how these measures comply with Mexico’s Universal Periodic Review accepted recommendations to strengthen the prevention and protection for human rights defenders and journalists by providing sufficient resources and to ensure the effective implementation of the Protection Mechanism, under the Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Protection Act.

In this context, we call on our distinguished peers in the Mexican Legislative branch, with whom we have established a consistent relationship of friendship and mutual understanding, to reconsider the proposal to eliminate these funds, to strengthen and improve the institutions that protect human rights and to take all the necessary measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 without putting further people at risk of violence and human rights violations.

Yours sincerely,

MEP Diana Riba (Greens/EFA)

MEP Massimiliano Smeriglio (S&D, Chair EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee)

MEP Anna Cavazzini (Greens/EFA)

MEP Eugenia Rodriguez Palop (GUE/NGL)

MEP Miguel Urbán (GUE/NGL)

MEP Marie Toussaint (Greens/EFA)

MEP Idoia Villanueva Ruiz (GUE/NGL)

MEP Dietmar Köster (S&D)

MEP Jordi Solé (Greens/EFA)

MEP Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA, Chair Delegation countries of Central America)