

MEXICO: SELECTED ISSUES OF INTERNAL FLIGHT ALTERNATIVES (JULY 2003 - JULY 2005) — October 2005

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MAP



Source: CNN. 15 December 2003. "Map of Mexico."
<http://edition.cnn.com/TRAVEL/CITY.GUIDES/WORLD/Americas/mexico/bigmap.html> [Accessed 9 Mar. 2005]

GLOSSARY
CIEPAC

Centre for Economic and Political Investigation of Community Action (Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria)

COFETEL

Federal Telecommunications Commission (Comisión Federal de Telecomunicaciones)

CONAPRED

National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Consejo Nacional Para Prevenir la Discriminación)

EZLN

Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional)

IFE

Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral)

INEGI

National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (Instituto de Estadística Geografía e Informática)

PAN

National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional)

PRD

Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática)

PRI

Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional)

PRODH

Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez)

Comments: The titles above were translated to facilitate reading. They are not official translations since English has no official status in Mexico. "PRODH" is the English title used in the English documents published by this centre.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a follow-up to two papers (1997 and 2001) on issues concerning internal flight alternatives (IFAs) in Mexico. The matter of an IFA is usually raised in the case of individuals who are considered to be vulnerable because they express their political opinions, women who are victims of spousal abuse, homosexuals who are at risk, and other specific groups. This paper also addresses the traceability of individuals in Mexico and, in particular, government records and information sharing.

A February 2001 Research Directorate document, quoting an April 1994 Immigration and Refugee Board Legal Services publication, states that "the concept of internal flight alternative (IFA) is premised on the principle that international protection is intended to benefit only those persons who are deprived of the protection against persecution normally expected from their own country" (Canada Apr. 1994).

Whether an IFA exists depends on the conditions in the country of origin and, in particular, on the specific IFA area, as well as on the personal circumstances of the individual; in short, the IFA depends on the "reasonableness of relocation to another area in the country of origin" (UN 23 July 2003, Par. 38).

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an assessment of whether an individual at risk may relocate elsewhere in his or her country of origin must meet certain criteria and is relevant only in certain cases, particularly when the agent of persecution is not a state agent (ibid.).

This paper also addresses the elements (national records, telephone networks, etc.) that could challenge an IFA by helping an agent of persecution track individuals, as well as the conditions in four specific regions (North, Centre, South and Federal District).

2. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 General

In July 2003, President Vicente Fox and his party, the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN), were shaken up as his party suffered a setback in the mid-term congressional elections (BBC 2 June 2005): his team of members of parliament (MPs) dropped from 205 to 153 (Europa World Online 2003-2005). The Congress is divided between the three major parties, and this has made it difficult for President Fox, who has been unable to carry out the energy and fiscal reforms that he set out to achieve (*The San Diego Union Tribune* 26 May 2005; see also *Political Affairs* 15 July 2005).

As President Fox's mandate comes to an end, some sources consider his government's achievements to be rather modest (The Economist Intelligence Unit 24 Mar. 2005; Centro PRODH 4 Apr. 2005).

Some say that there are shortcomings in the area of human rights progress, especially concerning the application of measures for dealing with human rights violations (HRW 13 Jan. 2005; Centro PRODH 4 Apr. 2005). Although President Fox introduced a national human rights program (Programa Nacional de Derechos Humanos) in December 2004 (AI 25 May 2005; Noticieros Televisa 10 Dec. 2004), by mid-2005, no changes were apparent regarding the reform proposals submitted to Congress and inspired by the 2003 analysis by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)(NRC 20 June 2005, 5; AI 25 May 2005; HRW 13 Jan. 2005). The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, is concerned about this lack of progress (*El Universal* 30 June 2005) and so are the individuals in charge of the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, PRODH), who criticize the lack of consultation before the program's development; they feel that the program is threatened by the 2006 election deadline (Centro PRODH 4 Apr. 2005).

High Commissioner Arbour recently said that she was concerned about the [translation] "extreme violence" that Mexican women are facing (*El Universal* 30 June 2005). She also said that it was important to tackle the issue of indigenous peoples' rights (ibid.).

Pressure to recognize indigenous peoples' group rights has continued during the presidency of Vicente Fox (BBC 2 June 2005; NRC 20 June 2005). However, the independence of indigenous peoples remains an issue (ibid.; BBC 2 June 2005).

President Fox has tried to tackle drug trafficking and has been relatively successful (BBC 2 June 2005; Reuters 15 Feb. 2005; *The Economist* 30 June 2005). At the same time, new violence has erupted because the drug cartels have been trying to infiltrate state institutions - including the president's office (BBC 2 June 2005; ibid. 22 Feb. 2005). According to *The Economist*, the scale of the United States' demand for drugs via Mexico has created "the world's most powerful and dangerous organised criminal gangs" (30 June 2005).

Violence at the Mexico-United States border continues to pose problems (US 26 Apr. 2005): numerous sources cited violent acts related to drug trafficking, such as the murder of the new chief of police of Nuevo Laredo, in the state of Tamaulipas (DPA 15 June 2005; AP 17 June 2005), and the need for the government to send in federal troops and officers (ibid.; BBC 15 June 2005; *La Jornada* 14 June 2005).

2.2 2006 Presidential election

Some sources indicated that the former mayor of Mexico City, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, stands a good chance of winning the 2006 presidential election (AFP 7 Mar. 2004; FOCAL Apr. 2005) even if it is not certain he will be successful (Canadian FOCAL Apr. 2005; *WMRC Daily Analysis* 30 Dec. 2004). The results of a 10 July 2005 survey published by *El Universal* indicated that people's intention to vote for López Obrador rose from 35 per cent in February 2005 to 38 per cent in April, and then fell to 32 per cent in June.

In an April 2005 newsletter of the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), Kenneth F. Greene, an assistant professor at the University of Texas in Austin, stated that López Obrador's running for presidency as leader of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD) would transform the presidential election into a three-way race; Greene says that the PAN and the PRD are not very well organized in most regions of the country.

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, "political manoeuvring ... could taint the legitimacy of the [2006 election] process (24 Mar. 2005). At the beginning of April 2005, the Mexican Congress decided to revoke Andrés Manuel López Obrador's immunity for contempt of court (he had ignored a court order concerning the purchase of land); this measure could bar him from running in the election (FOCAL Apr. 2005; Europa World Online 2003-2005; *Latin American Mexico and NAFTA Report* 18 Jan. 2005). These political hardships clearly illustrate the political climate in Mexico (ibid.; Canadian FOCAL Apr. 2005).

3. GROUPS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

3.1 Human rights activists

Amnesty International claims that state governments have not yet taken the necessary measures to respond to the intimidation that human rights activists suffered in 2004 (25 May 2005). Cases of attacks and harassment toward these activists have diminished but have not been eliminated (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Intro.).

Relations between the activists and the Mexican authorities have improved: General José Francisco Gallardo, a well-known activist who was demanding the appointment of a human rights ombudsman for the armed forces, was released (Abizaid 21 July 2005). However, there are still arrests and cases of harassment involving other activists, particularly defenders of the environment in the states of Chihuahua (ibid.) and Guerrero (AI 12 Nov. 2004).

3.2 Journalists

According to *Country Reports 2004*, journalists "outside the capital or large cities" were the most at risk of suffering human rights violations (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2.a.). Reporters Without Borders stated that "Mexico's local and regional media were vulnerable to pressure and attacks from criminals, politicians and police" (BBC 2 June 2005).

In 2005, the number of violent incidents against journalists rose in Mexico (CNDH 3 July 2005; Abizaid 21 July 2005; SourceMex 20 Apr. 2005). Mexico's National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH) says that the nature of the offences committed against journalists has escalated and that their risk of facing organized crime has increased (3 July 2005).

PRODH reported 33 cases of journalists who were victims of serious human rights violations (armed attack, kidnapping and at least 13 assassinations) under the presidency of Vicente Fox (Centro PRODH 17 June 2005).

According to some observers of human rights in Mexico, murders of journalists are no longer ordered by political authorities (AFP 3 May 2005) - they are ordered by drug traffickers (ibid.; SourceMex 20 Apr. 2005). Leonarda Reyes, from the Centre for Journalism and Public Ethics (Centre de journalisme et d'éthique publique), stated that [translation] "a similar authority [i.e. drug traffickers] applies the death penalty as it sees fit" (ibid.); José Carreno, director of journalism studies at the Ibero-American University in Mexico City, said that [translation] "out-of-control powers acting with great impunity" make investigative journalism - already rare in the country - even more difficult (*Miami Herald* 13 Apr. 2005).

Olga Abizaid, an expert on Mexico at Canadian FOCAL, says that most journalists affected by violence cover police activity, particularly in the area of drug trafficking, and are generally victims of organized crime (21 July 2005).

Since the beginning of 2005, three journalists have been murdered for reports denouncing corruption and ties between drug traffickers and the authorities or local businesses (AI 25 May 2005; *Miami Herald* 13 Apr. 2005; AFP 3 May 2005), whereas five were murdered in 2004 (ibid.; RSF 24 June 2005).

At the beginning of April 2005, Raúl Gibb Guerrero, a newspaper owner, was shot after publishing reports on drug trafficking in the state of Veracruz; shortly beforehand, a radio journalist was killed in the state of Tamaulipas (*Miami Herald* 13 Apr. 2005; SourceMex 20 Apr. 2005). In the state of Sonora, a reporter for the *El Imparcial* newspaper disappeared after writing a series of reports on drug cartels and on how they were planning to kill government officials; in the state of Tabasco, the daughter of a journalist was kidnapped and beaten (ibid.).

Some journalists have been poorly treated by government officials, and "excessively restrictive" laws on defamation, particularly in Chiapas), undermine freedom of expression to the point that the journalists can face fines while doing their job (AI 25 May 2005; HRW 13 Jan. 2005).

3.3 Women

The Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights visited Mexico in February 2005 and spoke about the problem that impunity for perpetrators of crimes against women causes (UN 2 Mar. 2005). She criticized the "lack of responsiveness of police [or prosecutors]," as well as the marginalization of indigenous women who encountered violence (ibid.).

A study conducted by the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (Instituto de Estadística Geografía e Informática, INEGI) reveals considerable differences with respect to violence against women from one state to another (Mexico 1 June 2004). For the country as a whole, 46.6 per cent of women said that they were a victim of at least one act of violence in 2003; the rate for Sonora was 49.8 per cent (ibid.) and for Chihuahua, 46.3 per cent (ibid.). One source indicated that the actual definition of spousal abuse can differ from one state to another (Abizaid 21 July 2005).

A preliminary report by the Mexican Congress indicated that an increasing number of women are being murdered in Mexico City and in the states of Baja California, Chiapas and Veracruz, followed by the states of Campeche, Chihuahua, Mexico and Morelos (IPS 28 Mar. 2005). Statistics for 2004 provided by state prosecutors reveal that 112 women were murdered in the northern state of Baja California, 203 in Chiapas, 204 in Veracruz, and 106 in Mexico City (ibid.).

Several sources criticized the many murders of women in Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua) and the lack of measures to fight this violence (Centro PRODH 4 Apr. 2005; AI 25 May 2005; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1).

3.4 Homosexuals

A report by the Citizens' Commission Against Hate Crimes (Comisión Ciudadana contra Crímenes de Odio) estimates that 75 per cent of murders of a homophobic nature are not reported (*La Jornada* 16 May 2005). Based on the same report, the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Consejo Nacional Para Prevenir la Discriminación, CONAPRED) denounced the murders of 290 homosexuals between 1995 and 2003 (275 men and 15 women) (Mexico n.d.c).

The federal state in which the most murders of homosexuals occurred was the Federal District (126), followed by the states of Mexico (62), Veracruz (37) and Michoacán (15) (ibid.; *La Jornada* 16 May 2005).¹

In his *Sexual Orientation and Human Rights in the Americas* report, Andrew Reding pointed out that the situation of homosexuals has improved because of political and legal gains for sexual minorities, especially in the metropolitan areas (Mexico City) and tourist destinations (Acapulco, Cancún) but not in smaller areas, where discrimination continues (Dec. 2003).

Raymundo Sandoval Bautista, from PRODH's educational processes section, stated that [translation] "homosexuals often have to move because of physical or social threats" (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005). The lack of tolerance toward homosexuals is visible throughout Mexico (Abizaid 21 July 2005). In addition, homosexuals' right to work is sometimes challenged (ibid.).

NOTES

¹ In 2003, there were 8,813,276 inhabitants in the Federal District, 14,217,493 in the state of Mexico, 7,251,304 in the state of Veracruz and 4,198,576 in the state of Michoacán (UN 2005). [\[back\]](#)

4. INTERNAL FLIGHT ALTERNATIVES

4.1 General

The population of Mexico, which totals over 100 million inhabitants (Leclerc 30 Mar. 2005, preface) across approximately two million square kilometres (Mexico n.d.d), is about 65 per cent mixed origin—Spanish and Amerindian (Métis)—20 per cent indigenous and 15 per cent White (generally direct descendants of Europeans) (*ibid.*, Sec. 2.1). Some 62 ethnic minorities in Mexico make up 12 per cent of the population and are situated mostly in the southern states (Veracruz, Yucatán, Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero) (NRC 20 June 2005, 5).

The social, ethnic and linguistic characteristics of the mainly indigenous regions can make movement and adaptation for these individuals more difficult (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005). The Norwegian Refugee Council identifies the difficulties encountered by some internally displaced indigenous people from Chiapas who have no identity documents and who do not speak Spanish and who, therefore, risk being ignored by government aid programs and being denied access to credit and to public education programs (NRC 20 June 2005).

According to the fourth report, published on 1 September 2004, by Vicente Fox's government, nearly 890,000 individuals in Mexico migrated from one state to another between June 2003 and June 2004 (Mexico 1 Sept. 2004). The state of Quintana Roo, which owes [translation] "almost half of its annual demographic growth to migratory movement" (*ibid.*), received the most migrants in relation to its population. In absolute terms, migrants mainly leave the Federal District and migrate to the state of Mexico (*ibid.*).

Twenty-two million people live in the urban areas of the state of Mexico and in Mexico City (AFP 4 July 2005). Every year, the population of the state of Mexico increases by 350,000 people, and 58 per cent of the inhabitants come from poor regions and are [translation] "drawn by the economic dream" (*ibid.*)

Jean-François Prud'homme, a professor at the Colegio de México, said that the economic inequality has consequences for access to migration measures but that there is total freedom of movement in Mexico (3 Aug. 2005).

Olga Abizaid specified that, for security and safety reasons, Article 11 of the Constitution both guarantees and restricts freedom of movement (21 July 2005). No document is required for migrating within the country (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005; Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005), but migrants may be asked to show official identification (*ibid.*). Following the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, migration is controlled more often and travellers are increasingly required to carry their passport or voter's registration card (Abizaid 21 July 2005). Controls at bus terminals can be explained by the growing pressure on Mexico from the United States to control population movement in the country (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005). Furthermore, freedom of transportation is restricted in the area where the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) is present, namely, in Chiapas (Abizaid 21 July 2005).

Madeleine Desnoyers, regional officer for the Americas for Montreal's Rights and Democracy, says that the matter of financial means is important to Mexicans who have neither the means to migrate nor family who can provide them with lodging (7 July 2005). Individuals who are well known may also be unable to settle elsewhere (Desnoyers 7 July 2005).

It is difficult to say whether a person can settle elsewhere in complete security if the reason for his or her displacement is unknown (Desnoyers 7 July 2005).

4.1.1 Corruption

Corruption is widespread in the police (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Intro.; Desnoyers 7 July 2005) and criminal justice systems (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.d.; Desnoyers 7 July 2005). The many cases of public killings are reason for Mexicans' distrust of these systems (ibid.).

According to Madeleine Desnoyers, some sources indicate that the army is involved in drug trafficking and that secret trafficking networks exist in the police and the armed forces (7 July 2005). Recent events in Nuevo Laredo illustrate the police's and the army's involvement in drug trafficking (BBC 15 June 2005; AP 22 June 2005; US 26 Apr. 2005; DPA 15 June 2005). In January 2004, the involvement of 17 police officers from Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua) in a drug trafficking network brought to light police corruption and the impunity that corrupt police granted to members of the drug cartels at the expense of public safety (*Washington Post* 30 Jan. 2004; *Latin America and Mexico NAFTA Report* 10 Feb. 2004).

According to Raymundo Sandoval Bautista, agents of [translation] "persecution" could be ordinary citizens just as easily as they could be state officials (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005). According to Jean-François Prud'homme,

[translation]

. . . problems that vulnerable people could face are more associated with the fragility of the state of law, the lack of professionalism in the police forces and the existence of possibly delinquent social networks that could eventually represent threats for these individuals. It is a matter of dismissing the state's systematic action plans and addressing these problems from the perspective of deficiencies in how the democratic state operates. The actions of public or private agents of persecution must be interpreted in this context (3 Aug. 2005).

4.2 Traceability of people in Mexico

4.2.1 Public documents and registration systems

The responsibility for issuing certificates and maintaining public records falls within the jurisdiction of the 31 state governments and the government of the Federal District (the applicable rules are slightly different in the Federal District) (US 22 Apr. 2005). For example, birth and marriage certificates are registered and kept in the central archives of the states (ibid.) and can be consulted in the local civil registries (ibid. n.d.). However, military certificates are issued by the federal government (ibid. 22 Apr. 2005).

According to Raymundo Sandoval Bautista, the information in the registries, which corresponds with the documents issued by the federal government, can be exchanged between the various administrations involved (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005).

The most extensive registry in Mexico is the register of civil status (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005). However, no cards are issued based on information in the register, and Mexicans' names and addresses are not updated in it (ibid.).

The documents that are most often used as pieces of identification are the voter's registration card and the Population Register Identification Number (Clave Unica de Registro de Población, CURP) (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005; Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005) given to an individual at birth (Abizaid 21 July 2005), as well as the driver's licence, the military card (ibid.), the birth certificate (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005) and the passport (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005). The voter's registration card is used most commonly (ibid.) and has become [translation] "the ultimate identity card" (Abizaid 21 July 2005).

4.2.2 Voter's registration card

Electoral law does not require citizens to be registered in the registry of electors or to have an voter's registration card (Mexico 5 July 2005.). However, in order to vote, Mexican citizens must

be at least 18 years old, must be listed in the registry of electors and must have a voter's registration card with a photograph on it (credencial para votar) (*ibid.* n.d.f; *ibid.* 5 July 2005).

The voter's registration card is issued by the Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral, IFE), a public, permanent and independent organization that is responsible for organizing the federal elections (Mexico 5 July 2005). The IFE was established on 11 October 1990 and falls under the jurisdiction of Mexico's federal code of institutions and electoral procedures (*ibid.*).

If a Mexican of voting age wants to obtain an voter's registration card, he or she must go to an IFE office to fill out a registration form and be photographed (the photograph will be included on the voter's registration card) (*ibid.* n.d.f). This card has [translation] "many security features that guarantee the highest confidentiality" (*ibid.* n.d.f).

The voter's registration card bears the voter's name, age and sex, the year of his or her registration in the registry of electors, a personal identification number (made up of the date of birth, a few letters from the surname and given name, and randomly selected numbers) and the voting office that corresponds with the voter's address (*ibid.* 5 July 2005). According to the IFE, since 1997, the electors lists prepared using the registry of electors, for local and federal elections, include electors' photographs (*ibid.* n.d.g).

A sample voter's registration card may be viewed at the following Web address: <<http://www.ife.org.mx/InternetCDA/Credencial/index.jsp#requisitos>>. The elector's fingerprint is visible on the back of the card.

Within the IFE, the federal registry of electors division manages the database of electors (*ibid.* 5 July 2005). Magalí Amieva, from the IFE's international affairs division, stated that the information gathered is used only to establish electors lists for the federal elections; it is strictly confidential, protected by law and cannot be shared with any other administration, whether it is public, private or foreign (*ibid.*; see also Privacy International 16 Nov. 2004) except in the case of legal obligations or an order of justice (*ibid.*).

Jean-François Prud'homme said that the registry has had problems with confidentiality in the past and that [translation] "the registry's administration is directly dependent on the IFE, an independent public organization" (3 Aug. 2005). Mr. Prud'homme noted that it is [translation] "certainly the most up-to-date registry in Mexico" (*ibid.*).

According to the IFE, the registry of electors is permanent and it is citizens' responsibility to provide their changes of address because their [translation] "registration and voting location depends on their place of residence" (Mexico n.d.f). In May 2004, an officer from the Mexican embassy in Ottawa told the Research Directorate that a citizen has 30 days to make a change of address with the IFE but that the citizen is not penalized if he or she fails to comply with that deadline (*ibid.* 19 May 2004). If the change of address is not made, letters from the voting office will continue to be sent to the individual's last known address (*ibid.*).

According to the IFE, of the 60 million Mexicans of voting age in 2000, 58 million were registered and 56 million had an voter's registration card (*ibid.* n.d.g).

The voter's registration card is accepted as a piece of identification in banks (*ibid.* 5 July 2005; *Business Wire* 7 June 2005), stores and government organizations (*ibid.* 7 June 2005), and it is considered to be more reliable than driver's licences, which are issued by state governments (Mexico 5 July 2005). An American company said that since March 2004, it has produced over 10 million voter's registration cards, which it gave to Mexico's IFE; the company plans to provide between 20 and 27 million more to the IFE (*Business Wire* 7 June 2005).

Jim Hodgson, area secretary for the Caribbean and Latin America at the United Church of Canada, said that the voter's registration card is "necessary for many common transactions involving banks, public offices and the police" (28 June 2005). According to Jim Hodgson, since the voter's registration card is used extensively as a piece of identification and since there is a lack of protection of the information in databases of public institutions in general, it is easy to find someone in Mexico (Hodgson 28 June 2005; *ibid.* 2 Aug. 2005). Jim Hodgson also stated that the

extensive use of the voter's registration card makes it easy for the police to find a person using the IFE's database (*ibid.*). The Research Directorate could not find concrete examples of this use of the database among the sources consulted.

Furthermore, an 18 June 2003 article in *Latinamerica Press* stated that the information in the IFE's registry was sold illegally to ChoicePoint, a company in Atlanta, United States, and that this company re-sold the information to the United States Department of Justice (see also PI 16 Nov. 2004). The articles stated that

[f]our thousand underpaid IFE officials in 32 states had access to the voter registration lists, which were contained on a series of easily-copied CDs. In addition, the political parties, whose veniality is legendary, all had access to the discs (*Latinamerica Press* 18 June 2003).

4.2.3 Federal taxpayers register (*Registro Federal de Contribuyentes*)

Workers must register with the federal taxpayers register (Mexico 9 June 2004). To register, they must report to the tax administration service (Servicio de Administración Tributaria, SAT) according to their place of residence and submit a duly completed form, as well as other required documents, such as a birth certificate, proof of tax domicile and official identification (*ibid.*). A tax registration card is then issued to the taxpayer (*ibid.*).

The SAT estimates that nearly eight million Mexicans are still not listed on the taxpayers register or paying taxes, although they should be (*El Universal* 19 May 2005). Another source indicates that tax evasion is a widespread problem in Mexico but that no reforms in this area are planned for 2005 (Economist Intelligence Unit 24 March 2005). According to Jean-François Prud'homme, approximately 40 per cent of the economically active population [translation] "are not part of formal-sector employment and Mexico is an American country with one of the lowest rates of ability to tax (11 or 12 per cent of GDP), which casts doubt on the effectiveness of the federal taxpayers register" (3 Aug. 2005).

During the first quarter of 2005, just over 26,000 names were recorded in the register during a voluntary registration campaign, even though the Mexican congress had not released the funds required for an actual 2005 census of taxable persons (*El Universal* 19 May 2005).

4.2.4 Population Register Identification Number (*Clave Única de Registro de Población*)

Approximately 75 million people have registered using the Population Register Identification Number (Clave Única de Registro de Población, CURP) (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005). The CURP [translation] "enables all inhabitants of Mexico—including foreign residents and Mexicans living abroad—to register with federal departments and organizations" (Mexico n.d.i).

The National Population Register (*Registro Nacional de Población*, RENAPO) issues the CURP (Mexico 1 July 2005). Nearly eight million identification numbers were assigned between September 2003 and August 2004; in August 2004, the RENAPO database contained the names of 105,439,199 people (*ibid.* 1 Sept. 2004).

According to Jim Hodgson, more public service employees have access to that database than to the IFE database (2 Aug. 2005). The RENAPO has had problems consolidating information since the beginning of this century (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005).

Privacy International, a non-profit human rights group based in London that acts as "a watchdog on surveillance and privacy invasions by governments and corporations" and conducts public awareness campaigns on these topics (PI 5 Jan. 2005), stated that the CURP provides each citizen with "direct access to multiple personal data" (*ibid.* 16 Nov. 2004). However, no specific case of the CURP's being used to track down a person could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The government organizations involved in the project to [translation] "coordinate the personal identification registration" issue a Public Administration Identification Card (Credencial Única de la Administración Pública) to their employees and clients (Mexico n.d.i). This card bears the holder's CURP and other information; however, [translation] "each agency can include details that it deems useful, as long as they are not used for advertising or political purposes" (ibid.).

President Fox's fourth government report noted that measures had been taken [translation] "to increase cooperation between the institutions that issue identification documents at all three levels of government" (ibid. 1 Sept. 2004). Moreover, a project launched in December 2004 aimed to homogenize [translation] "the issuance and registration of a single, multipurpose document" (ibid.).

4.2.5 Other national registers or databases

Liliana Sanchez Pichardo, an employee of Mexico's Health Department, stated that there is no list of people with government medical coverage (*ibid.* 13 July 2005). The Institute for Security and Social Services for Public Service Employees (Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado, ISSSTE) covers government employees, while the Mexican Social Security Institute (Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, IMSS) covers employees in the private sector (ibid.).

According to the Mexican Social Security Act, employers must register their employees with the IMSS for them to be covered (*ibid.* n.d.h). An employer indicates when an employee's job begins or is terminated, as well as changes in his or her salary, by completing different forms that can be downloaded from the Internet via the Tramitanet service (ibid.).

Anyone who is not covered by one of the two systems can submit an application to the Department of Health (ibid. 13 July 2005). The department's social security division (Seguro social) offers minimal health care coverage (ibid.). An employee of that department added that, in the case of emergencies, patients are given first aid, and their ability to pay the fees is evaluated later (ibid.). Each hospital keeps its own records (ibid.).

According to Mexico's National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics [M1](Instituto de Estadística Geografía e Informática, INEGI), in 2004, more than 10 million people were covered by the ISSSTE and more than 42 million by the IMSS (*ibid.* 2 July 2004). The Centre for Economic and Political Research for Community Action (Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria, CIEPAC) in Chiapas stated that, as of 30 March 2005, 57.8 per cent of the Mexican population was not insured by the ISSSTE or the IMSS (CIEPAC 30 March 2005).

Moreover, CIEPAC condemned the manner in which the authorities recruit families to register for social security; in particular, it criticized the quantity of personal and family data collected from families in the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas in order to evaluate the costs related to their health care coverage (ibid.). One and a half million families are registered for social security (ibid.). CIEPAC noted that when a family registers for social security, they must use the health care services of the clinic they are assigned to (ibid.).

The passport register accounts for only a limited portion of the population (Prud'homme 3 Aug. 2005).

4.2.6 Federal Law for Transparency and Access to Public Government Information (Ley Federal de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública Gubernamental)

According to Privacy International, 24 laws address the right to privacy and the protection of personal information in Mexico (16 Nov. 2004).

The Federal Law for Transparency and Access to Public Government Information (*Ley Federal de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública Gubernamental*) addresses the Mexican population's access to information, as well as the protection of personal data collected by

various government institutions (Mexico n.d.e; *ibid.* 2002). The law covers the transfer of personal information by different government agencies; while prohibiting the transfer of personal information for commercial purposes, it does allow the sharing of personal information for statistical use or when required by court order (*ibid.*).

Implemented in 2002 by the Fox administration, the law has already shown positive results in reducing corruption (*El Universal* 14 July 2005c; International Relations Center 15 March 2005); however, "state governments must adopt their own versions of the law to enforce it" (*ibid.*). In August 2004, 17 states (Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Coahuila, Mexico, Nuevo León, Jalisco, Querétaro, Colima, San Luis Potosí, Aguascalientes, Michoacán, Durango, Morelos, Zacatecas, Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Veracruz[M2]) adopted [translation] "active" transparency laws (*ibid.*).

According to recent information, the local authorities responsible for enforcing the law frequently disregard it, and the legal measures taken by government authorities to contest the law create serious obstacles to public access to information (*El Universal* 14 July 2005c; International Relations Center 15 March 2005). One of the advantages of the law is that it standardizes "the principles under which the diverse organs of the State shall manage a citizen's personal data" (PI 16 Nov. 2004). However, "the law lacks sufficient protections to provide greater levels of security for the processing of private data" (*ibid.*).

The Federal Institute of Access to Public Information (Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información Pública, IFAI) is an independent organization responsible for ensuring that the law is enforced by the various federal government agencies in Mexico (Mexico n.d.e; PI 16 Nov. 2004). Mexico has no law or organization to regulate the use of personal information by private entities (*ibid.*).

On 15 June 2003, Colima became the first state to enact such a privacy and data protection law (*ibid.*). According to Privacy International, it is not yet known "how that law is working in practice" (*ibid.*).

4.2.7 Telephone systems

Information on the possibility of tracking down a person through the telephone systems was limited among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the following information may be useful.

The company Teléfonos de Mexico (Telmex) has a stronghold on 95 per cent of local telephony (*Business Wire* 26 Jan. 2005; Economist Intelligence Unit 1 Mar. 2005). The dominance of Telmex has made access to fixed-line telephony "relatively expensive," but "cellular telephony has wide coverage and is becoming more competitive" (*ibid.* 24 Mar. 2005; US 14 June 2005). Moreover, "mobile subscribers far outnumber fixed-line subscribers" (*ibid.*): mobile telephones numbered 40 million in 2004, compared with 17 million fixed-line telephones (*El Financiero* 18 May 2005).

The Economist Intelligence Unit listed Avantel as the second biggest telecom company; Axtel, Maxcom and Alestra are other local telephone service providers (1 Mar. 2005). Telcel controls 75 per cent of the mobile market (Economist Intelligence Unit 1 Mar. 2005). Telefónica Móviles (TEM) has emerged as the second largest player in the mobile market with 2.7 million users in the fourth quarter of 2002, while Telcel users numbered only 19.4 million (*ibid.*). Other mobile service operators include Iusacell, Nextel and Unefón (*ibid.*).

Telephone service for the general population is poor, particularly in rural areas (*ibid.*; *ibid.* 24 March 2005). Mexico's Federal Telecommunications Commission (Comisión Federal de Telecomunicaciones, COFETEL) reported that 53,917 towns with 100 to 499 inhabitants had rural telephone service in 2003, compared with 38,368 in 1998 and 16,815 in 1993 (Mexico 2004a).

COFETEL also indicated that eight states had a telephony density of less than ten telephone lines per one hundred inhabitants, while four states and the Federal District had a density of more than twenty telephone lines per one hundred inhabitants (*ibid.* 2004b). The Federal District stands out with nearly 40 lines per 100 inhabitants, while the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas

are at the other extreme with telephone densities of 5.8 and 4.7 telephone lines per 100 inhabitants, respectively (ibid.). The national average is 15.8 (ibid.).

To obtain telephone service from Telmex, a client must go to a Telmex store, present a piece of identification and proof of address, and pay for the installation of the telephone line (Telmex n.d.). In the case of a change of address, the subscriber must present official identification and the receipts of the last three payments made (ibid.). A credit card is required to obtain a mobile telephone (Abizaid 21 July 2005).

A page on the Telmex Website offers an online white pages (*paginas blancas*) service, enabling anyone to find the addresses and telephone numbers of 10 million Telmex residential clients (Telmex 2005). A person can request a private line; information for this type of line is not made public [translation] "unless the authorities require it for verification purposes" (Abizaid 21 July 2005).

Transparency International reported that Telmex was the only private Mexican company "to have worsened its corruption rating between 2001 and 2003 . . . [t]here was an increase in the number of bribes paid to company employees to speed up the process of getting phone lines hooked up" (*El Universal* 17 March 2005).

4.2.8 Police forces (sharing of information and databases on criminals)

The "Inter-Agency Coordination" section of the May 2004 Issue Paper on the Mexican police published by the Research Directorate provides a number of details on the cooperation and the sharing of information between the federal, state and municipal police forces. Another Issue Paper on state protection was published in May 2005. Both Issue Papers address the matter of pervading police corruption.

A public announcement from the United States Department of State recently noted that "Mexico's police forces suffer from lack of funds and training" (26 Apr. 2005).

Coordination between the federal and state police forces is also lacking, and there have been reports of conflicts between them: an attack on two federal preventive police officers in November 2004 in Tlahuac (DF) and, more recently, violent confrontations in the border town of Nuevo Laredo (Abizaid 21 July 2005). On November 23 in Tlahuac, two undercover agents conducting an investigation into drug trafficking were killed by a mob that believed they were attempting to abduct children (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.a.; Abizaid 21 July 2005).

The consolidation of police forces' intelligence systems would certainly make their work more effective; however, surveillance mechanisms and local informant networks already exist, and different police forces cooperate with one another when they have common interests (ibid.).

The government's Operation Safe Mexico (*México Seguro*) aims to increase cooperation between the different police forces, improve the gathering of information on organized crime, and eliminate police corruption at the municipal level (Abizaid 21 July 2005). This program, recently implemented in certain northern states of Mexico, was expanded to include the entire country (*La Jornada* 1 July 2005).

Although a number of databases relating to crime and justice were created in 1995, Mexico has no record system of "positive identification of offenders, such as a fingerprint or biometric system, to identify people" (US 3 March 2003, Sec. V.11.A). The record systems that do exist "provide public security statistics and share information with every state on criminals who have been charged, indicted, processed, and sentenced" (ibid.).

5. SITUATION BY REGION

5.1 General

Political violence appears to be increasing at the local level, particularly in the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas, where members of opposition parties are often the targets of the violence (Abizaid 21 July 2005).

According to an article in the magazine *Human Organization*, published by the Society for Applied Anthropology in the United States, most of the drug trafficking cartels are headquartered in "the traditional insurgency states of the southwest," that is, in Guerrero and Chiapas, as well as in Jalisco, Sinaloa, and all the northern border states (1 July 2005).

A 2004 report by Transparency International defined corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" and indicated that between 2001 and 2003, the situation had improved in 20 states while it had deteriorated in 11 others. The highest level of corruption was recorded in San Luis Potosí (*El Universal* 17 March 2005). The Federal District is also among the states that receive the most corruption complaints (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 3).

Southern Mexico participates less in the country's economy, and average salaries are lower than in the north, in the centre and in the Federal District (Abizaid 21 July 2005). Moreover, "the skills of workers and degree of technical expertise vary from state to state reflecting different patterns of economic development" (Economist Intelligence Unit 24 March 2005). A 2005 United Nations (UN) Human Development report indicated the differences in the quality of life in Mexico: According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report, certain areas of "Mexico City and the industrial hub of Monterrey in the north could be compared to rich European cities, but other parts of the capital and rural areas in the south of the country" are much poorer (26 Oct. 2004). The town of Metlatonoc, in the southern state of Guerrero, was found to be the poorest in Mexico (BBC 26 Oct. 2004). Oaxaca and Chiapas had the lowest human development indexes (UN 2005, 3[RCK3]).

According to data from the 2000 census, the five states with the largest proportion of indigenous peoples are the five poorest in terms of the human development index: Puebla, Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas (Mexico n.d.a). CONAPRED also reported that [translation] "50 per cent of the houses located in indigenous areas have no electricity, 68 per cent have no running water, 90 per cent have no sewage system and 76 per cent have dirt floors" (ibid.). Based on data from a 2003 study conducted by a citizens' inquiry on discrimination, CONAPRED affirmed that indigenous women experience discrimination on three different levels - they [translation] "are more vulnerable" because they are women, indigenous and poor (ibid.).

"A group of indigenous workers from Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Veracruz claimed to local police that they had been brought to the State of Chihuahua and forced to live and work in the fields under inhuman conditions" (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 6c). Moreover, the authorities do not enforce child labour laws (HRW 14 Jan. 2005), so children work on tobacco plantations, for example, and have serious health problems (Mexico n.d.b; see also *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 6.d., for information on agricultural child labour in the states of Guanajuato, Sonora, Sinaloa and Baja California).

"The states that receive the most complaints from people suffering from HIV [are] the Federal District, Nuevo Leon, Jalisco, and Mexico" (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). The most often-cited complaint was the denial of medical services to HIV patients (ibid.).

5.2 North

(Northern Baja California, Southern Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila de Zaragoza, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Durango, Zacatecas, Nayarit, San Luis Potosí)

In Nayarit, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) won the state governorship on 3 July 2005 (*The Economist* 7 July 2005). For its part, the PRD successfully retained control of Southern Baja California when its candidate, Narciso Agúndez, won by a margin of 10 points (*Latin American Mexico and NAFTA Report* Feb. 2005). The PRD also retained the governorship of Zacatecas in the 2004 elections (ibid. 7 Dec. 2004). The PRI easily maintained its stronghold in Tamaulipas, while in Sinaloa it won with only one per cent more of the votes than the PAN candidate, a former PRI member, received (ibid.). The PRI also retained the governorship of Durango (ibid.).

The war on drugs is having consequences in northern Mexico: "According to reports in Mexican newspapers, at least 300 people have died in drug-related violence in six of the country's northern states" since the beginning of 2005 (*The Economist* 30 June 2005). The war between criminal organizations has resulted in "a wave of violence aimed primarily at members of trafficking organizations, criminal justice officials and journalists" (US 26 Apr. 2005). While the worst violence has been focused in Nuevo Laredo (Tamaulipas) (*ibid.*), sources stated that "hardly a day goes by without the discovery of a corpse - or corpses - in the states of Baja California, Sinaloa, and Chihuahua" (DPA 15 June 2005). One source reported that Sinaloa "is riddled with drug smugglers" (*Latin American Mexico and NAFTA Report* 7 Dec. 2004).

At the beginning of June 2005, the entire local police force in the border town of Nuevo Laredo was suspended, following the assassination of the new police chief (*Washington Post* 16 June 2005; *Latin American Weekly Report* 14 June 2005; *The Economist* 30 June 2005). The investigation led to the firing of 100 police officers (*ibid.*; BBC 20 July 2005). However, the 27 July 2005 issue of the *Miami Herald* reported that "about a third of Nuevo Laredo's 700 police officers were fired" and that federal agents and soldiers will patrol the streets alongside the police officers that have resumed their duties. On 19 July 2005, two more police officers were slain, bringing the number of police killed in Nuevo Laredo in 2005 to at least 10 (*The Dallas Morning News* 21 July 2005; BBC 20 July 2005).

Another police chief, this time in Chihuahua, was shot dead on 6 June 2005 (*Latin American Weekly Report* 14 June 2005). Rivalries between cartels left five people dead in Culiacán (Sinaloa) on 14 July 2005 (*El Universal* 14 July 2005b).

Moreover, the former police chief of Escuinapa (Sinaloa) was accused of having been involved in the murder of a journalist in November 2004 (*ibid.* 14 July 2005a).

Women are violently attacked and frequently murdered in Ciudad Juarez in the state of Chihuahua, where serious criminal investigations are lacking (AI 25 May 2005; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). Although the number of murders committed had decreased since 2003, the bodies of at least 16 women were found in Ciudad Juarez in 2004 (*ibid.*; AI 25 May 2005). Many reported cases of murdered women are not investigated or are given little attention by the police (Desnoyers 7 July 2005; Abizaid 21 July 2005). According to Olga Abizaid, most murder victims are migrant women from the south of Mexico (21 July 2005).

5.3 Centre

(Aguascalientes, Colima, Hidalgo, State of Mexico, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Morelos, Querétaro, Tlaxcala)

The PRI candidate, Enrique Peña, swept the 3 July 2005 elections for the governorship of the State of Mexico, which political observers described as the "key" state in the Mexican presidential race (BBC 4 July 2005). Just over 40 per cent of the electorate exercised their right to vote in the state election (*Latin America Weekly Report* 5 July 2005). This was the "last important state vote before the presidential election in July 2006" (*The Economist* 7 July 2005).

In 2004, the PAN claimed victory over the PRI and PRD in the states of Tlaxcala and Aguascalientes (*Latin American Mexico and NAFTA Report* 7 Dec. 2004). In February 2005, PRI candidate, Miguel Angel Osorio Chong became the new governor of the state of Hidalgo (*Latin American Weekly Report* 1 Mar. 2005).

Escalating violence was also reported in Jalisco and states along the Mexico-United States border following the implementation of Operation Safe Mexico in June 2005 (*The Dallas Morning News* 5 Aug. 2005).

On 21 June 2005, a prominent gay rights activist was found murdered in Querétaro (*Weekly News Update on the Americas* 26 June 2005; AI 6 July 2005).

The human rights deputy attorney recently announced that an investigation into the disappearance of three youths in Colima in June 2001 revealed that no federal agents were involved (*La Jornada* 3 June 2005).

5.4 South

(Michoacán, Puebla, Chiapas, Guerrero, Tabasco, Veracruz, Villahermosa, Oaxaca, Yucatán, Campeche, Quintana Roo)

On 6 February 2005, the PRI lost the governorship of the state of Guerrero, "one of its southern bastions," for the first time (*Latin American Mexico and NAFTA Report* Feb. 2005; *ibid.* Mar. 2005). The same day, the PRI candidate managed to retain his position as governor of Quintana Roo (*ibid.* Feb. 2005). The states of Puebla (14 November 2004 election) and Veracruz (earlier in 2004) remained in the hands of the PRI (*ibid.* 7 Dec. 2004).

One source questioned the political motives for the attack on three police stations in Guerrero on the eve of the election (*The New York Times* 7 Feb. 2005). Political violence marked local elections in Oaxaca, Chiapas and Guerrero (AI 25 May 2005). In Chiapas, political tensions are at the heart of the conflicts against members of the PRD and the Zapatistas in particular (NRC 20 June 2005).

In certain regions, the displacement of people is more significant; such is the case in Chiapas, where displacements have been caused by the presence of the Mexican army, Zapatistas (Desnoyers 7 July 2005), and paramilitary groups affiliated with the PRI and PRD (Abizaid 21 July 2005). Critics have voiced their opinions on the role of the Mexican authorities in the continuous marginalization of indigenous populations, particularly in Oaxaca and Chiapas (AI 25 May 2005; NRC 20 June 2005, 10). On this topic, the Norwegian Refugee Council indicated that in 2005, 10,000 to 12,000 people were still displaced in Chiapas and that "the conditions that lead to violence and displacement still prevail" (*ibid.*).

Therefore, certain municipal authorities supporting the PRD have deprived communities that support the Zapatistas of basic services, such as running water—a political pressure that infringes on the right to live, on freedom of movement, and on access to sacred places in those communities (*ibid.*). Poverty and the lack of government services in regions held by the Zapatistas have resulted in a number of departures to the United States or to the very interior of the State of Chiapas (*Los Angeles Times* 2 July 2005).

According to Olga Abizaid, no Mexican government agency is responsible for monitoring the movements of internally displaced persons (21 July 2005).

On 9 June 2005, after being threatened by the paramilitary group Peace and Justice (Paz y Justicia), 15 families fled the town of Andrés Quintana Roo in Chiapas but were forced to return because of climate conditions (Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas 17 June 2005). Fear and tension persist; men are not working on their plots of land; and five families had to move again on 3 July 2005, following repeated intimidations (*ibid.*; *ibid.* 19 July 2005). The Norwegian Refugee Council has also denounced the paramilitary groups that are behind the violence and displacements (20 June 2005).

A representative of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Centre has denounced the militarization of the country and of Chiapas in particular: ninety-one military camps are still in operation (Centro PRODH 4 Apr. 2005). According to Centro PRODH, the serious human rights violations observed in that state - particularly sexual violence against indigenous women - are a result of the military presence in certain communities (*ibid.*). Natives in Chiapas are often interrogated at military checkpoints that are still in place (NRC 20 June 2005).

In January 2005, Paracho (Michoacán) became the first Zapatista municipality outside Chiapas (*Latin American Weekly Report* 4 Jan. 2005; Europa World Online 2003-2005). In August 2003, the EZLN proclaimed the independence of 30 municipalities in Chiapas (*ibid.*; NRC 20 June 2005).

Police corruption and political motives are apparently behind the authorities' failure to take action against human rights violations in Guerrero: Guerrero's Human Rights Commission reported that, in 2004, 20 police force employees charged with various crimes - from murder to rape - were still at large (*Duluth News-Tribune* 1 Aug. 2004). The Guerrero Association for Families of Disappeared Victims also indicated that there are still cases of torture and abductions but that no one is being punished (*ibid.*).

In one case, a former agent of Mexico's Federal Investigation Agency (Agencia Federal de Investigación, AFI) threatened the life of the president and staff of a non-governmental organization based in Cancún (Quintana Roo) that operates three shelters for women and girls who have been victims of domestic violence in Mexico (AI 16 Feb. 2005).

The apathy of the authorities, who have not charged the soldiers responsible for raping indigenous women in Guerrero, was denounced by Amnesty International (*ibid.* 23 Nov. 2004; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5).

According to Amnesty International, Felipe Arreaga Sánchez, an environmental activist from Guerrero, was arrested in November 2004 and charged with murder and criminal conspiracy for political reasons (AI 12 Nov. 2004). On 19 May 2005, "a leader in the campesino environmental movement in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero" and his four sons were ambushed (*Weekly News Update on the Americas* 29 May 2005). Two of his sons were killed when their vehicle was machine-gunned (*ibid.*; DPA 15 June 2005).

5.5 Federal District of Mexico

Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador resigned as mayor of Mexico City on 26 July 2005 (his duties ended officially on 29 July 2005) in order to run in the country's presidential race (*EI Universal* 26 July 2005; AP 30 July 2005).

Recent statistics indicate that Mexico City has the highest number of abductions, followed by Bogotá and São Paulo (194 abductions from January to June 2005, compared with 172 and 169, respectively) (*EI Universal* 4 Aug. 2005).

The Mexico City metropolitan area has 100 businesses that cater to a gay clientele (*The Economist* 19 May 2005). The annual gay parade held on 25 June 2005 attracted 15,000 people, according to police estimates, whereas organizers put the number closer to 30,000 (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, because the gay population in Mexico City is higher than elsewhere in the country, more gay murders are committed there (Mexico n.d.c; *La Jornada* 16 May 2005). Approximately 30 people are murdered in Mexico City every year "solely because of their sexual orientation" (IPS 24 June 2005). Of the 126 murders of gays committed in Mexico City between 1995 and 2003, most remain "unsolved and unpunished" (*ibid.*).

According to Raymundo Sandoval Bautista, the PRODH, located in the Federal District, receives 30 complaints every year from people with HIV/AIDS who are battling discrimination (21 July 2005). In general, those people file complaints for [translation] "violence, threats, loss of employment, and refusal of medical coverage" (Sandoval Bautista 21 July 2005). Some cases of discrimination are handed over to the police, who do not enforce the laws; this discourages people from filing complaints, which, according to Raymundo Sandoval Bautista, means that the number of complaints recorded every year (30) is not an accurate indication of the magnitude of the problem (*ibid.*).

NOTES ON SELECTED SOURCES

Abizaid, Olga

Olga Abizaid is an expert on Mexico at the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL). She is also co-editor of the organization's newsletter.

Desnoyers, Madeleine

Madeleine Desnoyers is the Americas regional officer for the human rights organization Rights and

Democracy. She has testified on human rights in Mexico before the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the Canadian House of Commons.

Hodgson, Jim

Jim Hodgson is the area secretary for the Caribbean and Latin America at the United Church of Canada. He has worked as a journalist in Cuernavaca (Morelos) and as secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Prud'homme, Jean-François

Jean-François Prud'homme is a professor at the *Colegio de México*. He specializes in the comparative politics of political institutions in Mexico and Latin America.

Sandoval Bautista, José Raymundo

José Raymundo Sandoval Bautista has been involved in the educational processes program at the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, PRODH) since November 2000. His duties include working with HIV/AIDS victims of discrimination and with members of the gay community.

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