

## **ISSUE PAPER**

### **MEXICO: SELECTED ISSUES OF INTERNAL FLIGHT ALTERNATIVES**

All the sources of information contained in this document are identified and are publicly available.

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## MAP



Source: The Perry-Castañeda Library (PCL), University of Texas at Austin, 1997

## GLOSSARY

AC	Alliance for Change (Alianza por el Cambio)
<i>Caciques</i>	Local political bosses in rural areas, often wealthy landowners and cattle ranchers
EZLN	Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional)
Limeddh	Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos)
PAN	National Action Party (Partido de Acción Nacional)
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática)
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional)
PRODH	Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez)
PVEM	Ecologist Green Party of Mexico (Partido Verde Ecologista de México)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a follow-up to the October 1997 Question and Answer Series paper entitled *Mexico: Internal Flight Alternatives*, although its focus is more narrow and limited to the possibility of an IFA for individuals considered to be at risk for expressing their political opinion and/or denouncing corruption (whistleblowers) at the local level. Even though drug trafficking has strong links to corruption, this paper will only note drug trafficking as it relates to IFA issues covered in the paper. The period covered in this paper is January 2000 to January 2001, although some earlier sources are used. Many of the alleged incidents of political harassment or whistleblowing referred to in the paper occurred in the period leading up to the July 2000 presidential elections.

According to the Legal Services of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB):

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. [While someone may] have a well-founded fear of persecution for one of the relevant grounds in one part of the country, [if] there is another place, within that country, where [he/she] would have no such fear...it would be reasonable in all the circumstances, to expect [him/her] to relocate there. (Apr. 1994).

For Mexico's nearly 100 million people (*Europa 2000* 2000, 2488), the right to freedom of movement is guaranteed in the Constitution and is respected in practice, although the government attempts to keep people away from areas controlled by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) in the State of Chiapas (*Country Reports 1999* 2000, Section 2d.). The Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Limeddhh) states that freedom of movement is limited in some areas of the country, such as in the indigenous communities of Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca and the Huasteca region of Hidalgo (22 Nov. 2000), while Jean-François Prud'homme, political scientist at the Colegio de México, states that nothing impedes freedom of movement in Mexico (15 Nov. 2000). Similarly, Judith Adler Hellman, a professor of social and political science at York University in Toronto, states that there are no "official

impediments" to freedom of movement from state to state, that internal migration is widespread and resettlement is commonplace (11 Nov. 2000). The urban population has increased as impoverished people from the countryside make their way to the cities; an early 1998 report claims that about two-thirds of Mexicans resided in towns or cities of more than 5,000 people and over 2,000 migrants were arriving daily in Mexico City alone (Noble Apr. 1998, 49).

### 1.1 Political Background

Mexico's federal republic is a decentralized political structure with 31 states and a federal district (*Europa 2000* 2000, 2486; *Country Reports 1999* 2000). The states are further divided into 2,394 municipalities (*municipios*) (Noble Apr. 1998, 46) whose presidents, as well as the federal president and state governors, are directly elected by Mexican citizens (ibid.; *Europa 2000* 2000 2486, 2494). Although there are multiple governments in theory, in practice Mexico has, until very recently, been ruled by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) for decades and State powers have been subordinated to the centralizing leadership of the federal PRI (Noble Apr. 1998, 46).

On 2 July 2000, Vicente Fox Quesada of the National Action Party (Partido de Acción Nacional, PAN) won the presidential elections, ending 70 years of PRI rule (CNN 3 July 2000; *The Economist* 8 July 2000). Fox took office on 1 December 2000 (*La Jornada* 2 Dec. 2000; *The San Diego Union-Tribune* 2 Dec. 2000). In the final count, Fox received 42.5 per cent of the votes, while Francisco Labastida Ochoa of the PRI and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD) received 36 per cent and 16.6 per cent respectively (Derksen 13 Sept. 2000; LARR 11 July 2000a, 1). Fox's Alliance for Change (Alianza por el Cambio, AC), a coalition party comprised of the PAN and the Ecologist Green Party of Mexico (Partido Verde Ecologista de México, PVEM), obtained 223 seats in the 500-seat Chamber of Deputies; the PRI, 211 seats; and the PRD and its allies, 66 seats (ibid.). However, in the 128-seat Senate, the PRI maintained its plurality with 60 seats compared to the AC's 51 seats; the PRD and its allies won the remaining 17 seats (Derksen 13 Sept. 2000). The elections were widely seen as fair, although "hundreds of allegations of pressure and vote buying" were reported (CNN 3 July 2000) (see subsection 2.1 below).

Fox will be faced with challenges as his electoral support was the lowest of any president in Mexican history (LARR 11 July 2000a, 1) and the PAN, while the largest party in Congress, will lack an overall majority (*The Economist* 8 July 2000). The PRI, on the other hand, saw its political control weakened not only in the loss of the presidential race, but also by losing the mayoral race in the Federal District, the gubernatorial races in two states (CNN 3 July 2000; *NACLA* Sept./Oct. 2000, 9) and 30 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (ibid.). As for the PRD, its seats in the Chamber dropped from 126 to 52<sup>1</sup> and although its mayoral candidate in Mexico City, Manuel López Obrador, won the race in the Federal District, he did not win by the largest of margins and the PRD will have to share control of the Legislative Assembly with the PAN (ibid.) (see also subsection 4.4). Section 4 of this paper provides additional information on gains by opposition parties at the state level in 2000.

For background information on the judicial system and security forces, please consult the Research Directorate's September 1999 Issue Paper entitled *Mexico: Police*, MEX34213.E of 2 May 2000 on the Federal Judicial Police and MEX362222.EX of January 2001 on recent developments in the justice system all available in the IRB Regional Documentation Centres and on the IRB Website at <www.irb.gc.ca>.

## **2. ALLEGED RISK FACTORS: EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL OPINION; WHISTLEBLOWERS**

Alleged risk factors will be examined in the context of widespread corruption and impunity, both of which are serious problems in Mexico (Limedd 22 Nov. 2000; AFP 4 July 2000; AP 25 June 2000; *Country Reports 1999, 2000*, Section 1d.). In its 2000 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Transparency International ranks Mexico 59<sup>th</sup> out of a list of 90 countries with a CPI score of 3.3 on a scale from 1 to 10 (13 Sept. 2000)<sup>2</sup> although Limedd

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<sup>1</sup> The Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral, IFE) reported, however, that the PRD had received 53 seats, while its smaller party allies, which together form the Alliance for Mexico (Alianza por México), received the following number of seats: Labour Party (Partido del Trabajo), 9, Convergence for the Democracy (Convergencia por la Democracia), 2, Social Alliance Party (Partido Alianza Social), 2, Nationalist Society Party (Partido de la Sociedad Nacionalista), 2, for a total of 68 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (Derksen 13 Sept. 2000). The IFE total for the PRD and its allies (68 seats) differs from the results provided by the LARR on page 2 of this report (66 seats). The Research Directorate was unable to find final official figures to resolve this discrepancy.

<sup>2</sup> The Index relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption among public officials as seen by business people, country analysts and the general public (Transparency International 13 Sept. 2000).



claims that the Mexican government was "6<sup>th</sup> place in terms of corruption" (22 Nov. 2000). Limeddh adds that the problems associated with the administration of justice are further aggravated not only by corruption, but also by influence peddling (*tráfico de influencias*) and the inexperience of judiciary staff (22 Nov. 2000).

Important reforms, such as the creation of the Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral, IFE), have been put in place in recent years to ensure fairer elections and the presence of national and international observers has helped to reduce political violence during elections (AI 29 June 2000). However, politically-motivated intimidation continued to be an issue during the period leading up to the July 2000 elections (ibid.; *The Christian Science Monitor* 26 June 2000; Global Exchange 4 July 2000). Global Exchange, an international human rights organization that organized a delegation to observe the conditions surrounding the election<sup>3</sup>, notes that while the IFE's vote-counting system was transparent and efficient, "episodes of vote-buying, coercion, and intimidation" were of "serious concern" in the days preceding the election, particularly in marginalized and poor communities (ibid.). The delegation reported 12 cases of vote buying, all committed by the PRI (ibid.). *The Christian Science Monitor* reported that there were fewer incidents of vote influencing in the period leading up to the election compared to past elections, but that such incidents were being closely scrutinized because of the potential loss of the presidency for the PRI (26 June 2000). Amnesty International claimed that the PRI was using intimidation tactics, such as threats to jobs, state funding to local communities and death threats, to pressure the electorate (29 June 2000). Former president Zedillo claimed these "electoral anomalies" were isolated incidents and said that they did not reflect the general mood surrounding the elections (*The Christian Science Monitor* 26 June 2000).

Global Exchange commented that during the elections many Mexicans faced "intimidation by government officials and *caciques* [local political bosses in rural areas, often wealthy landowners and cattle ranchers]" despite political freedom being manifested during the campaign and the ruling party's subsequent defeat (4 July 2000). Elections have often been the catalyst for political violence, where PRI "bosses" exercise their power through patronage and intimidation (AI 29 June 2000). Gerardo Otero, director of the Latin American Studies Program

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<sup>3</sup> The delegation's observers visited the States of Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Yucatan, Mexico and the Huasteca region of Hidalgo (Global Exchange 4 July 2000).

at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and a specialist on Mexico, also makes reference to the pervasive "patron-client" culture which has been deeply entrenched because of the PRI's long rule in Mexico (14 Nov. 2000). Similarly, *The Nation* refers to this political culture as the "ruling party's byzantine patronage network," which is firmly rooted in communities throughout Mexico, from Mexico City's "shantytowns to the rural hamlets of Chiapas" (24 July 2000). Within three weeks of the election, the PRI patronage network was already being examined in municipalities run by the PRD and PAN (ibid.).

Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, longtime leftist and now a close [National Security] advisor to President Fox, expressed his belief that: "Politically motivated harassment will end under Fox, both because the candidate was elected with a mandate for greater democracy and because his powers will be limited. Fox lacks a majority in Congress and a vast party machine such as the PRI" (*Sacramento Bee* 6 Aug. 2000). Aguilar Zinser, a professor and former congressman, was threatened and harassed in the 1970s and 1980s because of his anti-corruption activities (ibid.).

In January 2000, a key witness in the case to prosecute General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, a former anti-drug chief, for drug trafficking was killed (SRE 11 Jan. 2000; IPS 11 Jan. 2000) Humberto Capelletti, Gutiérrez Rebollo's former bodyguard and assistant, was murdered while riding on a city bus; he had accused the general of having dealings with drug cartels and also accused his lawyers of contracting former military officers to kill key witnesses in the case against the general (ibid.). In February 2000, Gutiérrez Rebollo received a second sentence of 40 years, which added to his first sentence, meant he would be imprisoned for a 71 years (SRE 23 Feb. 2000). In the last five months of 1999, more than 12 army officials had been arrested on drug-related charges (IPS 11 Jan. 2000). Information on protection available to persons who witness illegal drug transactions can be found in MEX35480.E of 1 November 2000.

Prior to the July 2000 elections, whistleblowers wrote letters, used the press, the Internet and protests to denounce campaign irregularities (*The Christian Science Monitor* 26 June 2000). In an open letter to then president Zedillo, a public servant accused the undersecretary in the Secretariat of the Controller and Administrative Development of requiring employees to sign a form, which demanded that identification numbers be included, for the purpose of "'inducing and conditioning" employees to vote for the PRI (ibid.).

Another whistleblower Ramiro Berrón, an employee with the state petroleum company PEMEX, went public with an accusation that vote buying for the PRI was taking place within the company, an allegation PEMEX denied (ibid.; *Business Week* 3 July 2000; *La Jornada* 21 June 2000). Rogelio Montemayor, PEMEX director, stated that Berrón was upset because he had been reprimanded earlier for allegedly distributing pornography via by the company's Internet connection (ibid.; *Business Week* 3 July 2000); Berrón said that he circulated a "machista" joke, not pornography (ibid.). Investigations to determine whether PEMEX used its resources to support the PRI were being carried out by the company's internal revenue control bureau (Contraloría Interna) and the Secretariat of Internal Revenue and Administrative Development (Secretaría de Contraloría y Desarrollo Administrativo, Secodam) (*La Jornada* 21 June 2000); Berrón also presented evidence of the alleged scheme before the National Congress (*Business Week* 3 July 2000). Berrón claimed that making the charges public had its "risks" in that he was being followed, his telephone had been tapped, his reputation had been damaged and his employment status had become "problematic" (*The Christian Science Monitor* 26 June 2000). José Antonio Ceballos, director of PEMEX Exploration and Production (PEP) stated that Berrón was still employed by the company despite his public complaints (*La Jornada* 21 June 2000); Montemayor said the investigations' conclusions will determine whether Berrón faces any sanctions, which could range from a private or public warning to dismissal (*desde una llamada de atención en privado o público hasta la separación del cargo*) (ibid.). In its Trip Report to Mexico and Nigeria, the Carter Center stated that both Berrón and his wife were "severely harassed until *The New York Times* ran an article about their case, and since then have been left alone but are still fearful" (30 June-7 July 2000). Additional information on the investigations into Berrón's allegations could not be found among the sources consulted. Information on other cases of whistleblowers in the State of Veracruz is provided in subsection 4.3 below.

### **3. POSSIBILITY OF AN IFA**

Information on the possibility of an IFA in Mexico for individuals at risk because of political opinion or for denouncing corruption is limited among documentary sources. Therefore, most information in this section was provided by oral sources.

Vincente Fox has stated that once he formed the government, no one would have to flee Mexico for political reasons because there will be an open government (AFP 22 Aug. 2000). He added that Mexican political exiles in Canada would be welcomed back, but that those with legal charges against them would need to have those problems resolved by the justice system (ibid.).

Statements from sources vary on whether an IFA exists for individuals at risk. Several sources state that the possibility of relocating internally within Mexico depends on factors particular to each case. Andrew Reding, director of the North America Project at the World Policy Institute, stated in his report entitled *Update on Treatment of Homosexuals* that internal resettlement in Mexico would be "difficult if not impossible...for political activists and whistleblowers whose homosexuality would be used against them, either for blackmail, or through mistreatment by the police, or by public exposure" (May 2000, 30). Both Otero and Rafael Alvarez, researcher on political violence at the Human Rights Centre Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (PRODH), state that the issue must be seen in the context of which authority is the "persecuting" agent (Otero 14 Nov. 2000; Alvarez 14 Nov. 2000). If the agent, whether at the national, state or local level, exercises influence on the local scene or has strong political connections to the central government, its success in locating a specific individual could be increased (Otero 14 Nov. 2000). On the other hand, if the local authority's influence were minimal, then it could be conceivable that the individual at risk has an IFA (ibid.). PRODH says that it would be possible to move, with relative safety, to another state or locality if the political or social dissident were relatively unknown and if his/her actions had been essentially on a local or regional level (16 Nov. 2000). He makes an exception, however, for dissidents from Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca states where there is greater violence and government control (ibid.).

Both Alvarez and Reding state that it is unlikely that a local authority's power would extend beyond the regional boundaries in which a political activist or whistleblower carried out their activities (Alvarez 14 Nov. 2000; Reding 23 Nov. 2000). Reding gives the hypothetical example of a PRD member in Oaxaca who has a conflict with a *cacique* in his hamlet and the unlikelihood that the *cacique* would be able to exercise power outside the municipality, let alone the state (ibid.). He provides the concrete example of Protestants from Chamula, Chiapas, who were "subjected to persecution" by the town's Catholic PRI *cacique* and were able to find refuge in nearby San Cristobal de las Casas (ibid.).

Prud'homme states that small local communities relying on dense social networks are influenced by informal coercion and social pressure; therefore, it would be very difficult for an individual who was the object of threats to remain in these communities in such circumstances (15 Nov. 2000). Given that there is freedom of movement in Mexico, there is nothing to impede a person from Oaxaca who has denounced corruption, for example, from relocating to Mexico City, unless that person has links to organized crime or drug cartels for whom distance is no obstacle (*ibid.*). However, both Reding and Hellman say that there are some social factors that could impede an individual at risk's ability to relocate (23 Nov. 2000; 11 Nov. 2000). If the individual were a member of an indigenous ethnic group or had weak Spanish language skills, internal resettlement might be impossible; furthermore, if the person had limited employment skills (e.g. a subsistence farmer), economic considerations could become obstacles to relocating (Reding 23 Nov. 2000). Similarly, Hellman explains that relocation for poor Mexicans "who are persecuted in one local area" might be problematic because of the lack of resources in finding housing and new employment in the resettlement locale, especially if all of their relatives, who would normally assist them, were concentrated in the area in which the problems surfaced (11 Nov. 2000).

According to Reding, the possibility of IFA "depends on the level at which the political confrontation occurred" (23 Nov. 2000). For example, if a PRD political activist were to "set off alarms on a national level" which would threaten the PRI's interests more broadly, then that person would likely be placed under surveillance and could receive death threats wherever he/she relocated in Mexico (*ibid.*). Reding expected that this possibly might end with the change in government as Fox and his government will have control over the national security apparatus (*ibid.*). However, more than half of the Mexican states remain in the hands of the PRI and these state governments might feel more "threatened by dissent and by inconvenient disclosures" under Fox's presidency (*ibid.*) (see Appendix for List of State Governors and Their Parties). These states maintain surveillance systems similar to the national one which, according to Reding, would remain in place despite changes in government at the federal level; in such a context, a "dissident or whistle-blower" would have to move out of the state (*ibid.*). Limeddh says that although Mexico is composed of sovereign and free states, there is a large measure of coordination in police matters and in "persecution" of political opponents and delinquents in

general (22 Nov. 2000). Given this coordination, Limeddh believes that a person who is at risk in one state would not necessarily be safe in moving to another one because of collaboration agreements between the federal Office of the Attorney General (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) and its state counterparts (ibid.). Limeddh adds that IFA is not an effective measure for individuals incarcerated on false charges, which are used to disguise their status as prisoners of conscience (ibid) (see the case of two farmers in Guerrero in subsection 4.3 below).

### **3.1 Surveillance and Regulatory Measures**

In general terms, the application of the law is uneven throughout Mexico; it is generally more vigorous and more respected in the centre of the country than in the outer regions (Prud'homme 15 Nov. 2000).

Individuals can be traced by the Interior Ministry (Secretaría de Gobernación) (PRODH 16 Nov. 2000; Reding 23 Nov. 2000) which maintains an extensive surveillance network that includes thousands of informants, as well as making routine and widespread use of wiretapping (ibid.). Reding believes that this network will most likely be scrutinized by the Fox government, but its dismantling "will not happen overnight" (ibid.). PRODH adds that individuals could also be sought by the Centre of Investigations and National Security (Centro de Investigaciones y Seguridad Nacional, CISEN), the Mexican army, the Federal Preventative Police (Policía Federal Preventiva, PFP), other security forces and paramilitaries (16 Nov. 2000). The PFP, comprised of 11,000 police officers (6,000 of which are military troops), operates throughout the country, and can intervene in all spheres (Limeddh 22 Nov. 2000). According to Limeddh, the PFP showed its propensity to contain and "repress" social movements when it seized the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM) on 6 February 2000 to end the student strike, and showed force in the communities of Montes Azules in Chiapas when it mobilized forces to displace indigenous communities later in May (ibid.). However, *Weekly News Update on the Americas* reported that the PFP, as well as the Mexico City riot police, were acting on a court order when it carried out its non-violent police sweep at UNAM (13 February 2000). Additional information on the PFP is provided in MEX36222.E of January 2001 available in IRB Regional Documentation Centres and on the IRB Website at <www.irb.gc.ca>.

Mexico has a Federal Registry of Persons (Registro Federal de Causantes, RFC) which is like Canada's Social Insurance Number. The RFC could be used by the authorities to track an individual (Otero 14 Nov. 2000). The RFC number must be provided when applying for employment and when requesting official receipts for tax purposes in Mexico (ibid.). It was put in place in part to minimize tax evasion and is highly centralized (ibid.). Although he doubts that the RFC is always up-to-date, Prud'homme states that a RFC number is nonetheless necessary for annual payment of taxes and for requesting tax receipts (16 Nov. 2000). He stresses, however, that it is possible to live in Mexico without paying taxes and that tax evasion is very high; in fact, the informal employment sector accounts for 40 per cent of the active work force in Mexico (ibid.). Neither Prud'homme nor Otero are aware of whether the RFC has been used by the Mexican government to track down any perceived political opponents or whistleblowers (ibid.; 14 Nov. 2000). Prud'homme also mentions two other centralized registries in Mexico: a single registry for the population and the national registry of electors (16 Nov. 2000). The former is not yet complete and its use is limited, but when fully established, it could be an effective tool for tracking the general population; the latter issues the elector's card (*credencial de electores*) that provides personal information, including the address of the card holder, and is the one piece of identification that is requested most often (ibid.). However, the registration of electors and updating of information on the *credencial* are voluntary, and although political parties may have access to the electoral lists, the national registry of electors is autonomous from the central government (ibid.). Prud'homme believes that none of the three national registries constitute an instrument of control comparable to what a national identity card, issued in many countries, could be (ibid.).

## **4. SITUATION BY REGION**

### **4.1 The North**

In the northern part of the country there has been much regional political change. There are only a few states that are not governed by the Alliance for Change (the PAN and its coalition partner, the PVEM) north of Mexico City: Baja California Sur and Zacatecas (where the PRI and PRD share the seats in the state congress) (LARR 11 July 2000b, 6). Zacatecas is led by PRD governor Ricardo Monreal (*Orange County Register* 4 July 2000). In Durango, Sinaloa, San Luis

Potosí and Tamaulipas, the PRI is still dominant (LARR 11 July 2000b, 6). In the state of Nayarit, a coalition of opposition parties joined their forces to defeat the PRI, which it did when the opposition, under the leadership of PRI defector Antonio Echevarria, won the state elections on 4 July 1999 (*Mexican Labor News and Analysis* July 1999).

In terms of crime, the State of Sinaloa, which is the home to most of the country's major drug smugglers, replaced Baja California Norte as the most violent state with a reported 207 murders in the first five months of 2000 (AP 25 June 2000). Baja California had 160 murders in the same period (ibid.). Eighty per cent of Sinaloa's murder count is attributed to drug smuggling and 94 per cent of all crimes are never solved (ibid.). Williams Alfredo Roman Garcia, a former homicide police chief of Sinaloa's state judicial police, stated that "crimes are not solved because they are linked to drugs, they are handled by federal authorities—who he said were on the payroll of the drug smugglers" (ibid.). He was murdered three weeks after providing this information in an interview with the Associated Press (AP) (ibid.). An opposition politician, Rafael Morgan, said that people do not report the murder of relatives to the authorities because they fear not only possible reprisal by the drug lords, but by the authorities also; he added that "the hit men don't finish off only the witnesses, but their families also" (ibid.).

In late August 2000, Guillermo "Willy" Castellanos Martínez, a prominent PRI member who headed the federal Ministry of Commerce and Industrial Development (Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial, Secofi) in Tijuana, was killed by a gunman (*Excélsior* 31 Aug. 2000; *The San Diego Union-Tribune* 1 Sept. 2000). No arrests were made nor any motive established (ibid.). *Zeta*, a weekly Tijuana-based magazine, claimed that there were five possible motives for Castellanos' death including his public accusations of state police officers being involved in auto theft (1-7 Sept. 2000). Castellanos had been involved in regulating and promoting the city's *maquiladora* industry (assembly plants) (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 1 Sept. 2000) and had announced that he would run for the PRI nomination for the mayoral race in Tijuana's 2001 municipal elections (ibid.; *Excélsior* 31 Aug. 2000). After the assassination, PRI leaders accused the PAN-led government in Baja California of being "incompetent and weak" in fighting crime (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 1 Sept. 2000).



## 4.2 The Centre

The PAN has made many gains in the central part of the country in recent months. At the federal level, the PRI was severely weakened politically in the State of Mexico, one of its traditional strongholds, during the July 2000 elections (LARR 11 July 2000b, 6). The PAN won twice as many congressional seats there as the PRI (*ibid.*). That party also won the gubernatorial elections in the States of Guanajuato and Morelos which also took place on 2 July 2000 (LARR 11 July 2000c, 8). In Guanajuato, Fox's home state, the PAN retained its majority, winning 22 out of the 36 seats in the local congress; it also won 29 of the 46 municipalities in the state (*ibid.*). In Morelos, it won the state from the PRI, the first state won by the PAN south of Mexico City (*ibid.*). In Jalisco's state elections in November 2000, Francisco Ramírez of the PAN won the gubernatorial race with 45.56 per cent of the vote compared to Jorge Arana of the PRI's 43.17 per cent (CEEJ 19 Nov. 2000). The PAN will control the local congress with 24 legislators out of a total of 40 (*La Jornada* 14 Nov. 2000). The PRI said it would ask for a recount of the votes because of irregularities (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 13 Nov. 2000).

## 4.3 The South

The political makeup of the South still favours the PRI federally; it has a majority in all states except Michoacán, which is a PRD stronghold (LARR 11 July 2000b, 6). On the state level, however, the PRI lost an important electoral battle in Chiapas when on 20 August 2000 Pablo Salazar's Alliance for Chiapas (*Alianza por Chiapas*) won the gubernatorial race (BBC 21 Aug. 2000; *La Jornada* 21 Aug. 2000; LARR 19 Sept. 2000, 2). Salazar, a former PRI senator, led a coalition of eight opposition parties in Chiapas, including the PRD and the PAN (*In These Times* 2 Oct. 2000), winning 52 per cent of the vote, while his PRI opponent, Sami David, obtained 45 per cent (LARR 19 Sept. 2000, 2). This victory is significant because it is the first time since the Mexican Revolution that Chiapas will be led by a non-PRI governor; also noteworthy is the fact that Salazar is an evangelical Protestant and leading defender of indigenous rights (*In These Times* 2 Oct. 2000). Two days after his gubernatorial victory, in clashes between EZLN supporters and PRI members in Ocosingo, 37 people were injured and 4 people were killed (*In These Times* 2 Oct. 2000; *La Jornada* 23 Aug. 2000). The clash was apparently the result of a land dispute between Zapatista rebel support groups (*bases rebeldes*)

and the PRI-backed Organization for the Defence of Indigenous Rights (Organización para la Defensa de los Derechos Campesinos) (ibid.).

The PRI, however, was victorious in the State of Veracruz, where on 3 September 2000, it retained its control in municipal and state elections (LARR 19 Sept. 2000, 2). The party increased its control of municipalities from 107 previously held to 140 (out of 210) (ibid.). A violent incident was reported three days before the elections when a local PAN congressman, Alejandro Cossío, and other members of his party were beaten by followers of Reynaldo Escobar, mayoral candidate of the Democratic Convergence (Convergencia por la Democracia (CD), described as the political organization of a former governor) and municipal employees, in the Veracruz municipality of Jalapa (*La Jornada* 1 Sept. 2000). The violence occurred when PAN members discovered CD members using municipally owned vehicles to transport hundreds of food stocks for distribution later in a particular district (ibid.). The PAN reported the incident to the State Electoral Commission (Comisión Estatal Electoral, CEE) (ibid.). On 12 September 2000, *Excélsior* reported that the results confirming Escobar's mayoral win in Jalapa were contested by the PAN, PRI and PRD before the Municipal Electoral Commission (Comisión Municipal Electoral, CME). However, in November 2000, the State Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Estatal de Elecciones, TEE) confirmed Escobar as municipal president in Jalapa and ruled as unfounded the arguments put forth by the other political parties to nullify the election results (16 Nov. 2000).

On 22 October 2000, Manuel Andrade of the PRI was declared the winner of the gubernatorial race in the southern State of Tabasco (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 22 Oct. 2000; *Weekly News Update on the Americas* 29 Oct. 2000a). Preliminary results showed that Andrade had received 44 per cent of the vote to 43 per cent for the PRD candidate, Raul Ojeda (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 22 Oct. 2000). The PRD declared that the election had been marred by irregularities and fraud (ibid.; *Weekly News Update on the Americas* 29 Oct. 2000a), an allegation election officials in the state denied (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 22 Oct. 2000). The day before the election, in the state capital of Villahermosa, PRI members fired shots in the air to prevent members of the PRD from inspecting PRI offices; the PRD had accused the PRI of owning computers that were to be used to falsify election results (AFP 16 Oct. 2000). In late December 2000, the Superior Court of the Electoral Tribunal of the Judicial Power of the

Federation (TEPJF) annulled the Tabasco State elections because of proven irregularities (*Los Angeles Times* 31 Dec. 2000; *Weekly News Update on the Americas* 31 Dec. 2000). The Tabasco State Congress is to select an interim governor and new state elections are to be held within the year (ibid.). Outgoing legislators, however, amended the state's constitution a day following the TEPJF's decision to nullify the elections to ensure that new elections could not take place for 18 months (*Los Angeles Times* 31 Dec. 2000).

The political climate remains problematic in some parts of the south. *Country Reports 1999* states that politically-motivated violence continued to be an issue in the southern States of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas (2000, Intro.). The heavy military presence in the indigenous communities of Oaxaca, Guerrero, Chiapas and the Huasteca region limits freedom of movement and has provoked the forced displacement of about 16,000 people, primarily in Chiapas (Limeddh 22 Nov. 2000). Limeddh has documented the cases of more than 300 political prisoners whose trials have been plagued by irregularities (22 Nov. 2000). Most prisoners are from Chiapas, followed by Oaxaca and Guerrero; the majority are indigenous people and members or sympathizers of the PRD (ibid.).

One incident involved Artemio Pérez of Mixistlan, Oaxaca State, who, after speaking out against the PRI at a meeting on 14 June 2000, was thrown in jail and died the next day after he allegedly hung himself in his cell (AI 29 June 2000; *The Record* 1 July 2000). Elpidio Ramírez, PRI assistant mayor in Mixistlan, had arrested Pérez, an opposition sympathizer, "for disturbing the peace and bothering the visitors" (ibid.). The family of the victim said that Pérez had been murdered (ibid.).

Other violent incidents include those against PRD members in Chiapas (*Weekly News Update on the Americas* 29 Oct. 2000b). On 16 October 2000, Juan López Gómez, a member of PRD's executive committee in Tila, was killed; one man was arrested and three others, reputed to be members of the Peace and Justice paramilitary group, were under suspicion for the killing (ibid.). Two other PRD members, Pedro Ruiz Entzin and Julio Ruiz Perez, were murdered in an ambush in the Pantelho municipality on 19 October 2000; the authorities claimed that the murders had not been political but the result of a family feud (ibid.).

In late August 2000, two farmers from Guerrero, Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, who had drawn public attention against illegal logging, were sentenced to 6 to 10 years

imprisonment on charges stemming from alleged marijuana planting and possession of illegal firearms (IPS 13 Oct. 2000; *La Jornada* 29 Aug. 2000). Human rights and environmental groups in Mexico and beyond claimed that the charges had been "trumped up" and that the real cause for their incarceration was linked to their anti-logging activities (IPS 13 Oct. 2000). The farmers were arrested in May 1999 and have been jailed ever since; at the time of their arrest, they were reportedly tortured by members of the Mexican army (ibid.; *La Jornada* 29 Aug. 2000).

In late October 2000, federal agents arrested 11 members of Peace and Justice, which is described in *The San Diego Union-Tribune* as "a pro-government vigilante group," in Chiapas (27 Oct. 2000a). The group was accused of killing 46 Zapatista sympathizers, primarily in the Chiapas municipalities of Tila, Tumbala, Sabanilla, Salto de Agua and Yajalon (*Weekly News Update on the Americas* 29 Oct. 2000b).

In August 1999 in the State of Veracruz, after having accused some union leaders of corruption, seven indigenous members of the General Workers Popular Peasants' Union (Unión General Obrero Campesina Popular, UGOCP), were beaten up and threatened with death in the municipality of Playa Vicente, Veracruz (AI 18 Aug. 1999). Amnesty International reported that the leaders had been seized from their homes by a hundred armed members of the union who warned that their properties would be seized if they did not behave (*si no se disciplinan*) (ibid.). The group claimed that the attack against the leaders occurred with the approval of the local authorities (ibid.). A complaint was made to the Public Ministry on 1 August 1999, but no investigation had been launched into the matter by the time Amnesty International reported the incident on 18 August 1999. No additional information on this case could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In an other whistleblowing incident in Veracruz, the editor of a monthly magazine, Antonio Flores Cancela, blamed the Chief Accountant of the Internal Revenue Service of the State Congress (Titular de la Contaduría Mayor de Hacienda del Congreso local), René Mariani Ochoa, and his permanent advisor, Benjamín Sigüenza Salcedo, for orchestrating a campaign of intimidation and death threats against him for having published articles on how two of Ochoa's construction companies had been awarded several public works contracts in the principal municipalities of the state; municipal governments were threatened with audits if they did not tender the work to his companies (*El Universal* 3 Sept. 1999). The editor stated that he had

received anonymous death threats by phone for investigating corrupt acts carried out by the Internal Revenue Service; he warned that if something happened to him, his family or colleagues at the magazine, he would hold the heads of the Service responsible and the judicial authorities responsible for prosecuting them (ibid.).

#### 4.4 Mexico City

Although Manuel López Obrador of the PRD won the mayoral race in Mexico City on 2 July 2000, the party lost its majority in the Legislative Assembly to the PAN and its coalition partner the PVEM (LARR 11 July 2000d, 9). The PRD, however, elected 11 district mayors in Mexico City's 16 precincts (*delegaciones*) (*La Jornada* 3 July 2000), but at the federal congressional level, it saw its share of seats dwindle from 29 out of a total of 30 in the Federal District to 6 (LARR 11 July 2000d, 9). The final count of the 66-seat assembly is 24 seats for the PAN, 10 for the PVEM, 26 for the PRD, 5 for the PRI and 1 for the Social Democratic Party (Partido Democracia Social) (ibid.).

Clashes ensued on election day following close vote counts between the PRI, PAN and PRD in and near Mexico City (*The Dallas Morning News* 10 July 2000). Dozens of people were wounded, including three electoral officials (ibid.). Another source reported that clashes took place between the PRI and PRD in Chimalhuacán, a suburb of Mexico City, when the latter refused to recognize the win of the PRI mayoral candidate there (DPA 5 July 2000). In August 2000, another incident in Chimalhuacán was reported, but this time the clash was between rival PRI associations (*Calgary Herald* 19 Aug. 2000; *Weekly News Update on the Americas* 20 Aug. 2000). The *Calgary Herald* reported that at least 9 people had died, while the *Weekly News Update on the Americas* reported 10 were killed (*Calgary Herald* 19 Aug. 2000; *Weekly News Update on the Americas* 20 Aug. 2000). 98 people were wounded by bullets and 204 were arrested in the incident (ibid.). The violence broke out after one of the rival factions, the Organization of Villages and Neighbourhoods (Organización de Pueblos y Colonias, OPC), seized the municipal offices to prevent the inauguration of Tolentino Román who heads the other PRI grassroots organization, Peasant Torch (Antorcha Campesina) (ibid.).

## 5. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

President Fox has made pledges to tackle government corruption, to reform the justice system and to increase regional cooperation in combatting drug-trafficking (BBC 5 July 2000). On the issue of judicial reform, Fox has vowed to amalgamate all national police forces under a new federal security and justice ministry (ibid.; *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram* 5 July 2000). This new ministry would take domestic security responsibilities away from the Ministry of the Interior (ibid.; BBC 5 July 2000). Fox has also vowed to establish a strategy that would gradually "demilitarize" the country's various police forces (*La Jornada* 1 Aug. 2000) and to eliminate political corruption during his six-year term (*The Fort Worth Star-Telegram* 5 July 2000). Another Fox initiative is to set up a truth commission that would investigate past politically-motivated crimes (BBC 5 July 2000; *The San Diego Union-Tribune* 27 Oct. 2000b). Aguilar Zinser states that the findings of such a "transparency commission," to be approved by Congress, will not be known until late into Fox's term (ibid.).

A concrete measure already undertaken by Fox was the withdrawal of army troops from camps and checkpoints in different parts of Chiapas soon after his inauguration on 1 December 2000 (*La Jornada* 2 Dec. 2000; *The San Diego Union-Tribune* 2 Dec. 2000). Troops were pulled back from 53 checkpoints in Los Altos, the North and the Cañadas of Chiapas (*La Jornada* 2 Dec. 2000). The checkpoints had been used to restrict the movement of weapons in areas where there was conflict between pro- and anti-EZLN supporters, as well as the movement of foreigners who supported the Zapatista cause (*The San Diego Union-Tribune* 2 Dec. 2000). In another show of good will to move along the peace process in Chiapas, the Fox government has released 17 Zapatista prisoners and has sent the Indian Rights bill to Congress for approval (AP 8 Jan. 2001). A delegation of Zapatista rebels headed by Subcomandante Marcos is expected to arrive in Mexico City in early March 2001 to lobby the Mexican Congress to approve the bill (ibid.).

Anti-corruption measures in the public service include carrying out an audit in all federal agencies and the establishment of a Transparency and Anti-Corruption Commission (Comisión para la Transparencia y el Combate a la Corrupción) by presidential decree (*La Jornada* 5 Dec. 2000). Among the commission's objectives are concrete actions to prevent corruption in the

federal public sector and strengthening legal instruments that would effectively sanction improper behaviour by public servants (ibid.).

## NOTES ON SELECTED SOURCES

### **Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (PRODH):**

The Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, PRODH) in Mexico City was founded by the Jesuits in 1988 and is one of the leading non-governmental organizations in the country. It investigates, studies and publishes reports concerning the human rights situation in Mexico; provides judicial defense to persons or groups who have had their human rights violated; and produces educational materials. (PRODH 19 Feb. 1999 (<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/mexico/limeddh/index.html>))

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### **Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Limeddh):**

The Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Limeddh) was founded in 1985 and is affiliated with the French-based Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme (FIDH). Limeddh monitors human rights violations in Mexico, including political violence, prison conditions and torture. (Limeddh n.d. <<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/mexico/limeddh/index.html>>)



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**APPENDIX: LIST OF STATE GOVERNORS AND THEIR PARTIES**

<b>State</b>	<b>Governor</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Government Term</b>
AGUASCALIENTES	Lic. Felipe González González	PAN	1998-2004
BAJA CALIFORNIA NORTE	Lic. Alejandro González Alcocer	PRI	1999-2005
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	Lic. Leonel Efraín Cota Montaña	PRD, PT	1999-2005
CAMPECHE	Lic. José Antonio González Curi	PRI	
COAHUILA	Lic. Enrique Martínez y Martínez	PRI	01/12/1999-2005
COLIMA	Lic. Fernando Moreno Peña	PRI	
CHIAPAS	Lic. Pablo Salazar Mendiguchia	COALITION	2000-2006
CHIHUAHUA	Lic. Patricio Martínez	PRI	1997-2003
DISTRITO FEDERAL	Lic. Andrés Manuel López Obrador	PRD	2000-2006
DURANGO	Lic. Angel Sergio Guerrero Mier	PRI	1998-2004
GUANAJUATO	Lic. Juan Carlos Romero Hicks	PAN	2000-2006
GUERRERO	Lic. René Juárez Cisneros	PRI	1999-2005
HIDALGO	Lic. Manuel Angel Núñez Soto	PRI	1999-2005
JALISCO	Ing. Alberto Cárdenas Jiménez	PAN	1995-2002
ESTADO DE MEXICO	Lic. Arturo Montiel Rojas	PRI	1999-2005
MICHOACAN	Lic. Víctor Tinoco Rubí	PRI	1996-2002
MORELOS	Lic. Sergio estrada Cajigal	PAN	2000-2006
NAYARIT	Lic. Antonio Echevarría Domínguez	Coalition PRD, PAN, PT	1999-2005
NUEVO LEON	Lic. Fernando Canales Clariond	PAN	1997-2003
OAXACA	Lic. José Murat Casab	PRI	1998-2004

PUEBLA	Lic. Melquiades Morales	PRI	1999-2005
QUERETARO	Lic. Ignacio Loyola Vera	PAN	1998-2004
QUINTANA ROO	Lic. Joaquín Hendricks Díaz	PRI	1999-2005
SAN LUIS POTOSI	Lic. Fernando Silva Nieto	PRI	1998-2004
SINALOA	Lic. Juan S. Millán Lizárraga	PRI	1998-2004
SONORA	Lic. Armando López Nogales	PRI	1997-2003
TABASCO	Lic. Roberto Madrazo Pintado	PRI	1995-2000
TAMAULIPAS	Lic. Tomás Yarrington Ruvalcaba	PRI	1998-2004
TLAXCALA	Lic. Alfonso Sánchez Anaya	PRD, PT PVEM	1999-2005
VERACRUZ	Lic. Miguel Alemán Velazco	PRI	1998-2004
YUCATAN	Lic. Víctor Cervera Pacheco	PRI	1996-2002
ZACATECAS	Lic. Ricardo Monreal Ávila	PRD	1998-2004

**SOURCE: Embassy of Mexico, Ottawa, 4 December 2000**

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