Mexico: ARTICLE 19 condemns continued assault on its work and the press

In Mexico, freedom of expression is under siege and faces a hostile environment in which the stigmatising discourse from those in power and against human rights defenders and the press perpetuates violence.

Throughout the year, our Regional Office has documented that the Mexican press is attacked every 14 hours. So far, 12 journalists have been murdered because of their work. This situation has led to Mexico becoming the riskiest country for the press in the Americas.

For 15 years, ARTICLE 19, with the opening of the Regional Office for Mexico and Central America, has documented, highlighted and denounced restrictions against freedom of expression.

We also actively participated in the development of institutional mechanisms to achieve greater government transparency. Since opening, our organisation has supported and accompanied victims and marginalised voices, such as journalists within remote areas, women and indigenous communities. For these reasons, national and local power players have harassed and threatened the organisation and its members numerous times.

The most recent hostilities were triggered by the president’s attacks issued during his public morning press conferences throughout 2021. This year alone, the Regional Office was attacked on at least 18 occasions. For instance, the office and its staff were subjected to judicial harassment, death threats, threats against their integrity, smear campaigns, digital attacks such as DDoS and DDS, and the presence of unknown people outside the office and the homes of staff members. Additionally, and continuously, the organisation receives online attacks, verbal attacks, phishing attempts, and is forced to endure other acts of intimidation.

We denounce this publicly now, but prior to this, we have made similar denouncements before the relevant authorities. In some cases, open files currently sit with prosecution institutions.

So far, none of our complaints have led to effective investigations, and there has been a failure to identify those responsible for the attacks. Even worse, the authorities have not been able to stop the harassment against the organisation. It is difficult to stop the acts against us when ARTICLE 19 is considered to be an enemy of the government in power.

This situation contributed to the decision of the International Board of ARTICLE 19 to hold its biannual meeting in Mexico, as an act of solidarity with the staff and their work for freedom of expression in the region.

We want to make clear that the failure of the Mexican government to live up to their commitments to human rights and to endorse the work we do, reduces our ability to defend and and protect freedom of expression.

Our demand is straightforward: we seek the guarantee of the Mexican government to end hostilities against ARTICLE 19 in Mexico, and provide acceptable conditions for our pursuit of human rights.

We are part of a brave and courageous community of journalists and activists who shed light on acts of corruption and serious human rights violations. We stand in solidarity with these individuals and groups, and demand guarantees for their lives and integrity too.
Incidents and aggressions against ARTICLE 19

ARTICLE 19 has continued to be a beneficiary organization of the Federal Protection Mechanism. While protection measures have been implemented and are being maintained as indicated by the authorities, the organization has experienced a series of incidents and aggressions. Below is a log of the incidents in 2022:

- **4 March 2022**
  Unknown individuals stood at the door of the room where a staff member of ARTICLE 19 was staying for several minutes during a documentation trip in Baja California.

- **5 April 2022**
  The Director of the regional office received a death threat on the same day as the presentation of the annual report.

- **14 & 15 April 2022**
  A malware on the Archives of the Repression website deleted more than 1,600 files on serious human rights violations.

- **15 & 18 July 2022**
  Unknown individuals took photographs outside the home of a member of staff and hassled his partner.
  Three days later, as he left his home he noticed that one of the security locks had been damaged.

- **12 August 2022**
  An unknown individual waited outside the house where members of ARTICLE 19 were interviewing a journalist on a documentation trip in Veracruz.

- **15 August 2022**
  State police took photographs of ARTICLE 19 staff and consultants without consent while they were recording videos during a documentation trip in Veracruz.

- **18 August 2022**
  Attempts were made to access the email accounts of a Consultant, where she has information about her work with the organization.

- **1 March 2022**
  Morena representatives restricted government support to members of a community in Palenque, Chias, due to their participation in workshops on the right to information given by ARTICLE 19.

- **21 May 2022**
  A Morena senator posted misleading information on Twitter about ARTICLE 19’s role following an aggression against a journalist, omitting the State’s obligations and assuming that the organization would not support the journalist.

- **22 July 2022**
  ARTICLE 19 received multiple attacks and intimidating messages on social networks after supporting and condemning the stigmatization of journalist Reyna Haydee.

- **22 September 2022**
  A staff member’s vehicle was partially set on fire while parked in the Roma neighborhood of Mexico City. At the time, he was responding to a summons from a ministerial authority.

- **6-14 April 2022**
  Multiple unauthorized access attempts to accounts that manage the Archives of the Repression website.

- **5 April 2022**
  Tax Administration Service (SAT) requests for information, dated the same date as the launch of the annual report.

- **5 October 2022**
  The President attacked ARTICLE 19 during his morning conference following the publication of the #EjércitoEspía investigation on espionage against journalists and human rights defenders.

- **29 September 2022**
  A Secretariat of the Navy vehicle was parked outside the gate of ARTICLE 19’s Mexico City office around the time staff arrived.

- **13 October 2022**
  An unknown person arrived at the home of a staff member of ARTICLE 19 and asked neighbors about her identity.