

**Submission by Human Rights Watch to the
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concerning Mexico
63rd plenary session
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Summary

This submission focuses on the situation of migrant and refugee children in immigration detention; attacks on students, teachers, and schools; access to palliative care; the involuntary treatment and arbitrary detention of persons with disabilities; and the protection of education during armed conflict. It relates to Articles 2, 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and proposes issues and questions that Committee members may wish to raise with the government.

Evidence contained in this submission is based in part on research conducted in the Mexican states of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Oaxaca, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz, as well as Mexico City, and the cities of San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa in Honduras between April and December 2015. Human Rights Watch interviewed 61 children and more than 100 adults who had traveled to Mexico from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Human Rights Watch also interviewed Mexican government officials; representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN refugee agency; and representatives of nongovernmental organizations; and reviewed case files and data collected by Mexico's immigration and refugee protection agencies. Further information can be found in the Human Rights Watch report, "[Closed Doors: Mexico's Failure to Protect Central American Refugee and Migrant Children](#)."¹

The Situation of Migrant and Refugee Children (Articles 2, 11, 12, 13, 14)

Background

In 2015-2016, Human Rights Watch documented the situation of Central American refugee and migrant children in Mexico and found wide discrepancies between Mexican law, which offers protection to those who face risks to their lives or safety if returned to their countries of origin, and practice.²

¹ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors: Mexico's Failure to Protect Central American Refugee and Migrant Children*, March 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/03/31/closed-doors/mexicos-failure-protect-central-american-refugee-and-migrant-children#20c51b>.

² Mexico recognizes as refugees those who have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, gender, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and are out of their country (or are stateless and out of the country of last habitual residence) and cannot return to it by reason of their well-founded fear. Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection, and Political Asylum, art. 13(I). It also recognizes as refugees people who "have fled their country because their lives, safety, or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order." *Ibid.*, art. 13(II) (reflecting refugee definition in Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, adopted by the Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico, and Panama, held at Cartagena, Colombia, November 19-22, 1984, concl. 3). See also Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection, and Political Asylum, art. 13(III) (allowing claims based on events that have arisen after an individual has left his or her country of origin or last habitual residence). In addition, Mexico's Immigration Law authorizes the status of Visitor for Humanitarian Reasons, commonly known as a humanitarian visa, for victims or witnesses to a crime, unaccompanied migrant children under the age of 18, and applicants for

Many migrant and refugee children are fleeing violence, including domestic violence and threats from gangs in Central America’s “Northern Triangle” countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Gang violence has plagued these countries for more than a decade, and gangs in these three countries often target children. Nearly half of the children who spoke to Human Rights Watch said they chose to leave their homes to escape violence or because they were targeted by local gangs. When children fled together with their families, they or their parents often spoke of specific concerns for the children’s lives or safety—including gang recruitment; sexual violence, particularly against girls; and domestic violence affecting children in the household. Three of the children who traveled to Mexico alone told us that they were hoping to reunite with mothers, fathers, or siblings because their grandparents or other elderly caregivers were no longer able to care for them. Children also encounter violence, including sexual violence, on the journey.³

Mexican immigration authorities apprehended more than 20,000 unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in 2015, some 17,000 in 2016, and nearly 7,300 in 2017, keeping the vast majority of them in detention.⁴ As many as half may have had strong cases for asylum, according to UNHCR.⁵ Yet Mexico’s refugee agency, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados, COMAR), afforded international protection to just 57 unaccompanied children from these countries in 2015, 129 in 2016, and 45 in 2017, less than 1 percent of the total number of unaccompanied children apprehended in these periods.⁶

Children who may have claims for refugee recognition confront multiple obstacles in applying for refugee recognition from the moment they are taken into custody by the National Institute of Migration (Instituto Nacional de Migración, INM), Mexico’s immigration agency. These include the failure of INM agents to inform migrant children of their right to seek refugee recognition, the failure of government authorities properly to screen child migrants to determine whether they may have viable refugee claims, and the absence of legal or other assistance for most children who do apply for refugee recognition, unless they are fortunate enough to be represented by one of the handful of nongovernmental organizations that provide legal assistance to asylum seekers. Asylum processes are not designed with children in mind and are frequently confusing to them.⁷

refugee recognition and complementary protection, as well as on other “humanitarian grounds in the public interest.” Immigration Law, art. 52(V). See also Regulations for the Immigration Law, art. 137.

³ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, pp. 18-37.

⁴ Instituto Nacional de Migración (INM), Boletines Estadísticos 2015-2017, http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es_mx/SEGOB/Boletines_Estadísticos (accessed February 6, 2018).

⁵ Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (ACNUR), *Arrancados de raíz* (México, DF: Oficina de ACNUR en México, 2014), p. 12; UNHCR Regional Office for the United States and the Caribbean, *Children on the Run: Unaccompanied Children Leaving Central America and Mexico and the Need for International Protection* (Washington, DC: UNHCR, 2014).

⁶ Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados (COMAR), Estadísticas 2015-2017, https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/290340/ESTADISTICAS_2013_A_4TO_TRIMESTRE_2017.pdf (accessed February 6, 2018).

⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, pp. 48-74; Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (ACNUR), *Arrancados de raíz* (México, DF: Oficina de ACNUR en México, 2014); Sin Fronteras, “Oaxaca de Juárez, San Pedro Tapanatepec, La Ventosa, y Salina Cruz: La experiencia de detención en el Pacífico,” in Joselin Barja Coria, *Derechos cautivos*; Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova, AC, “Tapachula, Chiapas: La experiencia de detención en la frontera sur mexicana,” in Joselin Barja Coria, *Derechos cautivos*.

These obstacles are serious barriers for children who have claims for refugee recognition. In addition, children and parents reported that they decided not to apply or withdrew applications because they did not want to remain locked up.⁸ Where the indirect pressure on individuals is so intense that it leads them to believe that they have no access to the asylum process and no practical option but to return to countries where they face serious risk of persecution or threats to their lives and safety, these factors in combination may constitute constructive *refoulement*, in violation of international law.⁹

More generally, returning children to their home countries when they have been targeted by gangs or reasonably fear that they will suffer violence or other human rights abuses in their countries of origin or where family members in their countries of origin are unable or unwilling to care for the children breaches Mexico's obligations to protect children and ensure that its actions are in their best interests.¹⁰ In January 2018, Amnesty International reported that Mexico illegally returns thousands of people, children as well as adults, to life threatening situations in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador each year.¹¹

Under Mexico's Immigration Act, all children—not just asylum seekers—who are apprehended by the INM should be referred to shelters run by the National System for Integral Family Development (Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, DIF), Mexico's child protection agency.¹² Their stay in immigration detention facilities should only be in exceptional circumstances. In practice, this requirement is not observed. Under international standards, children should not be detained as a means of immigration control; instead, countries should “expeditiously and completely cease or eradicate the immigration detention of children”¹³

⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, p. 5.

⁹ The prohibition on refoulement bars constructive as well as direct state action that results in an individual's return to risk. As a result, states may not indirectly force individuals back to countries where they are likely to face persecution or threats to their lives and safety. See, for example, Committee on Migrant Workers and Committee on the Rights of the Child, Joint General Comment No. 3 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 22 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the General Principles Regarding the Human Rights of Children in the Context of International Migration, U.N. Doc. CMW/C/GC/3-CRC/C/GC/22 (November 16, 2017), para. 46 (“non-refoulement obligations apply irrespective of whether serious violations of those rights guaranteed under the Convention originate from non-State actors or whether such violations are *directly intended or are the indirect consequence of States parties' action or inaction*” (emphasis added)); *M.S. v. Belgium*, App. No. 50012/08 (Eur. Ct. H.R. January 31, 2012).

¹⁰ See, for example, Committee on the Rights of the Child, *K.Y.M. v. Denmark*, Views: Communication No. 3/2016, U.N. Doc. CRC/C/77/D/3/2016 (January 25, 2018) (deportation of a girl to risk of female genital mutilation in Somalia violates the principle of best interests of the child and the deporting state's obligation to protect children from all forms of violence); Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 6: Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside Their Country of Origin, UN Doc. CRC/GC/2005/6 (September 1, 2005), para. 27

¹¹ Amnesty International, *Overlooked, Underprotected*, January 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/7602/2018/es/> (accessed February 1, 2018).

¹² Immigration Law, art. 112(l); General Law on the Rights of Girls, Boys, and Adolescents, art. 89 (“En tanto el Instituto Nacional de Migración determine la condición migratoria de la niña, niño o adolescente, el Sistema Nacional DIF o sistema de las entidades, según corresponda, deberá brindar la protección que prevé esta Ley y demás disposiciones aplicables.”).

¹³ Committee on Migrant Workers and Committee on the Rights of the Child, Joint General Comment No. 4 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on State Obligations Regarding the Human Rights of Children in the Context of International Migration in Countries of Origin, Transit, Destination and Return, U.N. Doc. CMW/C/GC/4-CRC/C/GC/23 (November 16, 2017), para. 5. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also notes: “Detention cannot be justified solely on the basis of the child being unaccompanied or separated, or on their migratory or residence status, or lack thereof.” Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 6, para. 61. Similarly, the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children observe, “Refugee or asylum-seeking children should not be detained.” Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (Geneva: ICRC, 2004), http://www.unicef.org/protection/IAG_UASCs.pdf (accessed January 29, 2016), p. 60.

In September 2016, President Enrique Peña Nieto announced that Mexico would strengthen its refugee recognition procedures and “develop alternatives to immigration detention for asylum seekers, particularly children.”¹⁴ These changes had not been implemented at time of writing.

Children in Immigration Detention

Mexico operates nearly 60 immigration detention centers throughout the country. The largest of these are Siglo XXI, in Tapachula, with a capacity of 960; Acayucan, in Veracruz, with a capacity of 836; and Iztapalapa, in Mexico City, with a capacity of 430.¹⁵ Ten of these immigration detention centers, including these three, are designated to hold children, although Human Rights Watch heard of cases in which boys were held in other immigration detention centers together with adult men.

Boys held in the Acayucan detention center told Human Rights Watch their cells were so overcrowded they slept on the floor. Similarly, many children told us that they slept on the floor, with no mattress or blanket, while they were in Siglo XXI. Several of the teenage boys we interviewed mentioned a cell in Siglo XXI known as the *calabozo* (“the lockup”). “It’s a punishment cell,” said Edgar V., age 17. “They put the kids there that misbehave. There were five kids in the cell the day I arrived. The four days I was there in Siglo XXI, they were there the whole time.”¹⁶

Elsewhere, children were sometimes placed in facilities with adults, and families were separated.¹⁷

Even children who are housed in DIF shelters are deprived of their liberty, albeit in facilities that are significantly cleaner and more humane than Mexico’s immigration detention centers. DIF shelters are custodial settings, and those who are housed there are not free to leave at will unless they accept return to their countries of origin. Children in most DIF shelters do not attend local schools, are not taken on supervised visits to local playgrounds, parks, or churches, and do not have other interactions with the community; unless they need specialized medical care, they remain within the four walls of the shelter 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the duration of their stay.¹⁸

The Consequences of Detention for Mental Well-Being

The effect of immigration detention on the mental health and mental well-being of detained children and adults has been extensively documented. Children in detention have demonstrated developmental and behavioral problems as well as major depression, suicide ideation, incidents of self-harm, sleep difficulties, anxiety regarding delays in educational progress, and a sense of shame.¹⁹ The nongovernmental organization *Sin Fronteras* has observed similar adverse effects

¹⁴ Government of Mexico, “Cumbre de Líderes sobre Refugiados,” September 20, 2016, <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/articulos/cumbre-de-lideres-sobre-refugiados?idiom=es> (accessed February 4, 2018).

¹⁵ Sin Fronteras, *Derechos Cautivos*, p. 41.

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, pp. 81-93; Human Rights Watch interview with Edgar V., San Pedro Sula, Honduras, June 8, 2015.

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁹ Louise K. Newman and Zachary Steel, “The Child Asylum Seeker: Psychological and Developmental Impact of Immigration Detention,” *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, vol. 17 (2008), pp. 665-683; Sarah Mares, Louise Newman, Michael Dudley, and Fran Gale, “Seeking Refuge, Losing Hope: Parents and Children in Immigration Detention,” *Australasian Psychiatry*, vol. 10 (2002); Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, “A Last Resort? National Inquiry into Children

for the mental health and well-being of detained children and adults in Mexico.²⁰ Nearly every child we spoke with described immigration detention in terms that suggested that it had a profoundly negative effect on them. “You’re under guard in the immigration stations. I thought I was going crazy. It was so hot, and they don’t let you out of the cells” except for meals and other short periods of time, said Johanna H., age 17, of the Siglo XXI detention center in Tapachula, Chiapas. “We’re all human beings with the same rights. They shouldn’t be mistreating people in this way.”²¹

Lack of Access to Education

Children have the right to receive an education regardless of their migration status.²²

Nevertheless, children in detention, in both immigration detention centers and DIF shelters, told Human Rights Watch they had no regular access to education no matter the length of time they spent in these facilities. At most, they could take part in activities, run on an ad hoc basis, that had a limited educational component. For example, in the Viva México DIF shelter in Tapachula, Human Rights Watch observed volunteers run craft sessions and religious discussions, and staff told researchers that they were seeking ways to get additional community involvement in the detention center. Daniel L., a 15-year-old Salvadoran asylum applicant who was in the ninth grade when he left for Mexico, said that he had not been able to attend classes during the month he spent in Siglo XXI or in the time he had been held in Tapachula’s Viva Mexico DIF shelter. When he asked DIF officials how soon he would be able to attend school, “They said that I can maybe go when I have some kind of document saying that I’m allowed to be here in Mexico. . . . I want to study. I want to have a career.”²³ Fifteen-year-old Kevin B., 15, left El Salvador with his 14-year-old brother in August 2014. “It’s been 10 months since I’ve gone to school. I want to study. I want to be an engineer.”²⁴

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights as Grounds for an Asylum Claim

Deprivation of the right to education or other economic, social, and cultural rights may also give rise to an asylum claim from children. As UNHCR has noted, “Children’s socio-economic needs are often more compelling than those of adults, particularly due to their dependency on adults

in Immigration Detention, Major Findings and Recommendations of the Inquiry, 17.1, Major finding 2,” 2004, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/publications/last-resort-national-inquiry-children-immigration> (accessed June 1, 2017); Aamer Sultan and Kevin O’Sullivan, “Psychological Disturbances in Asylum Seekers Held in Long Term Detention: A Participant-Observer Account,” *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 175 (2001); Zachary Steel, Shakeh Momartin, Catherine Bateman, Atena Hafshejani, and Derrick M. Silove, “Psychiatric status of asylum seeker families held for a protracted period in a remote detention centre in Australia,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 28, no. 6 (2004); Sarah Mares and Dr. Jon Jureidini, “Psychiatric assessment of children and families in immigration detention – clinical, administrative and ethical issues,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 28, (2004); Guy J. Coffey, Ida Kaplan, Robyn C. Sampson, and Maria Montagna Tucci, “The Meaning and Mental Health Consequences of Long-Term Immigration Detention for People Seeking Asylum,” *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 70 (2010) pp. 2010-2079; University of Toronto Faculty of Law, International Human Rights program, “No Life for a Child,” A Roadmap to End Immigration Detention of Children and Family Separation,” 2016; University of Toronto Faculty of Law, International Human Rights Program, “Invisible Citizens, Canadian Children in Immigration Detention,” 2017, http://ihrp.law.utoronto.ca/utfl_file/count/PUBLICATIONS/Report-InvisibleCitizens.pdf (accessed June 2, 2017); Ann Lorek, Kimberly Ehntholt, Anne Nesbitt, Emmanuel Wey, Chipo Githinji, Eve Rossor, and Rush Wickramasinghe, “The Mental and Physical Health Difficulties of Children Held Within a British Immigration Detention Center: A Pilot Study,” *Child Abuse and Neglect*, vol. 33 (2009), pp. 573-585.

²⁰ Sin Fronteras, *La ruta del encierro: situación de personas en detención en estaciones migratorias y estancias provisionales* (México, DF: Sin Fronteras, 2014), pp. 72-74.

²¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Johanna H., Mexico City, April 30, 2015, in Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, pp. 94-95.

²² Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 20: Non-Discrimination in Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, U.N. Doc. E/C.12/GC/20 (July 2, 2009), para. 30 (“all children within a State, including those with an undocumented status, have a right to receive education”); Committee on Migrant Workers and Committee on the Rights of the Child, Joint General Comment Nos. 3/22, para. 6(a).

²³ Human Rights Watch interview with Daniel L., Tapachula, Chiapas, May 8, 2015, in Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, p. 93.

²⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Kevin B., Tapachula, Chiapas, May 8, 2015, in Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, pp. 93-94.

and unique developmental needs. Deprivation of economic, social and cultural rights, thus, may be as relevant to the assessment of a child's claim as that of civil and political rights."²⁵

Good Practices

Human Rights Watch observed some good practices by Mexican officials. In northern Mexico, unaccompanied children appeared to be quickly and routinely housed in DIF-run shelters, rather than in INM-run detention centers. DIF officials in every part of Mexico we visited displayed a strong understanding of Mexico's children's rights law, and we heard of cases in which they had identified and referred children with possible international protection needs to COMAR.²⁶

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee ask the government of Mexico:

- What steps are being taken to develop alternatives to immigration detention for asylum seekers, particularly children?
- Until these alternatives have been developed, what steps are being taken to improve conditions for asylum seekers and migrants, particularly children?
- What steps are being taken to ensure access to education for all migrant and asylum-seeking children?
- What medical services do migrant and asylum-seeking children have access to?

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee call upon the government of Mexico to:

- Ensure access to education services for asylum seeking children while their refugee status claims are pending. This should ideally take place outside the detention facilities to facilitate the continuance of education upon release.
- Provide access to health and psycho-social services for victims of violence, and to comprehensive post-rape care, including emergency contraception and safe, legal abortion, for victims of sexual violence.
- Ensure children in detention facilities have access to culturally appropriate community resources.
- Ensure children in detention facilities have access to appropriate medical treatment and psychological counselling.
- Consider economic, social, and cultural rights when assessing unaccompanied children's asylum claims.
- Ensure that children are not detained in immigration detention. Provide appropriate care and protection to unaccompanied and separated children in a variety of ways, whether by housing children with families or in state or privately run facilities. Where children are detained in immigration detention, ensure that this is only as a last resort and for the shortest time practicable.
- Ensure that children have effective access to refugee recognition procedures, including appropriate legal and other assistance.

Attacks on Teachers and Students in Mexico (Articles 13, 14)

During the review period, abductions of and attacks on students, teachers, schools, and universities by both police and criminal groups continued to be of concern in Mexico. According

²⁵ UNHCR, Guidelines on Child Asylum Claims, para. 14. See also Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 11: Plans of Action for Primary Education, UN Doc. E/1992/23 (May 10, 1999), para. 4 ("The lack of educational opportunities for children often reinforces their subjection to various other human rights violations.")

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Closed Doors*, p. 6.

to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, teachers in more than 75 schools were threatened, and more than 50 students, teachers, academics and education officials were killed or abducted with their whereabouts unknown in 2009-2012.²⁷ In the appendix, we have attached a chapter documenting attacks on schools, students, and teachers in Mexico. This was drafted by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, a coalition to which Human Rights Watch belongs.

On September 26, 2014, police and unidentified armed people opened fire on three buses filled with students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' School as they were traveling from the city of Iguala back to Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, where the school was located. More than 15 people were injured and 6 were killed. After throwing teargas into one of the buses, police ordered the students out of the vehicle. They beat an unknown number of students from this bus and took them away in police cars.²⁸ The whereabouts of 43 students remain unknown, although the DNA of one student was later identified among remains that the Mexican government said were those of the students.²⁹ The Mexican authorities arrested approximately 100 people, including police officers, for alleged involvement in the case, but no convictions were obtained.³⁰ Widespread outcry against the government's weak response and international attention to the case led the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to establish an Inter-disciplinary Group of International Experts (GIEI) to investigate, with the involvement of the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF).³¹ GIEI reported in September 2015 that state investigators had committed serious errors in the investigation and that, contrary to a report by Mexico's attorney general's office, there was no evidence to indicate that the students' bodies were taken to a local dump and burned; this finding was corroborated by a later EAAF report.³² The expert group also

²⁷ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, "Education Under Attack 2014: Country Profiles: Mexico," http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/eua_2014_country_profiles_mexico.pdf (accessed February 1, 2018).

²⁸ "Human Rights Watch World Report, Mexico" January 2015, New York, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/mexico>. Amnesty International, "Treated with Indolence": The State's Response to Disappearances in Mexico, January 14, 2016, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/treated-with-indolence-the-states-response-to-disappearances-in-mexico/> (accessed February 6, 2018), pp. 31-33. Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes (GIEI), *Informe Ayotzinapa: Investigación y primeras conclusiones de las desapariciones y homicidios de los normalistas de Ayotzinapa*, 2015, <https://www.casede.org/index.php/bibliotecacasede/derechos-humanos/461-informe-ayotzinapa-investigacio-n-y-primeras-conclusiones-de-las-desapariciones-y-homicidios-de-los-normalistas-de-ayotzinapa> (accessed February 6, 2018); Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), *Analysis and Information on Mexico's Ayotzinapa Case*, December 2015, <https://www.wola.org/analysis/analysis-and-information-on-mexicos-ayotzinapa-case/> (accessed February 6, 2018).

²⁹ The 43 who are still missing: Disappeared 'normalistas' ("Los 43 que faltan: normalistas desaparecidos"), *Vice News*, September 25, 2017, https://www.vice.com/es_mx/article/3b9kk5/los-43-que-faltan-normalistas-desaparecidos-full (accessed February 06, 2018); "Three years after Ayotzinapa, a mural reveals the paths of violence" ("A tres años de Ayotzinapa, un mural revela los caminos de la violencia"), *New York Times*, September 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2017/09/07/ayotzinapa-aniversario-mural-forensic-architecture-muac/> (accessed February 6, 2018); "Human Rights Watch World Report, Mexico" January 2017, New York, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/mexico>; "Human Rights Watch World Report, Mexico" January 2018, New York, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/mexico>.

³⁰ "The Ayotzinapa Platform: What happened to the 43 disappeared Mexican students?" *Open Democracy*, September 7, 2017; <https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/forensic-architecture-manuella-libardi/ayotzinapa-platform-what-happened-to-43-dis> (accessed February 6, 2018); "No Convictions In Mexico's Missing 43 Students Case After Two Years," *Huffington Post*, January 16, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/ayotzinapa-43-students-mexico_us_57e981a7e4boe80b1ba3a276 (accessed February 6, 2018); Human Rights Watch letter to Mexico's Attorney General on Human Rights Crisis, April 28, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/28/letter-mexicos-attorney-general-human-rights-crisis>.

³¹ "Mexico: Damning Report on Disappearances, Experts Dispute Official Account of 2014 Atrocity," Human Rights Watch news release, September 6, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/06/mexico-damning-report-disappearances>; Amnesty International, "Treated with Indolence": The State's Response to Disappearances in Mexico, pp. 6, 34-36. GIEI, *Informe Ayotzinapa*.

³² Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF), *Resumen Ejecutivo*, February 2016, http://centroprodh.org.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1774%3Aaaf-presenta-peritaje-sobre-basurero-de-cocula-en-caso-ayotzinapa&catid=209%3Afront-rokstories&lang=es (accessed February 6, 2018).

found that the municipal police and unidentified armed collaborators acted in coordinated fashion, and that the reasons for this level of coordination and violence are unknown.³³

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee ask the government of Mexico:

- What steps is the government taking to find the students from Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' School?

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee call upon the government of Mexico to:

- Address the failures of its investigation into the presumed enforced disappearance of the students from Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' School in September 2014, including expanding the expert groups' mandate to investigate, clarifying the whereabouts of the disappeared students, and thoroughly investigating links between authorities and organized crime groups.

Access to Palliative Care (Article 12)

We applaud Mexico for the significant progress in improving access to palliative care. In the last few years, the ministry of health created a palliative care department which has conducted needs assessments and training activities; it has taken steps to make the process of prescribing opioid analgesics less cumbersome and avoid stock-outs of these medications; and government insurer Seguro Popular has included palliative care in its basic insurance package. We hope that Mexico's next government will continue this commitment to ensuring people with incurable illnesses do not live and die in needless suffering.

Involuntary Treatment and Arbitrary Detention of Persons with Disabilities (Articles 12, 13, 14)

Mexico's 1984 General Health Law (GHL) allows the use of forced treatment of persons with disabilities and involuntary admission to psychiatric hospitals for medical treatment.³⁴

Involuntary admission to psychiatric hospitals is allowed for persons who are deemed to have "mental or behavior disorders," when they are considered to be "incapable" or at the request of a family member, guardian, legal representative, or any other interested person when none of the former are available, and a certified physician determines there is a serious mental disorder and the person's behavior "represents a serious and immediate danger for self and others."³⁵

The GHL establishes a formal right to informed consent for medical treatment. However, it also allows medical staff to deliver treatment that they determine to be "the best treatment indicated to treat the patient," in urgent cases or in cases of involuntary admission to a psychiatric hospital,³⁶ thereby undermining the actual ability of many patients to give their informed consent.

³³ "Human Rights Watch World Report, Mexico," January 2017, New York, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/mexico>; "Human Rights Watch World Report, Mexico" January 2018, New York, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/mexico>; Amnesty International, "Treated with Indolence," p. 33. GIEI, *Informe Ayotzinapa*.

³⁴ General Health Law of 1984, arts. 74 bis, IV, 75.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, arts 74 bis, IV, 75.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 74 bis, III.

An integral part of the right to health, including mental health, is the right to consent to treatment, both as a freedom and an essential safeguard to its enjoyment. This includes the right to refuse treatment.³⁷

The CRPD Committee has stated that the right to liberty and security of the person should not be infringed because of actual or perceived disability. In its General Comment No. 1, the Committee on the Rights of the Persons With Disabilities deems detention of persons with disabilities in institutions against their will, either without their consent or with the consent of a substitute decision-maker (such as a guardian), on the basis of their disability a form of arbitrary deprivation of liberty and incompatible with articles 12 and 14 of the CRPD.³⁸ Detention of persons with disabilities on the basis of alleged medical necessity has also been criticized by the Special Rapporteur on Torture on the basis that it can be potentially abused.³⁹

The Committee has also found that mental health legislation authorizing involuntary internment or hospitalization based on the alleged “dangerousness” of a person with a disability, and their potential to cause harm to self or others, is contrary to the right to liberty protected by article 14.2 of the CRPD.⁴⁰ Persons with disabilities can be detained, on an equal basis with others, when they engage in behavior that would constitute a legitimate cause for detention for any person. In these cases, reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities should be provided when it is so required.

In October 2014, the CRPD Committee in its Concluding Observations on Mexico, called on the government to:

- (a) Eliminate security measures that mandate medical and psychiatric inpatient treatment and promote alternatives that comply with articles 14 and 19 of the Convention;*
- (b) Repeal legislation permitting detention on grounds of disability and ensure that all mental health services are provided based on the free and informed consent of the person concerned.*⁴¹

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee call upon the government of Mexico to:

- Harmonize its legal framework with international human rights law, including through implementation of the 2014 CRPD recommendations, especially given that Mexico’s Congress is considering adopting a new mental health law.

The Protection of Education during Armed Conflict (Articles 13, 14)

Children and Armed Conflict Agenda Abroad

³⁷ UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,” A/HRC/35/21, March 28, 2017, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/076/04/PDF/G1707604.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed February 9, 2018), paragraph 63.

³⁸ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), General Comment 1, Article 12: Equal recognition before the law, CRPD/C/GC/1, May 19, 2014, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/031/20/PDF/G1403120.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed February 9, 2018), paragraph 40.

³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez,” paragraphs 40, 41, and 42.

⁴⁰ CRPD, “Guidelines on article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The right to liberty and security of persons with disabilities,” adopted September 2015, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/GC/GuidelinesArticle14.doc> (accessed February 9, 2018), paragraph 6.

⁴¹ CRPD, “Concluding observations on the initial report of Mexico,” CRPD/C/MEX/CO/1, October 27, 2014, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/MEX/CO/1&Lang=En (accessed February 9, 2018), para. 30.

In September 2014, Mexico announced it would participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations, “taking part in humanitarian tasks that benefit civil society.”⁴² Mexican troops who participate are required to comply with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations’ United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual (2012), which includes the provision that “schools shall not be used by the military in their operations.”⁴³

Moreover, the new 2017 Child Protection Policy of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, and Department of Political Affairs notes:

United Nations peace operations should refrain from all actions that impede children's access to education, including the use of school premises. This applies particularly to uniformed personnel. Furthermore, recognizing the adverse impact of the use of schools for military purposes, in particular its effects on the safety of children and education personnel, the civilian nature of schools, and the right to education, United Nations peace operations personnel shall at no time and for no amount of time use schools for military purposes.⁴⁴

While President of the UN Security Council in 2009, Mexico noted that the Council “urges parties to armed conflict to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education, in particular ... the use of schools for military operations.”⁴⁵ Mexico also chaired the working group on children and armed conflict during its membership of the Council.

In June 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2225 (2015) on children and armed conflict, which:

Expresses deep concern that the military use of schools in contravention of applicable international law may render schools legitimate targets of attack, thus endangering the safety of children and in this regard encourages Member States to take concrete measures to deter such use of schools by armed forces and armed groups.⁴⁶

Human Rights Watch believes that an example of such a concrete measure to deter the military use of schools in situations of armed conflict would be for Mexico to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.⁴⁷ The Safe Schools Declaration is a political commitment to better protect students, educational staff, schools, and universities during armed conflict. It was drafted through a consultative process led by Norway and Argentina in 2015. The Declaration

⁴² “In historic U-turn, Mexico to join U.N. peacekeeping missions,” *Reuters*, September 24, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-un-peacekeeping/in-historic-u-turn-mexico-to-join-u-n-peacekeeping-missions-idUSKCN0HJ2El20140924> (accessed February 6, 2018).

⁴³ United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual, 2012, section 2.13, “Schools shall not be used by the military in their operations.”

⁴⁴ United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and Department of Political Affairs, “Child Protection in UN Peace Operations (Policy),” June 2017.

⁴⁵ United Nations Security Council, “Security Council Reaffirms Commitment To Address Widespread Impact Of Armed Conflict On Children, After Hearing Over 60 Speakers In Day-Long Debate,” SC/9646, April 29, 2009, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2009/sc9646.doc.htm> (accessed February 1, 2018); Statement by the President of the Security Council, 6114th meeting of the Security Council, April 29, 2009, S/PRST/2009/9.

⁴⁶ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2225 (2015), S/RES/2225 (2015), http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2225.pdf (accessed October 9, 2017), para 7.

⁴⁷ Safe Schools Declaration, May 28, 2015, https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/utvikling/safe_schools_declaration.pdf (accessed October 19, 2016).

includes a commitment to use the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.⁴⁸ The Committee on the Rights of the Child has previously recommended endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration stating it is particularly relevant in the context of the State party's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.⁴⁹

As of February 2018, 72 countries—representing more than one-third of all UN member states—have already endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, including 13 of Mexico's fellow Organization of American States member states. In 2013, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights noted that the use of schools for military purposes impedes children's right to education.⁵⁰

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee ask the government of Mexico:

- What steps has Mexico taken in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2143 (2014) and 2225 (2015) to deter the use of schools for military purposes?
- Are protections for schools from military use included in any policies, rules, or pre-deployment trainings for Mexico's armed forces?

Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee call upon the government of Mexico to:

- Endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration, including by bringing the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* into domestic military policy and operational frameworks, as per the commitment made in the Safe Schools Declaration.

⁴⁸ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*, March 18, 2014, http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/guidelines_en.pdf (accessed October 19, 2016).

⁴⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, "Concluding observations on the report submitted by Bhutan under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict," CRC/C/OPAC/BTN/CO/1, June 27, 2017 http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fOPAC%2fBTN%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en (accessed February 6, 2018).

⁵⁰ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Truth, Justice, and reparation: Fourth report on [the] human rights situation in Colombia, OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 49/13, December 31, 2013, para. 732.

MEXICO

Teachers in more than 75 schools were threatened, more than 50 students, teachers, academics and education officials were killed or abducted with their whereabouts unknown, and nanotechnology researchers were targeted with bombs in 2009-2012.

CONTEXT

Attacks on teachers, academics and students took place in the context of high levels of general violence, including the abduction without trace of large numbers of children and adults.¹⁰⁶¹ Heavily armed criminal groups fought over territory and control of the drug trade – the main source of heroin and cocaine entering the United States – and against security forces trying to dismantle them.¹⁰⁶² The drug cartels, which have thousands of armed men, have increasingly diversified their operations, turning to other illicit trades such as kidnappings and extortion. The federal government began intensive security operations against them in 2006, backed by 96,000 troops.¹⁰⁶³ In the course of counternarcotics operations, security forces committed widespread human rights violations, including killings, torture and forced disappearances.¹⁰⁶⁴ According to the government, more than 70,000 people were killed in drug-related violence from December 2006 to December 2012, and more than 26,000 more were victims of disappearances or otherwise went missing.¹⁰⁶⁵

Teachers were among a long list of targets, reportedly because of their regular salary.¹⁰⁶⁶ Parents and children were attacked at schools and police were targeted while trying to protect educational establishments. In many cases, there was insufficient evidence to establish who was responsible for the attacks because few crimes were properly investigated by the authorities.

In primary education, net enrolment was 96 per cent in 2011 and in secondary education it was 67 per cent; gross enrolment at tertiary level was 28 per cent. Adult literacy was 93 per cent in 2009.¹⁰⁶⁷

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During 2009-2012, there was evidence of three direct attacks on school buildings plus additional threats against schools.

In early December 2010, for example, gunmen set fire to a kindergarten in Ciudad Juárez on the northern border because teachers refused to pay extortion fees,¹⁰⁶⁸ and in September 2011, threats of grenade attacks on schools in Santiago, in the north-eastern state of Nuevo León, caused panic among parents.¹⁰⁶⁹

Additionally, in July 2012, a kindergarten and a primary school were destroyed in Turicato, Michoacán state, by a Catholic sect called the Followers of the Virgin of the Rosary. Members used sledgehammers and pick-axes to destroy six classrooms, six bathrooms, furniture and computers and then burned down the buildings after a leader claimed she had received an order from the Virgin Mary to destroy them. The sect, whose rules prohibit formal schooling, refused to accept the secular government curriculum, especially on science and sexuality, or government uniforms, preferring robes and a headscarf.¹⁰⁷⁰

In 2009 and 2010, there were numerous gun battles in the vicinity of schools, in some cases resulting in the deaths of students, teachers or parents. In Reynosa, in 2009, 20 teachers reportedly struggled to keep up to a thousand students lying on the floor with their heads down while, for over two hours, grenades exploded and classroom walls were peppered with bullets around them.¹⁰⁷¹ On 30

August 2010, a shootout between gunmen and marines in Tampico, Tamaulipas state, as students were leaving school, left two children dead and two adults wounded.¹⁰⁷²

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

At least 14 school students,¹⁰⁷³ 12 school teachers¹⁰⁷⁴ and two education officials¹⁰⁷⁵ were killed in attacks on education in 2009-2012. One teacher who was a leading teacher trade unionist was abducted and his whereabouts remain unknown.¹⁰⁷⁶ Several school students were also abducted.¹⁰⁷⁷

The threat of violence related to criminal groups

Armed criminal groups in many cases demanded that teachers pay them a proportion of their salary or face kidnapping or other violence. But there were also killings of students and teachers by gunmen whose affiliation and motive were unexplained.

In Ciudad Juárez, in November 2010, there were both threats against individual teachers and threats posted on school walls warning that students would be kidnapped if teachers failed to hand over money to the perpetrators.¹⁰⁷⁸ One vice-principal of a primary school said criminals 'wrote graffiti on the school's walls saying: "If you don't pay up a massacre will happen".'¹⁰⁷⁹ In December 2010, the Chihuahua state senate called on the Governor and President to adopt a security plan to protect educational institutions in Ciudad Juárez from extortion.¹⁰⁸⁰

On 30 August 2011, at least 80 primary schools in Acapulco, in the south-western state of Guerrero, closed when up to 400 teachers went on strike in protest against threats of extortion and kidnapping.¹⁰⁸¹ One week later, it was reported that

this figure had increased to 300 schools, affecting 30,000 students in the area.¹⁰⁸² The trigger for the strike was reportedly a blanket demand issued to primary schools ordering teachers to give up 50 per cent of their pay before 1 October and part of their Christmas bonus, or face the consequences. The threat was reportedly made by phone, leaflets dropped off at schools and banners posted outside them.¹⁰⁸³ One teacher, who was a paymaster for teachers, received a letter requesting details of all teaching staff working in a specific area of the Acapulco education system who earned more than 8,000 pesos bi-weekly, and all of those earning more than 20,000 pesos. The letter also demanded the teachers' names, addresses and cell phone numbers, their voter registration cards and the names and addresses of their schools, plus the names of anyone who declined to divulge information.¹⁰⁸⁴ According to the online newspaper Examiner.com, the threat was confirmed by an official in Guerrero's Department of Education for the region of Acapulco-Coyuca de Benítez, and it was believed that a violent criminal group known as La Barredora had sent the message.¹⁰⁸⁵

Acapulco officials argued that teachers were over-reacting.¹⁰⁸⁶ However, the payroll officer at La Patria es Primero primary school, Acapulco, who was told to hand over information about teachers' salaries, fled the city.¹⁰⁸⁷ Teachers demanded that military personnel be stationed outside schools.¹⁰⁸⁸

The threats were made amid a climate of pervasive violence. Three weeks earlier, gunmen reportedly broke into a school and snatched a student whose body was later found in La Sabana.¹⁰⁸⁹ At the start of term, teachers in at least 75 Acapulco schools received threats, according to a CNN report.¹⁰⁹⁰ In September 2011, police found a sack of five decomposed men's heads dumped outside a primary school in Acapulco along with threatening

messages.¹⁰⁹¹ Also in September, it was reported that in a three-month period 43 teachers had been ‘express kidnapped’, meaning they were held for a limited period but released after a payment was made.¹⁰⁹²

In Acapulco, 12 schools reportedly did not reopen after the Christmas break due to the continuing demand that teachers hand over half their salaries and all of their bonuses. On 2 January 2012, the body of one murdered Acapulco teacher, Maria Viruel Andraca, 51, was left in the boot of a taxi on the Acapulco-Mexico highway with a note reportedly left by a criminal group,¹⁰⁹³ sparking new protests by teachers on the need for security measures to be implemented.¹⁰⁹⁴

Elsewhere, gunmen attacked parents waiting for their children outside a Ciudad Juárez elementary school on 25 August 2011, wounding one man and four women.¹⁰⁹⁵

Police officers assigned to protect schools and students were also killed. On 24 February 2010, a police officer, PC Marco Antonio Olague, was shot dead in front of dozens of pupils as they were going into a primary school in Chihuahua city, although the reason was unclear.¹⁰⁹⁶ Separately, on 12 September 2010, three police officers deployed to provide security at schools and campuses were shot dead while parked at a primary school in Ciudad Juárez while waiting for a colleague who had gone inside. Gunmen using AK-47 rifles sprayed the patrol vehicle with bullets. When crime investigators arrived, the gunmen reportedly returned and opened fire again.¹⁰⁹⁷

Two teachers who were trade union members were killed and one teacher who was a leading teacher trade unionist was abducted, and his whereabouts remain unknown. These incidents appeared to be

linked to intra-trade union rivalries over the control of education in Oaxaca state as part of the wider struggle between those for and against more autonomy for the indigenous population.¹⁰⁹⁸

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Attacks on higher education included kidnappings and murder of students and academics by gunmen; bombings aimed at nanotechnology researchers and facilities; and violence by police or security forces against students.

Killings and kidnappings of students and staff

A compilation of media reports suggests that seven academics or university personnel were murdered,¹⁰⁹⁹ four were injured¹¹⁰⁰ and six were threatened;¹¹⁰¹ in addition, at least 15 higher education students were killed,¹¹⁰² one was tortured and four were injured.¹¹⁰³ Some kidnappings ended in the victims being killed.¹¹⁰⁴ In some cases, it could not be verified whether the crime was linked to the victim’s education role or place of education. According to the Justice in Mexico Project, the level of violence reportedly caused some professors at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, where three professors were killed in a year, to leave their positions.¹¹⁰⁵

At least seven higher education students were kidnapped.¹¹⁰⁶ In one incident on 5 March 2012, three technical school students and one high school student, aged between 13 and 21, were abducted from their schools by heavily armed men and killed in Cuernavaca, Morelos, in central Mexico. Their dismembered bodies were found in plastic bags together with a message from a drug cartel.¹¹⁰⁷

Anti-nanotechnology bombings

In 2011, according to a compilation of media reports, six university campuses or research institutes were targeted with bombings and one researcher was separately assassinated in violence allegedly directed at staff involved in nanotechnology research.¹¹⁰⁸ A group called 'Individuals Tending towards the Wild' (ITS or 'Individuales tendiendo a lo salvaje' in Spanish) reportedly claimed responsibility for seven bombings and the assassination.¹¹⁰⁹

For instance, on 8 August 2011, two professors at the Monterrey Institute of Technology were wounded when a package containing a tube of dynamite in a 20 centimetre-long pipe exploded. ITS, which was also linked to attacks against nanotechnology in France and Spain, claimed responsibility.¹¹¹⁰ The group was reportedly motivated by a fear that development of nanotechnology could lead to nanoparticles reproducing uncontrollably and threatening life on Earth.¹¹¹¹

According to Nature magazine, ITS also claimed responsibility for two bomb attacks against the head of engineering and nanotechnology at the Polytechnic University of the Valley of Mexico in Tultitlán in April and May 2011, the first of which wounded a security guard. In May 2011, ITS issued a general threat to professors and students warning them about any suspicious packages on campus: 'because one of these days we are going to make them pay for everything they want to do to the earth'.¹¹¹²

After the Monterrey bombing, the group reportedly listed five more researchers it was targeting at the Institute and six other universities.¹¹¹³ The group also claimed responsibility for the killing of Ernesto Mendéz Salinas, a researcher at the Biotechnology

Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in November 2011.¹¹¹⁴

Human rights violations by police and security forces

One university student was wounded when police fired warning shots at a student demonstration against violence and the militarization of responses to violence, in front of the Ciudad Juárez Autonomous University Institute for Biomedical Sciences on 29 October 2010.¹¹¹⁵

In another incident, on 12 December 2011, police fired live ammunition while dispersing around 300 or more student teachers blocking the motorway outside Chilpancingo. They were demanding better resources for rural education. The police killed two protesters and injured three others. One of the protesters was detained and tortured.¹¹¹⁶

On 19 March 2010, military personnel killed two students as they left the campus at Monterrey Institute for Technology, planted firearms on their bodies and falsely claimed they were 'hit men'.¹¹¹⁷

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

At least six teachers were killed in 2013 for reasons that were never established.¹¹¹⁸ For example, on 10 September in Acapulco, it was reported that teacher José Omar Ramírez Castro had been shot and killed less than 10 metres from his school as he went to give his class, sparking a strike by 144 teachers over insecurity and disrupting the education of over 10,000 students.¹¹¹⁹ Threats of kidnap and extortion against teachers also continued, with, for example, one school in the state of Morelos responding by moving teachers from one school to another to reduce the possible targeting of specific teachers.¹¹²⁰ Police were alleged to have used excessive force and

illegally detained protesters when they used electric batons to disperse 300 teachers and students demonstrating against education reforms in Veracruz in September.¹¹²¹ In higher education, attacks against nanotechnology researchers persisted.¹¹²²

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