

# Newsletter on the situation of internal displacement in Mexico

## July - December 2021

◆ According to press reports and research by the CMDPDH, **between July and December 2021** violence-related events and circumstances triggered the internal displacement of at least **19,716 persons in 6 Mexican states**. Considering the latest information available on displacements that occurred during the first half of the year, 9,151 persons were internally displaced for the same reasons between January and June. **During 2021, a total of 28,867 persons** from 10 states were internally displaced by violence in Mexico - a figure that almost triples the one reported the previous year and has been the highest we have documented since 2016.

### Displacement triggers

- Violence related to political and social conflicts and/or territorial disputes
- Violence caused by organized armed groups

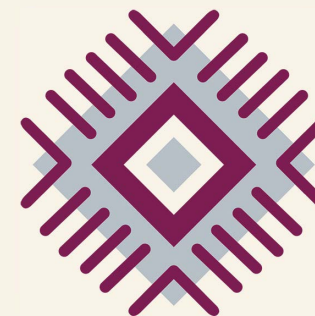
State	Affected municipalities	IDPs
Chiapas	5	6,585
Chihuahua	3	1,022
Guerrero	2	155
Michoacán	27	9,059
Oaxaca	1	390
Zacatecas	4	2,505



## ◆ Michoacán: the most affected state in 2021

The **increased violence** in Michoacán, in particular in the “Tierra Caliente” region, has turned this state into a displacement hotspot where at least 9,059 persons were forced to flee their homes in the second half of 2021 - 70% of the total number of IDPs in the state during the year. Blockades, attacks, and armed confrontations between organized crime groups operating in the region have forced entire families, including those with specific needs and protection risks such as **women, children, and elderly people**, to flee their homes in various municipalities like **Aguililla, Buenavista, Chinicuila, Coalcomán, and Tepalcatepec**.

IDPs from Michoacán seek protection within the state, in neighboring states, and even outside the country. According to a local source, in October there were approximately **3,500 IDPs from Michoacán in the state of Baja California**, and at least 1,500 of them were in Tijuana waiting for an opportunity to apply for asylum in the U.S.



## ◆ IDPs in the northern border and international protection

Hundreds of Mexican families continue to flee to the country's northern border in hopes to escape from violence and apply for asylum in the U.S., causing **border shelters** to be on the **verge of overcrowding**. By August, various shelters in Ciudad Juárez, in the state of Chihuahua, reported that **about 70% of their occupants** were internally displaced persons, mainly due to the violence in the states of Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Zacatecas. In Tijuana, among the thousands of people in the “El Chaparral” camp there were around 1,600 IDPs, mainly from the states of Guerrero, Michoacán, and Veracruz, including an estimate of around **600 or 700 minors**. In Nuevo Laredo, a city in the state of Tamaulipas, **45 IDPs** (29 adults and 16 minors) that were forced to flee the violence in the municipality of Calera, in the state of Zacatecas, arrived at the Civil Defense headquarters and requested assistance to be transported to one of the international bridges to apply for asylum in the U.S.

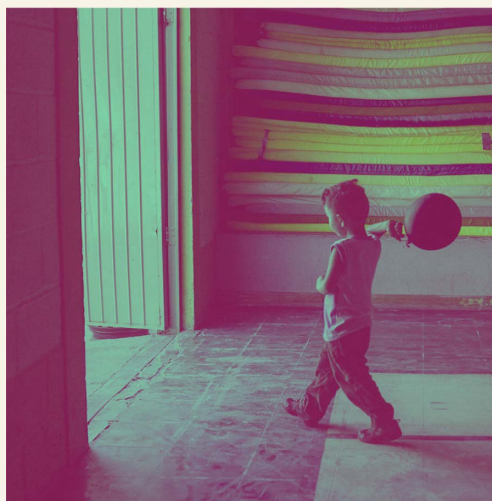


Photo: Luis Luján

## ◆ Internally displaced human rights defenders

Two women from Culiacán, Sinaloa, who were looking for their sons, both presumably victims of enforced disappearances, **were forced to flee** to another state after being victims of constant threats and acts of intimidation. The two *rastreadoras* (“trackers”, as people who search for the disappeared in vacant fields and deserts are known) had previously been displaced within the state and were now forced to leave Sinaloa due to the increased violence against them and threats to their families.



Photo: Rastreadoras del Fuerte /Denisse Pohls

### Statistical data related to internal displacement

According to data from the 2021 **National Survey on Victimization and Perception of Public Safety**, it is estimated that during 2020 people from **281,373 households** were forced to move to a different place to protect themselves from crime. This could represent a total of up to **911,914 persons** over the age of 18 who were forced to move as a protection measure.

## ◆ Advances at the legislative level

Although there was no significant progress regarding the bill that issues the **General Law to Prevent, Address and Provide Full Reparation to Internal Forced Displacement**, the following advances were made at state level:

- The Congress of Guerrero **passed a reform bill** to make the act of causing internal displacement a crime. **A similar reform bill** was proposed in Chihuahua.
- In Nuevo León, legislators **passed** a bill to reform the state’s Law on Victims which recognizes IDPs as a group that is “exposed to a greater risk of violation of their rights” and establishes specific measures for their protection.
- In Oaxaca, **a resolution was approved** demanding the state government protect the human rights and guarantee the safe return of 250 IDPs who were forced to flee Piedras Negras, in the municipality of San Juan Mazatlán Mixe, in 2017 due to a post-electoral conflict.
- Bills to create a State Law on Internal Displacement were proposed in **Morelos** and **Oaxaca**.
- The Congress of Michoacán **created** the Special Commission to Investigate and Combat the Disappearance of Persons and Forced Displacement. Among other things, the Commission will seek to promote legislative reforms, establish priorities for a local agenda, and disseminate updated data and statistics on disappearances and internal displacement.

## ◆ Protection measures for internally displaced persons

The National Human Rights Commission decided to use its mandate to **take the case** of the 143 families that were displaced in December 2020 from the Tierra Blanca Copala community, in the state of Oaxaca, with the purpose of documenting the case and starting an investigation.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted **precautionary measures** in favor of families in the Mixtec indigenous communities of Guerrero Grande and Ndoyonuyuji, in the municipality of San Esteban Atatlahuca, Oaxaca, and asked the Mexican State to adopt all measures necessary to protect their rights to life and personal integrity.

## ◆ IDPs and access to human rights

**Education** After a joint effort involving local educational authorities, an elementary school in Matamoros, a city in the state of Tamaulipas, **allowed 37 forcibly displaced and migrant children** who due to their particular circumstances did not have all the documents that are usually requested to attend virtual classes. 12 of the students came from Central America and the rest were IDPs escaping from the violence in states such as Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero.

**Assistance** The Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) presented a “pilot project” to assist the internally displaced families from Leonardo Bravo and Zitlala, in the state of Guerrero. **According to press reports**, the project consists in “finding shelter for each family and employment for the head of the family”.

**Access to justice** Members of 23 families that were displaced between 2014 and 2015 from the El Manzano community in Uruachi and the Monteverde community in Guazapares, in the state of Chihuahua, stated during a **press conference** that the crimes committed against them continue to go unpunished and that the authorities have not guaranteed the necessary conditions for them to return safely to their homes. Therefore, they **appealed to the Federal judiciary** to file injunctions against state and federal authorities so that a judge would rule on matters such as the full reparation of damages, access to justice, conditions for a safe return, property restitution, and non-repetition measures.

## ◆ Protests and mobilizations by IDPs ◆

In the absence of an adequate institutional response, groups of IDPs have had to organize and protest to demand for their rights. In August, around 100 IDPs **marched** to demand justice and the safe return to their homes in the Santa Catarina neighborhood in San Cristóbal de las Casas, in the state of Chiapas, from which they were displaced six years ago. Also, after a **failed attempt** to return to their homes, IDPs from Tierra Blanca Copala, a community in the state of Oaxaca, decided to reactivate **mobilizations** in their home state and in **Mexico City**.

Displaced families and individuals from different Mexican states and various civil society organizations that accompany them have come together to form the **National Collective of IDPs**. Their main goals are to increase the visibility of internal displacement in Mexico and to have a positive impact in the legislative process regarding the bill to create a General Law on the matter.

## ◆ Recommendations

👁️ **Watch this discussion** with the UN's Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, hosted by the Institute for the Study of Human Rights; the event **Internal Displacement in Latin America: Tools for the Implementation of Durable Solutions**, organized by **JIPS** and the CMDPDH (in Spanish), and the presentation of the report **Internal displacement in indigenous contexts: three state perspectives on a shared problem**, published by the National Population Council (in Spanish).

📖 **Read** the report of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement: **Shining a Light on Internal Displacement. A Vision for the Future** and the reports **Nexus between displacement and contemporary forms of slavery**, by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, and the **latest thematic report** by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, on prevention of arbitrary displacement in situations of armed conflict and generalized violence, and our **2020 report** on violence-induced internal displacement in Mexico (in Spanish).

🎧 **Listen** to UNHCR's podcasts series **Forced to Flee**.