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## **“State of Censorship” Report: Introduction**

Over the first two years of Enrique Peña Nieto’s term in office, the average number of attacks against freedom of expression in Mexico rose significantly. In the six year period prior to his inauguration, 1,092 attacks were recorded, an average of 182 per year. However, in the first two years of the current Administration, the recorded figure was 656; 330 of which occurred in 2013 and 326 in 2014. This represents an average of 328 attacks per year. Under the Felipe Calderón Hinojosa Administration, a reporter was attacked every 48.1 hours while with Peña Nieto, the figure stands at 26.7 hours.

In relation to serious attacks on the press, during Peña Nieto’s term, nine reporters have been killed. Four took place in 2013 and five in 2014.

Furthermore, the disappearance of 10 journalists were documented during the previous government - a yearly average of 1.6 – whereas the figure has risen to two per year in the current Administration.

47.8 percent of journalists attacked in 2014 worked in print media; 20.8 percent worked in digital media; and another 16 percent worked in radio and television.

The remaining 13.4 percent were independent journalists and human rights defenders working on monitoring protests.

Attacks against female reporters increased considerably. Over the six year Felipe Calderón Administration, 192 women suffered some type of attack due to their professional reporting activities, making for an average of 32 per year, while during the current Administration, 122 attacks have been committed: 59 in 2013 and 63 in 2014.

Impunity stands as the common denominator of both Administrations. Both federal and local judiciary bodies have allowed these attacks to continue. No one has been sentenced for any of the grave attacks recorded. Furthermore, where investigations have progressed, the judiciary have failed to make a link between the crime and victims’ occupation.

In a double attack on the press, the state, which has the obligation to ensure the necessary conditions for the free flow of information, physically assaulted, threatened and intimidated communicators, with impunity. In 2014, 56 percent of those responsible for the attacks were civil servants.

In this context, there have been more attacks perpetrated by police officers during Peña Nieto’s Administration. Since 2013, an average of 150 journalists were physically attacked, 48 were threatened, 46 intimidated and 41 were arbitrarily detained by members of the security forces.

Although the development of digital platforms has increased the availability of information for the public, reporters who use these tools to report freely, face attempts of imposing censure on them through violence.

In 2014, attacks occurring over the internet and social media against reporters working in digital media or using these platforms to disseminate information,

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accounted for 18 percent of the total. Last year, 56 assaults were recorded where the perpetrators used the internet and social networks to attack journalists and the media.

The contents of the weekly *Luces del Siglo*, based in Cancun, Quintana Roo, were falsified and shared via e-mail and social media 38 times. Twelve attacks were perpetrated against media portals that were critical of the government.

In the Federal District, attacks have increased by more than 70 percent, particularly attacks recorded during protest. Under the Calderón Administration, 98 attacks took place in Mexico's capital, an average of 16.3 per year. Under Peña Nieto it rose to 166; 81 in 2013 and 85 in 2014.

It is worth noting that Tamaulipas and Chihuahua, the most violent states for the press during the Felipe Calderón Administration, have seen violence decrease significantly under the present Administration. However, to a large extent, this decrease can be accounted for by the fear to report on issues that could threaten one's life, thereby generating widespread self-censorship.

The impunity with which attacks are perpetrated has generated a knock-on effect throughout the country. All of this occurs against a backdrop of a Federal Law, a protection mechanism and a "special" prosecuting unit to protect the press. That is, the Mexican government has all the legal tools to guarantee freedom of expression but not the will to make a significant change to allow Mexico to stop being one of the most dangerous countries for journalists.