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Mexico: Gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic violence; treatment of domestic violence survivors by society and authorities; ability of survivors to relocate to another region of the country, particularly in Mexico City and Mérida, and access housing, employment, education, and health services; legislation, state protection, and support services available (2022–July 2024)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. GBV in Mexico

The Wilson Center, a "nonpartisan" global policy think tank chartered by the US Congress (Wilson Center n.d.), indicates that GBV is "on the rise" in Mexico and that the factors driving femicides, sexual violence, and disappearances show "intricate connections between criminal networks, state-sponsored violence, and domestic forms of abuse" (2023-06-27). Sources indicate that "impunity" exists for perpetrators (Freedom House 2023-03-09, Sec. F2; Crisis Group 2023-04-19; Wilson Center 2023-06-27). In an interview with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of sociology and anthropology at the University of Guelph whose research is at the intersection of law, gender, and power in transnational processes in Mexico and across Latin America, Canada, and Europe, noted that in Mexico, "political violence, organized criminal groups and militarization" have created an environment that "supports violence" against women (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12).

According to the 2021 National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares, ENDIREH) by Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, INEGI), conducted from 4 October to 30 November 2021 on the various forms of violence experienced by women aged 15 and older in the 140,784 households surveyed, 70.1 percent of women aged 15 and older have experienced psychological, economic, patrimonial [property-related], physical, and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime; in the preceding iteration of this survey, the ENDIREH 2016, that figure was 66.1 percent (Mexico 2023, 3, 7, 9). The ENDIREH 2021 survey findings also indicate that 42.8 percent of women aged 15 and older had experienced a violent incident in the 12 months preceding the survey (Mexico 2023, 9).

Based on figures from Mexico's Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, SESNSP), Amnesty International indicates that "at least" 20,292 women were killed between 2018 and May 2023; on average, "almost 11 women are killed daily" (2023-07-11, para. 14). The same source adds that the prosecutors' offices investigated 5,065 of those 20,292 cases as alleged femicides (Amnesty International 2023-07-11, para. 14).

Citing official figures, an article by *Excelsior*, a Spanish-language newspaper in Mexico, indicates that the annual number of femicides increased by 137 percent between 2015 and 2021 (2022-04-24). Also citing official statistics, Freedom House states that 968 femicides were reported in 2022, but non-governmental sources indicate that the number is "likely much higher" (2023-03-09, Sec. G3).

According to ENDIREH 2021, 76.2 percent of women aged 15 and over in Mexico City have experienced one or more forms of violence throughout their lives, compared to 79.8 percent as of ENDIREH 2016 (Mexico 2023, 7). Furthermore, the same source also mentions that as of 2021, 71.4 percent of women aged 15 and over in Yucatán state had experienced one or more forms of violence throughout their lives, compared to 66.8 percent as of 2016 (Mexico 2023, 7). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor emerita of political science at the University of Texas at El Paso who has conducted research on violence against women and on

security issues at the US-Mexico border indicated that the states and municipalities that are "dominated" by criminal organizations such as Tamaulipas, Guerrero, and other south-central states are "likely to have higher rates of [physical and/or sexual] violence against women" because relatives of members of criminal groups can be targeted in "revenge killings" (Professor Emerita 2024-06-04). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence

According to Freedom House, "sexual abuse and domestic violence against women are common" in Mexico and perpetrators "rarely" face consequences (2023-03-09, Sec. G3). Sources indicate that domestic violence in Mexico is ["mainly" (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12) or "primarily" (Researcher 2024-06-20)] done by the woman's partner (Researcher 2024-06-20; Assistant Professor 2024-06-12) or by members of the partner's extended family (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12). The Assistant Professor further noted that in Mexico, women are "largely dependent" on men financially, and that Mexican society is very "patriarchal" (2024-06-12). An Associated Press (AP) article states that according to experts and advocates, "the rampant killings and history of femicide in Mexico can be attributed to deep-rooted cultural machismo, systemic gender inequality and latent domestic violence," in addition to "problems" throughout the justice system (2022-12-27).

According to the ENDIREH 2021 survey, 39.9 percent of women aged 15 years and over have experienced intimate partner violence throughout their current or last relationship in Mexico, out of which 35.4 percent of those incidents were psychological, 16.8 percent were physical, 6.9 percent were sexual, and 19.1 percent were economic and/or patrimonial (Mexico 2023, 11, 17). The National Network of Shelters (Red Nacional de Refugios, RNR), a network of shelters in Mexico made up of [translation] "85 percent civil society organizations and 15 percent government organizations" (RNR n.d.), reports that according to data from the SESNSP, in the first quarter of 2024, [translation] "more than 63,000 women" called 911 regarding intimate partner violence, which reflects an increase of 6.6 percent compared to 2023 (2024-05-22). The same source adds that 138,175 women reported by telephone that they experienced domestic violence and that in 2023 alone, there were 848 cases of femicides nationwide, with a total of 4,892 in the last six years (RNR 2024-05-22).

In an interview with the Research Directorate, a researcher and professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM) in Cuernavaca, the capital of the state of Morelos, whose research focuses on violence against women and domestic violence in Mexico, mentioned that girls under the age of 15 are at a "higher risk of experiencing sexual violence" in Mexico (Researcher 2024-06-20). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The ENDIREH 2021 survey indicates that 11.4 percent of women aged 15 and older had experienced violence "within the family" in the 12 months preceding the survey, with 9.2 percent of that violence being psychological and 3 percent being physical; siblings were the main perpetrators in 23.2 percent of cases overall, and in 37 percent of cases of physical violence (Mexico 2023, 16). Among the 1.7 percent of respondents who reported that they experienced sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, the perpetrator in 25.3 percent of cases was a cousin (Mexico 2023, 16).

The Assistant Professor indicated that factors such as sexual orientation, disability, poverty, economic inequality, social marginalization, race and ethnicity, religion, and culture affect the levels of domestic violence experienced by women in different situations (2024-06-12). The same source also stated that "marginalized" women who are not economically independent are "likely to be more vulnerable" to domestic violence (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12). The researcher indicated that factors such as age and ethnicity impact domestic violence, as well as income and educational levels, noting that women who earn more or are more educated than their partner may

experience higher levels of domestic violence (2024-06-20). According to ENDIREH 2021, the states with the lowest levels of women aged 15 and older who have experienced violence at one or more times throughout their lives were Chiapas (48.7 percent), Zacatecas (59.3 percent), and Tamaulipas (61.7 percent), while the states with the highest levels were Querétaro (75.2 percent), Mexico City (76.2 percent), and the State of Mexico (78.7 percent) (Mexico 2023, 7).

According to the Professor Emerita, "escalating domestic violence" that can lead to "murder" exists in Mexico despite "some bureaucratic attention" to GBV from the federal prosecutor's office and at the state level, including the creation of anti-femicide laws (2024-06-04).

2.1 Societal Attitudes

Citing a Mexican journalist who produced a documentary on survivors of GBV in Mexico, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) indicates that "[m]any" women do not file complaints "for fear of being stigmatized" or due to a "costly and cumbersome" legal process (UN 2023-07-03). According to the Professor Emerita, victims and survivors of domestic violence face shame and non-disclosure (2024-06-04). According to the Assistant Professor, survivors find it difficult to access support due to "stigma" and it is "common for women to deny" that they experienced domestic violence (2024-06-12). The same source added that while support could be offered to the survivors by the family and society, women could risk being "ostracized" for being survivors (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12). The same source also mentioned that in many cases parents or families in rural communities fail to support survivors, as leaving their home brings "shame" to the families and could lead to "gossip and accusations of adultery"; this can happen in upper and middle class families, but is "prevalent primarily in rural communities" (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12). According to the researcher, women are held to traditional roles in "some" areas, especially in rural and low-income regions, and are expected to "endure" violence as it is "an acceptable norm" (2024-06-20). The same source added that some women do receive financial support from their families or can move back in with them as attitudes around domestic violence are changing in some areas, but this support decreases as women continue to return to their "abusers" and as families might fear "retaliation" (Researcher 2024-06-20). Furthermore, the same source noted that women in urban areas can also seek help from a limited number of organizations, and, in many cases, do return to their "abusers" as they cannot support themselves or their children (Researcher 2024-06-20). According to the Assistant Professor, in many cases, the support might come "only" from feminist or human rights organizations (2024-06-12).

Amnesty International mentions that women and girls who protest GBV might be "stigmatized" for "daring to challenge traditional gender roles," which carries consequences that may include "breakdown of family relationships and loss of employment" (2021-03-03, 9). According to International Crisis Group (Crisis Group), an increased number of women have joined criminal groups to gain "power and respect" and protect themselves from GBV, while some women are drawn in by other factors, including by romantic partners, and in some cases are "coerced or tricked" into participating in illegal activities (2023-11-28, Principal Findings, 5, 7).

3. Legislation

Mexico's Federal Penal Code (*Código Penal Federal*) provides the following:

[translation]

Domestic Violence ...

Art. 343 Bis. A person commits the crime of domestic violence when they carry out acts or conducts involving dominance; control; or physical, psychological, property-related or economic; or sexual aggression against any person with whom they have or have had a relationship of marriage; consanguinity, affinity, legal kinship; common-law marriage; cohabitation or a couple's relationship, whether within or outside the family home.

Amended paragraph, Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF), 2024-01-17

A person who commits the crime of domestic violence shall be sentenced to six months to four years in prison and shall lose the right to alimony. In addition, they will be required to undergo specialized psychological treatment.

When the conducts described in this article are committed against a pregnant woman, an elderly person or a person with disabilities, the penalty shall be increased by up to one half at both its minimum and maximum levels.

Paragraph added, DOF 2024-04-17

Article added, DOF 1997-12-30. Amended, DOF 2012-06-14

Article 343 Ter. A person who carries out any of the acts indicated in the preceding article against a person who is subject to the custody, guardianship, protection, education, instruction or care of [the perpetrator] shall be deemed to commit domestic violence and shall be punished with six months to four years in prison.

Article added, DOF 1997-12-30. Amended, DOF 2012-06-14

Article 343 Ter 2. The penalties provided for in Art. 343 Bis shall be increased by up to one third for those who commit such acts through an intermediary.

Article added, DOF 2024-01-17

Art. 343 quater.- In cases of domestic violence, violence deemed equivalent to domestic violence, and violence through an intermediary, the Public Prosecutor's Office [Ministerio Público] shall warn the accused person to refrain from any conduct that could be offensive to the victim and shall decide upon preventive measures and request the precautionary measures it deems necessary to safeguard the physical or psychological integrity of the victim, as well as the protection orders established in the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence [*Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia*].

The administrative authority shall monitor compliance with these measures in accordance with the applicable legislation.

Article added, DOF 1997-12-31. Amended, DOF 2024-01-17. (Mexico 1931, bold and italics in original)

In addition, the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023* indicates that among the 32 Mexican states, 29 have legislated similar penalties to the ones provided by the Federal Penal Code regarding GBV, although sentences were "often more lenient" (US 2024-04-22, 33).

US *Country Reports 2023* also indicates that femicide is a federal crime punishable by 40 to 70 years of prison, and is also a criminal offense in all states (US 2024-04-22, 34).

The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence aims to coordinate the prevention, punishment and eradication of GBV at a national level, that is, between the national level, the states, the capital, and municipalities (State of México n.d.). The General Law was enacted in 2007 and amended on 26 January 2024 [latest amendment as of July 2024] (Mexico 2007).

3.1 Implementation of Legislation on Domestic Violence

US *Country Reports 2023* indicate that "[s]tate and municipal laws addressing domestic violence largely failed to meet the required federal standards and often were unenforced" (US 2024-04-22,

33). According to the Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates), an American NGO that seeks to "implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law" (The Advocates n.d.), the General Law "has not been fully implemented across Mexico" and a number of its legal mechanisms have "not proven to be effective" (The Advocates 2024-01-08). According to Freedom House, the implementation of the 2007 General Law "remains halting, particularly at the state level" (2023-03-09, Sec. G3). According to Crisis Group, Mexico's regulatory framework on violence against women "has not had a discernible impact" and the "impunity" level is "high" (2023-04-19).

4. Response from Authorities

According to Amnesty International, Mexican authorities have responded to "mostly" peaceful feminist protests against GBV with "excessive and unnecessary use of force," "illegal and arbitrary arrests," "gender-based verbal and physical abuse against women" and "sexual violence" (2021-03-03, 3). The same report indicates that protesters have been "stigmatized" as being "violent" and that the way authorities have framed the protests has made violence against feminist activists at the hands of private individuals and the state forces "more likely" (Amnesty International 2021-03-03, 3).

According to *Americas Quarterly* (AQ), a New York City-based not-for-profit publication covering business, politics, and culture with a focus on Latin America, published by the Americas Society/Council of the Americas (AS/COA) (AQ n.d.), the government of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador [scheduled to be in office until 1 October 2024, when he will be replaced by Claudia Sheinbaum, who was elected in June 2024 (BBC 2024-06-03)] "overlooked" the steps "necessary to ensure women's safety" and in "some cases," "undermined" women's safety (2022-05-17). According to Freedom House, President López Obrador "frequently dismissed" feminists as allied of the opposition in 2022 and earlier years (2023-03-09, Sec. G3). According to the Assistant Professor, the administration of President López Obrador has repeatedly "attacked" feminist groups, accused them of "discrediting" the government, and cut "most" of the funding for women shelters and programmes, which were run by feminist and other civil society organizations (2024-06-12).

The Professor Emerita noted that "many" police officers have ties with criminal groups that carry out drug and human trafficking activities and that they "have long normalized domestic violence" to the extent that it became part of the police culture (2024-06-04). According to the Assistant Professor, there is generally an "institutional denial" and underreporting of domestic violence, including by police and agents of the Public Prosecutor's Office (2024-06-12). The same source further added that the police have the notion that domestic violence must be "extreme" for them to take action, which leads to "failure" in providing support or issuing protection orders for survivors, especially for Indigenous girls and women who might not even speak Spanish (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12).

5. State Protection

Chapter II of the General Law provides for the creation of a [Mexico English version] "Comprehensive Program to Prevent, Treat, Punish and Eradicate Violence Against Women," which includes actions to "[p]rovide specialized services free of charge for the treatment and protection of victims, through public and private authorities and institutions" (Mexico 2007, Art. 38(V)). According to a report by RNR and by Fundar, Centre of Research Analysis (Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación, Fundar), an independent research center focusing on public policies (Fundar 2014-06-24), submitted to the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women in Mexico are discriminated against by the same public institutions included in the care mechanism provided in the General Law and to which they apply for protection, treatment and reparation of the violence they experience (RNR & Fundar 2023-09-10, 5). Similarly, Amnesty International has "documented cases where families of the victims of

femicide are re-victimized by the authorities throughout the process of seeking justice" (2021-09-20, 4).

In its report on stigma and violence against women protesters, Amnesty International indicates that "impunity" for perpetrators in cases of GBV have "undermined trust in the institutions that should protect [women and girl protesters]" (2021-03-03, 8, 9). According to the Mexican journalist and documentary filmmaker interviewed by the OHCHR, "[n]ot only are there no legal consequences for killing women, but the State will do nothing to protect or financially take care of the victims" (UN 2023-07-03). According to the Assistant Professor, if women who survive domestic violence file an official complaint, there are "very slim chances" that they will obtain results or support from the authorities and could possibly face "retaliation" (2024-06-12). According to the researcher, the "high levels of impunity" discourage women who experience domestic violence from filing complaints as they do not believe the perpetrator will be investigated or prosecuted (2024-06-20). The same source added that less than 10 percent of cases where women have filed cases regarding domestic violence have reached the judiciary level (Researcher 2024-06-20). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. The researcher added that authorities and the police might dismiss the complaints if women are not a "stereotypical victim" in cases where women fight the perpetrator back or do not have marks of physical harm on their bodies (2024-06-20).

The Professor Emerita mentioned that "state and local law enforcement is weak" and officers are undertrained and underpaid, and do not conduct thorough investigations and prosecutions (2024-06-04). According to the researcher, the numbers of law enforcement personnel and police is also limited, and they tend to give priority to crimes such as murders and kidnappings (2024-06-20).

According to the Assistant Professor, there are many cases of women who were killed despite reporting domestic violence incidents and requesting protection from the police, who "failed" to intervene or protect them (2024-06-12).

5.1 Protection Orders

The General Law provides the following:

[translation]

Article 27.- Protection orders: They are measures that are to be urgently applied in the best interests of the victim, they are fundamentally precautionary and cautionary, and they must be granted officially, at the request of a party, by administrative authorities, the Public Prosecutor's Office or by the competent jurisdictional bodies, as soon as they become aware of the act of violence allegedly constituting a crime or infraction, which endangers the integrity, freedom or life of women or girls, preventing the aggressor at all times, either directly or through a third party, from having contact of any kind or means with the victim.

Paragraph amended, DOF 2021-03-18.

... (Mexico 2007)

According to the Fighting Domestic Violence tool [1], a comparative law tool developed by Baker McKenzie, an international law firm that provides business law services (Baker McKenzie n.d.a), there are three types of protection orders in Mexico: emergency, preventive, and civil (Baker McKenzie n.d.b, para. 4.1.5). The same source adds that emergency and preventive protection orders are "temporary and do not exceed 72 hours, while civil orders have no time limit" (Baker McKenzie n.d.b, para. 4.1.7). Furthermore, the same source notes that protection orders can be obtained by any "direct or indirect victim" of any age, including the children of a domestic violence survivor, or, in the case of a "victim" under 12 years old, their legal representative or the "public defendant" (Baker McKenzie n.d.b, para. 4.1.6, 4.3.2). The same source also mentions that emergency orders require that the accused aggressor immediately leave the marital home or the

place where the victim lives, and that the accused aggressor cannot approach the victim's home, place of work or studies, or residence of a family member that the victim is known to visit (Baker McKenzie n.d.b, para. 4.1.4). According to the researcher, even when protection orders are issued, the number of police and law enforcement agents is not sufficient to ensure their effectiveness and "the perpetrators know that nothing will happen to them if they breach protection orders" (2024-06-20).

5.2 Reporting Domestic Violence

According to the ENDIREH 2021 survey, 20.5 percent of women aged 15 years and over who experienced "physical or sexual violence" by an intimate partner, and 10.1 percent of women who experienced such violence by family, have sought support or filed a report (Mexico 2023, 18). In their 2023 submission to CEDAW's review for Mexico, the coalition Allies for Equality and Nonviolence (Allies) [2] indicates that in the states of Baja California, Chiapas, Coahuila, Colima, Guerrero, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Puebla, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Yucatán, and Zacatecas, minors (under the age of 18) who are survivors of rape or sexual violence must have their legal guardians or legal representatives file a complaint on their behalf (Allies 2023-09-11, para. 30). According to the researcher, police and public officials do not have interpreters most of the times, which makes it harder for Indigenous women who do not speak Spanish to file a complaint and leads to underreporting of domestic violence in states with larger Indigenous populations, such as Chiapas (2024-06-20). A 2021 Amnesty International report documents that investigations of femicides following a disappearance have been marked by "failings" of the state, including loss of evidence, lack of adequate investigations, not applying a gender perspective, and "inadequate" protection against threats by the perpetrator to the victims' families (2021-09-20, 3–5). According to the Wilson Center, "[s]evere underreporting, poor, truncated, or non-existent judicial investigations, discrimination and prejudices on [the part] of public officials" are some of the challenges in addressing "disappearances and gender-motivated murders of women and girls" (2023-06-27).

5.3 Alert Mechanism for Violence Against Women

The General Law defines the Alerts for gender-based violence against women (Alertas de Violencia de Género contra las mujeres) as follows:

[translation]

ARTICLE 22.- Alert for gender-based violence against women: It is a set of coordinated, comprehensive, temporary emergency actions taken between the authorities of the three branches and levels of government to combat and eradicate violence against women in a determined area; it is also to eliminate comparative tort, resulting from inequalities created by legislation or public policy that impedes the recognition of women, adolescents and girls' human rights or their exercise thereof in order to guarantee their full access to the right to a violence-free life.

The procedure to issue an Alert for gender-based violence against women must be prompt and expeditious, taking into account the urgency of the documented facts for the request and the territory specified in the request, as well as the principle of due diligence. *Article amended, DOF 2022-04-29.* (Mexico 2007, bold and italics in original)

Amnesty International indicates in a July 2023 submission to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) working group of the UN Human Rights Council that Mexico had 25 Alerts for gender-based violence against women activated in 22 states across the country (2023-07-11, 2). Sources note that the alerts have "failed" to stop femicides (Crisis Group 2023-04-19) or have "proven ineffective" (Freedom House 2023-03-09, Sec. G3).

6. Support Services

According to the Professor Emerita, survivors need money to relocate to locations with employment opportunities where they have social and familial networks, which is "difficult" and "challenging," particularly for low-income women as they may lose their children and shelter (2024-06-04). The Assistant Professor stated that it is generally "hard" for women who survive domestic violence to relocate to a new area in Mexico (2024-06-12). According to the researcher, "starting over" is "very complicated" because women who experience domestic violence do not "usually" have the education, work experience, or money [that would aid their efforts to relocate] (2024-06-20). The same source further noted that survivors are less likely to be employed and, if they are, they might receive lower salaries than other women and will "most likely" move within the same region in order to continue receiving support from friends and families (Researcher 2024-06-20). The researcher added that perpetrators might isolate women and threaten to take their children away, which would make it "more complicated" for women to escape (2024-06-20).

US *Country Reports 2023* notes that "[i]n addition to shelters, women's external assistance centers provided services including legal, psychological, and protective," but the number of cases "far surpassed" the available capacity (US 2024-04-22, 33). The same source adds that according to "[l]egal experts," there are not enough "psychological and anthropological experts" to issue "appropriate expert reports that judges required in femicide and domestic violence cases" (US 2024-04-22, 33). According to Human Rights Watch, Mexico's Congress established in 2023 that domestic violence shelters should be accessible to women with disabilities (2024-01-11). Information on the implementation of this regulation regarding accessibility of shelters could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

US *Country Reports 2023* states that "more than 69 shelters, external attention centers, emergency houses, and transition houses" received federal funding, and that 85 percent of those facilities were run by NGOs and 15 percent by the government (US 2024-04-22, 33–34).

AQ indicates that a number of shelters that "provide services for women and children fleeing violence" were closed due to delayed funding from the authorities (2022-05-17). Sources indicate that the budget assigned for the Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General de la República, FGR) to respond to crimes against women was cut by 73 percent in 2020 (LAB 2023-03-21; Animal Político 2022-01-10).

6.1 Shelters

According to the RNR and Fundar report, the shelters that were established under the General Law provide protection for women and their children who experience violence (2023-09-10, 5). The same source indicates that as of July 2023, the RNR has 75 shelters which offer women psychological and legal support in addition to educating them on their rights and providing education and training resources (RNR & Fundar 2023-09-10, 5). According to the Professor Emerita, women's shelters are few and distant from each other (2024-06-04). The researcher stated that shelters have "very limited" resources and "sometimes" do not have food or running water available and women "usually move out quickly" from those shelters (2024-06-20).

According to Crisis Group, Mexico has "specialised prosecution offices for crimes of violence against women (*fiscalías especializadas*) and Centres for Women's Justice (Centros de Justicia para las Mujeres), but they tend to be understaffed and poorly resourced" and are not easily accessible (2023-04-19). The same source adds that these offices exist to identify and prosecute perpetrators but do not provide survivors with protection (Crisis Group 2023-04-19). According to the Assistant Professor, these shelters stipulate that only women facing "extreme" forms of domestic violence where their lives are at risk can access these shelters, leaving women with few alternatives (2024-06-12).

6.2 Mexico City

According to the Assistant Professor, there could be a higher chance for women to obtain support from women's organizations in Mexico City, but it would be "almost impossible" for them to make it on their own, especially if they relocate with their children (2024-06-12). The same source added that access to employment and services is "very hard" and even when they secure employment, women are not paid as much as men (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12). The same source also noted that the situation is "exacerbated" for marginalized, Indigenous, and illiterate women and girls (Assistant Professor 2024-06-12). According to the website of the Mexico City Attorney General of Justice (Fiscalía General de Justicia Ciudad de Mexico, FGJCDMX), the Women Justice Centers (Centros de Justicia para las Mujeres) and Domestic Violence Support Center offer protection to women experiencing domestic violence (Mexico City n.d.a). There are four Women's Justice Centers in Mexico City (Azcapotzalco, Iztapalapa, Tlalpan and Magdalena Contreras) and they are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with [translation] "specialized, comprehensive and inter-institutional services"; they provide the following services:

- Assessment of the situation of violence through an interview;
- Psychological care for women and children;
- Primary medical care;
- Legal guidance and advice on familial, civil, criminal and labour matters;
- Representation and support of women during the application and the procedures for protective measures;
- Workshops, social and educational programmes aimed at achieving social and economic autonomy;
- Family Court: providing urgent protection measures in civil matters;
- Civil Court: Preparing case record, if not involving a crime, and providing advice for civil complaint;
- Public legal advice: guidance, advice or intervention in criminal proceedings, on the victim's behalf; and
- Public Prosecutor's Agency (Agencia del Ministerio Público): investigates alleged criminal acts it is made aware of (Mexico City n.d.a).

The same source provides the addresses for the four centers as well as their phone lines, which are also monitored 24 hours a day (Mexico City n.d.a).

The Centre for Domestic Violence (Centro de Atención a la Violencia Intrafamiliar, CAVI) offers [translation] "social assistance, psychological care, legal advice, legal follow-up in criminal matters, emergency medical care, processing of emergency protection measures" as stipulated in the Mexico City Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (Mexico City n.d.b).

6.3 Yucatán State and Mérida (Capital of Yucatán)

According to the website of the state of Yucatán, the Regional Third-Level Violet Centers (Centros Regionales Violeta de Tercer Nivel) offer free and confidential social work, psychological care, and legal advice and, if needed, referrals to the relevant unit in the public administration for children, girls and women who are living in situations of violence, as well as for their children and relatives who are indirect victims of violence (Yucatán n.d.a). There are 16 centers throughout Yucatán, including one in Mérida (Yucatán n.d.a).

The website of the Yucatán State Attorney General (Fiscalía General del Estado, FGE) indicates that women can access the Women Justice Center (Centro de Justicia para las Mujeres) [located in Mérida] (Yucatán n.d.b). The same source states that the following services are offered at the Center:

- State Attorney General: in charge of receiving and investigating complaints related to crimes against women; issues emergency protection orders; provides specialized legal and psychological help to victims;
- Defense Attorney for Minors and Family (Procuraduría de la Defensa el Menor y la Familia): provides institutional protection to minors at risks, through provisional care in

- shelters and provides legal, psychological and social assistance to women;
- Women's Secretariat (Secretaría de las Mujeres): provides psychological and legal assistance, if needed; initiate the creation of workshops on violence's prevention;
- Social Development Secretariat (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social): provides professional and occupational training to the women attending the Center;
- Education Secretariat (Secretaría de Educación): provides care in the children's playroom while their mothers attend the Center;
- Health Secretariat (Secretaría de Salud): in charge of general and emergency healthcare for the victims;
- Economic Development Secretariat (Secretaría de Fomento Económico): in charge of training and support aiming at women's economic stability;
- Shelters: temporary safe place while a support network or a more permanent shelter is located (Yucatán n.d.b).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] The Fighting Domestic Violence law tool provides rapid analysis of various countries' national legislation on domestic violence (Baker McKenzie n.d.c).

[2] Allies for Equality and Nonviolence (Allies) is a coalition of Mexican and international human rights organizations that advocate for and research Mexico's compliance in "preventing, eradicating and punishing violence against women" (Allies 2023-09-11, para. 4). The coalition is made up of Collective City and Gender (Colectiva Ciudad y Género), Equality Now, RAÍCES Gender Analysis for Development (RAÍCES Análisis de Género para el Desarrollo), Women Driving Equality (Mujeres impulsando la igualdad, MIDI), and the Center for Justice and International Law (Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional, CEJIL) (Allies 2023-09-11, para. 4–9).

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Internet sites, including: ABC News; Al Jazeera; Bertelsmann Stiftung; CBC; CNN; *El País*; Equal Times; EQUIS Justicia para las Mujeres; Factiva; Femicide Watch; Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom; Impunidad Cero; InSight Crime; Justice in Mexico; Kering Foundation; *Los Angeles Times*; *The New York Times*; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development; Organization of American States – Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; Spheres of Influence; UK – Home Office; UN – Refworld, UN Women; Washington Office on Latin America; *The Washington Post*.