EnfoqueDH – HUMAN RIGHTS PUBLIC POLICY ACTIVITY:
Quarterly Progress Report

Activity Start Date and End Date: October 30, 2015 to October 29, 2020
Total Estimated Cost: 11,125,685 USD
AOR Name: Bárbara Pérez-Martínez
Submitted by: Patricio Toussaint, Chief of Party
Prime Implementing Partner: Chemonics International Inc.

Varsovia 36, Col. Cuauhtémoc, Z.C. 06600
Mexico City, Mexico.
Tel: 52 1 557474 0336
Email: ptoussaint@mexicoderechoshumanos.org

Date: May 29, 2020 Version: 1
Reporting Period: February 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020

DISCLAIMER
This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by Chemonics International Inc.
### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMELP</td>
<td>Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAR</td>
<td>After Action Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Centro de Colaboración Cívica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEAV</td>
<td>Executive Commission of Attention to Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEBV</td>
<td>Veracruz Search Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDEHM</td>
<td>Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPAD</td>
<td>Centro de Justicia para la Paz y el Desarrollo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMDPDH</td>
<td>Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNB</td>
<td>National Search Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNDH</td>
<td>National Human Rights Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAF</td>
<td>Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGR</td>
<td>General Prosecutor’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJDL</td>
<td>Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos Fray Juan de Larios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLACSO</td>
<td>Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLD</td>
<td>General Law of Disappearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLT</td>
<td>General Law of Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOM</td>
<td>Government of Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFED</td>
<td>Instituto para el Fortalecimiento del Estado de Derecho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFDP</td>
<td>Federal Institute of Public Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJPP</td>
<td>Instituto de Justicia Procesal Penal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMDHD</td>
<td>Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITESO</td>
<td>Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLE</td>
<td>Laboratorio de Litigio Estructural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIF</td>
<td>Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MovNDmx</td>
<td>Movement for Our Disappeared in Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSCC</td>
<td>National Search Citizen Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENADET</td>
<td>National Registry for the Crime of Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCJN</td>
<td>Supreme Court of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOLA</td>
<td>Washington Office on Latin America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary 3
2. Context Analysis 4
3. Indicator Progress 7
4. Accomplishments and Overall Status 9
5. Problems and Delays (and/or Lessons Learned) 17
6. Major activities or corrective actions 17
7. Updates on Evaluation and Learning plans or activities 19
9. Participant Training 20
10. Partnerships Report 21
11. Annexes 21
## 1. Executive Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Activity Start and End Date</th>
<th>Activity Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EnfoqueDH – HUMAN RIGHTS PUBLIC POLICY ACTIVITY</td>
<td>October 30, 2015 to October 29, 2020</td>
<td>EnfoqueDH, is a technical assistance program, focused on building capacities of both government and civil society, for the design, implementation and evaluation of effective public policies on human rights in Mexico.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Government of Mexico (GOM) has responded to the human rights crisis with diverse initiatives. To further select initiatives, the General Laws of Torture and Disappearance were approved by the GOM in 2017. For these General Laws to be implemented at the federal and state levels, it is essential that there are competent authorities, efficient institutions, and an active and participatory civil society. EnfoqueDH works at the federal and state levels to promote the above conditions and, as such, to facilitate the proper implementation of these General Laws, contributing to address and reverse gross human rights violations. For this quarter, EnfoqueDH is reporting progress on the following activities:

### General Law of Torture
- Promoting better registries of torture
- Improving local capacities to document cases of torture
- Promoting independent monitoring mechanisms on the implementation of the General Law of Torture
- Supporting the General Law of Torture from its enactment, through to its implementation
- Promoting best practices in criminal proceedings to address torture
- Empowering judicial actors to address cases of torture
- Identifying the next steps to effectively implement the General Law of Torture

### General Law of Disappearance
- Developing the first Regional Search Program
- Building capacity within institutions in charge of searching for missing persons
- Advocating for the effective implementation the General Law of Disappearance in Jalisco
- Introducing statistical and contextual analysis tools to strengthen search and identification efforts
- Maximizing data interpretation related to cases of disappearances
- Best practices to respond to disappearances
- Capacity-building workshop on the spatiotemporal analysis of data
- New narratives to approach the struggles of civil society organizations in the defense of human rights
- Promoting the participation of relatives of missing persons and civil society in the design of public policies
- Leveraging current judicial mechanisms to respond to disappearances
- Developing civil society capacity for the search and investigation of cases of disappearance
- Enabling actions for the investigation of missing persons in Veracruz
- Building local capacities for criminal investigation and sanctioning of human rights abuses
- Offering psychosocial support to victims of disappearances
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Relevant Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Strengthening the CMDPDH’s strategic communication capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Working towards a Comprehensive Model of Attention to Victims in Veracruz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EnfoqueDH works at the federal level and in the four priority states of Coahuila, Chihuahua, Jalisco and Veracruz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five Quarter Two (February 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Context Analysis

#### National Overview

At the federal level, during February and March 2020, the human rights agenda was centered on the announcement of specific efforts to prevent and address violence against children and adolescents, and to strengthen actions in favor of the protection and safety of women and girls. At the same time, important strides were made in favor of the implementation of the General Law of Disappearance (GLD), and in the investigation of the 43 students who disappeared in Iguala, Guerrero, over five years ago.

On March 30, the Government of Mexico (GOM) declared a national state of sanitary emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The declaration ordered the suspension of “nonessential activities” from March 31 to May 31, urging the general population to stay at home. The health emergency represented an enormous challenge for the country, requiring authorities at all levels of government to guarantee and protect the rights of individuals.

However, despite the mobility restrictions that began in the middle of March, violence continued to escalate precipitously. According to the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System, March registered 3,078 homicides, making it the most violent month of President Lopez Obrador’s administration, and the first to exceed 3,000 deaths since August 2019. Gender-based violence also increased in the same month. The 911 emergency number received 115,614 calls from women nationwide, a 22.31% increase from the previous month. These unsettling figures continued into the following month, with April 19 and 20 registering 105 and 114 homicides respectively, the highest daily figures in 2020. Finally, on April 29, the Federal Government published a document with “Observations on Human Rights Violations during the COVID-19 Health Emergency”, which acknowledged that between March 1 and April 23, the National Search Commission (CNB for its acronym in Spanish) registered the disappearance of at least 237 people, out of which 87 had been located.

#### International Scrutiny

On March 6, as part of the 175th session of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Movement for Our Disappeared in Mexico (MovNDmx for its acronym in Spanish) comprised of 35 groups of relatives of missing persons and 40 civil society organizations, participated in a hearing pertaining to the creation of an Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism (MEIF for its acronym in Spanish) in Mexico. As a response to the humanitarian crisis facing the country and to the backlog of more than 37,000 unidentified bodies, the MovNDmx highlighted current challenges related to the creation of the Mechanism, and advocated for substantial administrative, regulatory and budgetary measures so it can ensure:
The existence of an independent Coordinating Group that complies with the highest technical standards, and carries out a detailed assessment of Mexico’s forensic identification needs.

Sufficient funding exclusively dedicated to the fulfillment of its functions, with the support of International Cooperation Agencies.

Cooperation between local prosecutors’ offices.

Participation and oversight from relatives of missing persons in its implementation.

During the hearing, both families and federal government representatives noted that one of the greatest challenges in the implementation of the MEIF is the level of access and support it receives from federal and state prosecutors’ offices, which have control over DNA databases and backlogged remains. In this regard, several members of the MovNDmx pointed out that some state prosecutors have not provided information on their forensic services, which affects the accuracy of official figures and the development of a reliable national assessment of forensic services.

On March 11, the U.S. Department of State published its 2019 report on Mexico’s human rights practices. The document notes the existence of reports of forced disappearances by organized crime groups, some of which include allegations of state collusion. It also acknowledges several issues within the GOM’s data collection on forced disappearances, as it often merges statistics of forced disappearances with missing persons who are not suspected victims of such crime. Moreover, investigations, prosecutions and convictions are still rare. As for torture and other cruel or degrading treatments, the report indicated that as of June 2019, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH for its acronym in Spanish) registered 20 complaints of torture, most of them from the states of Tamaulipas, Mexico, Veracruz, and Mexico City. It points out that only 15 out of 32 states have specialized prosecutors’ offices for torture as required by law. Moreover, it states that the GOM faces the challenge of developing indicators and reliable statistics on the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to cases of torture and mistreatment.

Finally, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) published an article on March 23 describing the GOM’s actions to address the current crisis surrounding disappearances. In particular, it mentions the efforts carried out by the CNB, with the support of EnfoqueDH, to develop a Search Program for the northeastern region of Mexico. The Program will coordinate concrete actions between different government authorities, maximizing existing efforts focused on the search of missing persons.

**Efforts to Implement the General Law of Disappearance**

On March 19, and as a result of joint efforts between government actors, relatives of missing persons, civil society and international organizations, the formal agreement approving the creation of the MEIF was published in the Official Federal Gazette. The Mechanism will have the mandate to clear the backlog of unidentified bodies and remains in the country. It will operate as a semi-autonomous government body under the National Search System, enjoying full operational and financial independence. The MEIF will be made up of national and international experts in forensic archaeology, anthropology, DNA and data analysis, as well as other relevant areas.

In the same month, and thanks to the work of the Special Unit for the Ayotzinapa case within Mexico’s General Prosecutor’s Office (FGR for its acronym in Spanish), arrest warrants were issued against five government officials and a former marine for torture, forced disappearance, and obstruction of justice in the case of the 43 students who disappeared in the state of Guerrero in 2014. The decision to prosecute high-level officials demonstrates the political will within President López Obrador’s administration to investigate this emblematic case. The effort was praised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Mexico.
On another matter of key importance to the context of disappearances in the country, on April 12, EnfoqueDH grantee Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos Fray Juan de Larios (FJDL for its acronym in Spanish), issued a public statement demanding the adoption of federal guidelines to forbid the cremation of unidentified bodies of people who had died or were suspected to have died of COVID-19. In response, federal authorities issued rules banning the cremation of unidentified and unclaimed bodies of people who died in these conditions, while also publishing protocols to register deaths during the health emergency.

**Efforts to Implement the General Law of Torture**

On April 5, during his most recent quarterly briefing, President López Obrador claimed that his government “had eradicated torture”, assuring that the GOM was no longer associated with this crime. The statement sparked criticism by civil society, as the implementation of the General Law of Torture (GLT) continues to lag. In particular, it was noted that Mexico still lacks a National Registry for the Crime of Torture, the National Program Against Torture has not yet been published, and many states do not have specialized prosecutor’s offices to investigate this crime.

**Progress within EnfoqueDH’s Priority States**

In Chihuahua, according to the local Search Commission, there are more than three thousand missing persons, out of which 443 are women; making it the state with the fourth highest number of recorded disappearances. Since the Commission began operations in April 2019, it has carried out 93 interventions, obtaining positive results in 16 of them by locating 20 deceased people, human remains in 4, and one person alive. On another note, and as part of advocacy actions during the health emergency, EnfoqueDH grantee Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres (CEDEHM), issued a statement demanding state government authorities to continue fulfilling their obligations in the search of missing persons by prosecuting those responsible for these crimes, and providing adequate reparations to victims.

In Coahuila, on April 21, the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJN for its acronym in Spanish) repealed article 58 of the state’s Law of Forced Disappearance, as it is contradicts Article 16 of the Federal Constitution. The local clause established that the State Prosecutor for Missing Persons could request the authorization of a judge to tap private communications, despite the fact that the Constitution gives this authority exclusively to the FGR with previous authorization granted by a federal judge. Moreover, on April 30, FJDL rebuked an official decree issued by the state government outlining different actions it planned to implement in response to the health emergency. The organization pointed out that it violated basic human rights, as it reassigns officers who are in charge of the search and investigation of disappearances to respond to health and sanitation tasks. FJDL also pointed out that these types of directives open the door for a disproportionate use of force as authorities can use the health emergency as a justification.

In the case of Jalisco, the State Prosecutor’s Office reported that from March 1 to April 23, 3,664 people had been reported as missing, 622 investigations were opened, and 428 people had been located. The information released was a direct response to communications issued by the *Por amor a Ellxs* collective, which claimed that due to the health emergency, the Special Prosecutor’s Office noticeably decreased its work, while disappearances continued at a similar rate prior to the emergency. Furthermore, on April 23, the *Por Amor a Ellxs* collective and EnfoqueDH grantee, Centro de Justicia para la Paz y el Desarrollo (CEPAD), advocated for the inclusion of actions related to the search and investigation of missing persons as essential activities during the health emergency. They pointed out that despite sanitary restrictions, there are several search and investigation activities that can be carried out without risking the health of authorities. The organizations identified that, as a result of the restricted accessibility to government institutions during the health crisis, there had been very
little reporting on their activities, and a poor response to requests from relatives of missing persons to obtain information on the progress of remote investigations. Therefore, CEPAD reiterated that government authorities should seek new communication strategies and attention measures using information and communication technologies as means of communication to respond to the needs of relatives of missing persons. These measures would guarantee the relatives’ right to information and their active participation in search tasks and the investigation of cases.

In Veracruz, on February 7, the 5th National Search Brigade began operations. Comprised of more than 300 people from 22 states, including relatives of missing persons, academics and activists, this Brigade will focus search efforts in Papantla, in the northern area of Veracruz, where in recent years, numerous clandestine graves linked to organized crime have been found. On another note, on March 12, the Veracruz Government Secretariat published a reform to its internal regulation, in order to include recommendations made by EnfoqueDH for the adequate incorporation of the Veracruz Search Commission (CEBV for its acronym in Spanish) into the structure of the State Government Secretariat. Finally, on April 22, the CNDH asked Veracruz Governor, Cuitláhuac García, to continue search actions for missing persons. In a statement issued by the CNDH, the Commissioner urged all governors to continue promoting the investigation, search, location and identification of missing persons, despite the pandemic.

3. Indicator Progress

The Indicator Summary Table, which includes detailed information about EnfoqueDH's indicators as defined in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, is presented in Annex 1.

Throughout this quarter, outcome indicators showed significant progress.

Indicator 01. Number of recommendations supported by USAID/EnfoqueDH, adopted by the GOM, in benefit of the implementation of the GLT.

- EnfoqueDH made a set of comprehensive recommendations to support the FGR in the development of a National Registry for the Crime of Torture (RENADET for its acronym in Spanish) mandated by the GLT. These include a standardized methodology to register instances of torture at local and federal levels, and a series of legal foundations and guidelines to link data from the National Registry of Victims with RENADET. In this regard, on March 10, Sara Irene Herrerías Guerra, Special Prosecutor for Human Rights, formally acknowledged EnfoqueDH’s recommendations, and their usefulness in the work that the FGR is carrying out on the matter.

- EnfoqueDH grantee CEDEHM, designed a Continuous Human Rights Specialization Program for Chihuahua's State Prosecutor's Office. The Program’s objective is to build capacities within the State Prosecutor’s Office so that all relevant authorities can incorporate a human rights approach in their day-to-day work. This Program includes a module on torture, focused on providing participants with increased knowledge and specialized skills to investigate and document this practice. On March 11, the State Prosecutor's Office acknowledged, through a formal communication, that it will consider all recommendations included in CEDEHM's Program.
**Indicator 02. Number of recommendations supported by USAID/EnfoqueDH, adopted by the GOM, in benefit of the implementation of the GLD.**

- EnfoqueDH provided technical assistance to the CNB in the development of a Search Program for the northeastern region of Mexico, specifically for the states of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Durango and Coahuila. The Program will coordinate concrete actions between different government authorities, maximizing existing efforts focused on the search of missing persons in these states. On February 18, Enrique Irazoque, Search Director at the CNB, sent a formal communication to EnfoqueDH acknowledging the support in the design and development of the Program.

- The Continuous Human Rights Specialization Program for Chihuahua’s State Prosecutor’s Office also includes a module to provide participants with increased knowledge and specialized skills to search for missing persons, investigate disappearances, and support victims.

- On March 12, 2020, the Government Secretariat of Veracruz published a reform to its organic law. It includes recommendations made by EnfoqueDH to incorporate the CEBV into the structure of the Government Secretariat of Veracruz.

- On April 29, 2020 the Government Secretariat of Veracruz approved a modification to the organizational structure of the CEBV. This change was a direct result of technical assistance provided by EnfoqueDH, where specific recommendations were made so the Commission could comply with its legal obligations, and improve its operation. Among the approved changes are the reorganization of the CEBV’s structure into six special units focused on: (1) the search of long-term missing persons; (2) immediate searches; (3) context analysis; (4) data processing and analysis; (5) legal affairs; and (6) institutional outreach.

- EnfoqueDH grantee FJDL, in coordination with missing person collectives and the Legal Counsel’s Office of Coahuila’s state government, worked to harmonize state laws with the GLD. As a result of FJDL’s work, 24 state regulations were modified to be in compliance with the GLD, specifically related to the Special Declaration of Absence.

**Indicator 7:** Thirty-nine (39) human rights defenders were trained and supported.

**Indicator 9:** Three (3) coordinated ventures were promoted on the issue of torture.

**Indicator 10:** One (1) truth-seeking and memory initiative was published.
4. Accomplishments and Overall Status

This quarter, EnfoqueDH faced a challenging context as the COVID-19 health emergency added a layer of complexity to the implementation of activities across the country. Since March 13, and in order to anticipate this setback, EnfoqueDH held conversations with grantees and consultants to assess potential disruptions to their activities. Until COVID-19 measures are lifted, EnfoqueDH will remain in constant communication with its counterparts to evaluate any disruptions to implementation, and to ensure that objectives are met through creative solutions.

In this period, EnfoqueDH had fourteen ongoing sub-grants aimed at bolstering the implementation of the General Laws of Torture and Disappearance at the federal and state levels, as well as thirteen consultancies for direct technical assistance to government counterparts such as the CNB, the Executive Commission for Attention to Victims (CEAV for its acronym in Spanish), FGR, the SCJN, CEBV and the Government Secretariat of Veracruz.

Objective 1. Strengthen the prevention and response capacities of local systems to enable the implementation of the General Law of Torture

Result 1.1. The Local System has improved its Capacities to Prevent Torture

-Promoting better registries of torture
After a five-month collaboration with CEAV and the FGR, EnfoqueDH developed a standardized methodology to register instances of torture at local and federal levels, as well as a series of guidelines to link data from the National Registry of Victims, managed by CEAV, with the RENADET, which will be under the purview of FGR. This work will allow the FGR and CEAV to maintain consistency of data on torture victims across registries and to ensure a comprehensive attention to victims of this crime. On March 10, Sara Irene Herrerías Guerra, Special Prosecutor for Human Rights, formally acknowledged EnfoqueDH’s recommendations and their usefulness for the FGR’s work in the design and development of the RENADET.

-Improving local capacities to document cases of torture
From December 9 to March 8, CEPAD carried out a series of capacity building sessions focused on conducting medical-psychological assessments based on guidelines from the Istanbul Protocol. Through theoretical and practical modules, seven professionals from the Mexican Red Cross, Guadalajara’s University, and civil society organizations had the opportunity to review and identify the Protocol’s limitations, as well as their responsibilities as health professionals in the documentation of cases of torture.

-Promoting independent monitoring mechanisms on the implementation of the General Law of Torture
Throughout 2019, EnfoqueDH, alongside grantee Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, worked to build a collaborative digital platform - https://sintortura.org - where civil society can monitor the implementation of the GLT. Towards this end, EnfoqueDH forged strategic alliances with leading organizations that advocate for the eradication of torture including: the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH), Documenta A.C., Fundar: Centro de Análisis e Investigación, and the OHCHR. The online platform centralizes and simplifies access to official information and indicators relevant to the implementation of the GLT, enabling these organizations to know whether authorities are complying with their obligations under the law. To ensure the sustainability of this initiative, the management of the
platform was officially transferred to USAID grantee, Documenta A.C., on February 7. The organization will now coordinate joint advocacy actions with the above organizations, as well as the regular update of relevant information to each of the platform’s indicators. Until the month of August, EnfoqueDH will continue to support this initiative, leading the annual update of official information and indicators related to the implementation of the GLT.

-Supporting the General Law of Torture from its enactment, through to its implementation
This quarter, the Instituto de Justicia Procesal Penal (IJPP) concluded capacity building efforts to empower civil society organizations from Jalisco, Chihuahua and Coahuila (three of EnfoqueDH’s priority states) in the investigation, litigation and documentation of the crime of torture. As a result, sixteen participants gained knowledge and acquired skills to prevent and eradicate this practice in accordance with the GLT’s framework and the National Code of Criminal Procedures. Next quarter, IJPP will conclude these efforts with local authorities and civil society organizations from the state of Veracruz.

Result 1.2 Actors of the local system have appropriated diagnostic assessments, action plans, strategic planning and budgeting tools, as well as judicial and psychosocial tools to respond to cases of torture

-Promoting best practices in criminal proceedings to address torture
In the month of April, the Instituto para el Fortalecimiento del Estado de Derecho (IFED), finalized a specialized assessment to identify specific criteria issued in recent years by the Supreme Court in relation the crime of torture, and its application under the GLT. Particularly in criminal proceedings. In the month of June, IFED will present the assessment through social media networks. The purpose will be to create awareness among judges, prosecutors and civil society actors on lessons that can be extracted from the Supreme Court’s decisions during the implementation of the GLT, and challenges faced by criminal justice system operators in complying with the law.

- Empowering judicial actors to address cases of torture
Between February 27 and March 12, EnfoqueDH supported the SCJN in the development of three regional consultation forums in Jalisco, Chihuahua and Veracruz, to update the “Protocol for those who Administer Justice in Matters Related to Acts Constituting Torture and Other Ill-Treatments,” published in 2014. This effort involved the active participation of over one-hundred federal and local magistrates, judges, public defenders, prosecutors, civil society organizations, and subject-matter experts. With the input from these forums, EnfoqueDH will now provide technical assistance to the Supreme Court in the development of recommendations and guidelines to update the Protocol. This carries great significance, as the 2014 Protocol became outdated as a result of the implementation of the new criminal justice system in 2016, and the enactment of the GLT in 2017. Thanks to this effort, the Supreme Court will have substantial feedback from a broad base of stakeholders to develop an effective instrument to address torture. In the long term, the updated Protocol will provide judicial authorities with much-needed inputs on how to better comply with their obligations to combat this practice. This novel participatory process follows a strategy developed by Arturo Zaldívar, President of the Supreme Court, who established that updates to any government protocol must be based on an assessment created through a broad consultative process with academia, criminal justice system operators and civil society.
Identifying the next steps to effectively implement the General Law of Torture

This quarter, CEPAD developed a set of practical guidelines for the implementation of the GLT in the state of Jalisco. These are based on an assessment about the context of torture in the state, as well as on progress, challenges, and pending actions in the implementation of the law. Among the most pressing issues are the lack of political will from the current government to address the situation, indifference towards torture, and scarcity of actors dedicated to advocate for its prevention and eradication. Overall, CEPAD pinpointed the main gaps in the implementation process of the GLT in the state, allowing the organization and other allies to develop collaborative strategies to push for targeted legal and institutional actions to end this practice in Jalisco.

Objective 2. Strengthen the prevention and response capacities of local systems to enable the implementation of the General Law of Disappearance

Result 2.1 The local system has improved its capacities to prevent disappearances

-Developing the first Regional Search Program
Between September 2019 and February 2020, EnfoqueDH supported the CNB in the development of a Search Program for the northeastern region of Mexico. Specifically for the states of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Durango and Coahuila, which account for 30% of recorded disappearances in the country. This effort involved the active participation of relatives of missing persons, local search commissions, government agencies, as well as national and international human rights organizations. The Program will coordinate concrete actions between different government authorities, maximizing existing efforts focused on the search of missing persons in these states. On April 29, the Program was presented by the CNB to local law enforcement authorities from the state of Durango, who expressed their commitment to promote its adoption. During the months of May and June, presentations will be carried out with authorities from Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas.

-Building capacity within institutions in charge of searching for missing persons
EnfoqueDH is currently providing technical assistance to the CNB in the development of a Unified Search Protocol, a key element under the GLD. Towards this end, EnfoqueDH supported the CNB in its efforts to map out a series of different operational flow charts that should be followed for the search of missing persons. These will become part of a working version of the Protocol, to be validated by the CNB next quarter. The validation process will allow the CNB to gather feedback from a broad base of stakeholders and ultimately develop a robust Protocol to guide and regulate the search efforts of different authorities in the country.

At the state level, since December 2019, EnfoqueDH has been collaborating with Veracruz’s Search Commission to strengthen its institutional capacity. During this quarter, and as a result of the technical assistance provided to the Commission, its internal regulatory framework was incorporated under the structure of the State Government Secretariat, as mandated by the local law on disappearance. In addition, the Government Secretariat of Veracruz approved a modification to the organizational structure of the CEBV. This change was a direct result of specific recommendations made by EnfoqueDH so the Commission could comply with its legal obligations, and improve its operation. Among the approved changes are the reorganization of the CEBV’s structure into six special units focused on: (1) the search of long-term missing
persons; (2) immediate searches; (3) context analysis; (4) data processing and analysis; (5) legal affairs; and (6) institutional outreach. In the upcoming months, EnfoqueDH will continue supporting the Commission to strengthen inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, improve current interventions in the area known as “La Guapota” located in the Úrsulo Galván municipality, and with recommendations for the institutional design of the forensic identification center.

-Advocating for the effective implementation of the General Law of Disappearance in Jalisco
As part of the sub-grant with CEPAD, the organization developed a set of practical guidelines for the GLD’s implementation in the state of Jalisco. These are based on an assessment about the context of disappearances in the state, as well as progress, challenges, and pending actions in the implementation and enactment of Jalisco’s recent bills on disappearance, attention to victims and special declaration of absence. Among the most pressing issues are that the state has insufficient resources for the implementation of the GLD, unreliable information, and a contradictory political discourse, where the government’s commitments have failed to translate into concrete actions. These guidelines will allow CEPAD to better advocate for participatory models that can gather representatives from different sectors to demand the adequate implementation of the GLD in the state.

Result 2.2 Local system actors have appropriated diagnostic assessments, action plans, strategic planning and budgeting tools, as well as judicial and psychosocial tools to respond to cases of disappearance

-Introducing statistical and contextual analysis tools to strengthen search and identification efforts
Through a joint collaboration with the Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences (FLACSO for its acronym in Spanish), the Human Rights Data Analysis Group, and the Iberoamerican University, Data Cívica carried out a statistical estimate of missing persons that have not yet been documented by state registries with high levels of disappearances. The findings revealed that:

- Chihuahua had 2,383 missing persons from 2008 to 2017 (at least 108 more people than what is reported by official registries).

- Tamaulipas had 19,556 missing persons from 2010 to 2016 (at least 13,980 more people than what is reported by official registries and collectives of missing persons).

- Coahuila had 2,593 missing persons from 2008 to 2017 (at least 373 more people than what is reported by official registries).

As a result of the analysis, strengths and limitations of official registries of missing persons were identified, and recommendations were drafted. These address the need for a better interconnection between different data systems that comprise the National Search System; the creation of a public protocol to guide data collection; the creation of a methodology to distinguish when a person is missing and when someone has been
disappeared; the incorporation of located people into registries; and a public version of the registry.

The findings were shared with the National Search Citizen Council and the FGR for review and feedback. Next quarter, these results will be complemented by a context analysis of the same states, carried out by FLACSO. It will be disseminated and followed-up with relevant government and civil society actors to support the development of effective measures for the prevention and the response to disappearances.

**-Maximizing data interpretation related to cases of disappearances**
As part of the technical assistance provided to the CNB, during this quarter EnfoqueDH supported the Commission to develop coding protocols to systematize and interrelate a wide range of information on disappearances in Mexico, with an emphasis on the period known as the “Dirty War,” which occurred between 1968 and 1982.

**-Best practices to respond to disappearances**
EnfoqueDH is collaborating with the MovNDmx to gather and systematize different national experiences on forensic identification. During the months of May and June, interviews will be held with civil society organizations and government authorities from states with relevant experience on the matter, such as Veracruz, Tamaulipas and Coahuila. The information from these interviews will be used to generate valuable inputs for the operation of the MEIF.

Furthermore, EnfoqueDH supported the CNB to develop the first volume of a training manual for the search of missing persons, which compiles the views of subject-matter experts from academia. Two additional volumes will be developed by the CNB to incorporate the experiences of relatives of missing persons and government authorities, under the premise that each of these groups has something distinctive and valuable to contribute to increase the knowledge of authorities in charge of search tasks; serving as key references within CNB’s training materials. Moreover, as the manuals will be publicly available, they will contribute to foster a wider discussion on disappearances in Mexico.

**-Capacity-building workshop on the spatiotemporal analysis of data**
This quarter, the Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF) began to plan the development of a workshop focused on the spatiotemporal analysis of data, for the months of June and July. Spatial and temporal analysis, mapping, and visualization techniques allow the identification of patterns in criminal data across space and time, providing a significant understanding of a case’s context, and the possibility of generating new insights into investigative leads. The workshop will first provide an introduction to broad concepts on the use of spatiotemporal visualization and analysis tools in the forensic context, and subsequently a hands-on, in-depth training. Due to COVID-19 sanitary measures, it will be held via a video conference/online learning platform, and will consist of 25 hours of learning engagement. Moreover, it will convene leading national human rights organizations on the matter such as FJDL, CEDEHM, the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, and Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho. This workshop will serve as a pilot to
eventually replicate the model to other interested audiences such as relatives of missing persons, journalists, and law enforcement authorities.

-New narratives to approach the struggles of civil society organizations in the defense of human rights
On April 27 and 28, Sistemas de Inteligencia y Opinión en Mercados, published the first of five tailored reports, developed by journalist Daniela Rea, on the experiences and daily struggles that civil society organizations in EnfoqueDH’s priority states have endured. Using the testimonies of mothers, sisters and other relatives of missing persons, this two-part story entitled “How to make room for the truth?” and “What part of your path can help others?” provides powerful and personal insights of the work that CEDEHM and EAAF carry out in Chihuahua. The next two journalistic reports will be published in May, depicting the stories of CEPAD in Jalisco, and FJDL in Coahuila.

-Promoting the participation of relatives of missing persons and civil society in the design of public policies
As part of EnfoqueDH’s sub-grant with the Centro de Colaboración Cívica (CCC) to increase the technical capacities of the National Search Citizen Council (NSCC), progress was made on two fronts. First, on February 24 and 25, workshops were held with subject-matter experts and members of civil society to validate the 64 preliminary indicators that were developed by the CCC and the NSCC to assess the degree of implementation of the GLD at the federal and state levels. Once these are finalized, they will be incorporated into a digital platform to disseminate findings pertaining to the level of implementation of the law. Second, on February 21 and 22, the NSCC held work sessions in the state of Tamaulipas with members of the State Citizen Council, the local search commission and the state prosecutor’s office.

-Leveraging current judicial mechanisms to respond to disappearances
This quarter IFED presented a preliminary assessment of existing judicial mechanisms to respond to disappearances. This involved a thorough review on the use of the amparo trial in cases of forced disappearance. As this mechanism is independent from the GLD, IFED is identifying potential overlaps and its applicability under the GLD. As part of awareness raising activities on the matter, on April 7 and 8, the organization hosted virtual discussion sessions with representatives of national and international organizations such as the CMDPDH, the OHCHR, FLACSO, the Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESO for its acronym in Spanish) and IDHEAS. These dynamic sessions promoted a space to receive inputs on how victims of disappearance and their legal representatives can effectively exercise their rights before law enforcement agencies.

1 https://piedepagina.mx/como-se-acomoda-la-verdad/
2 https://piedepagina.mx/que-de-tu-camino-andado-ayudara-a-otras/
-Developing civil society capacity for the search and investigation of cases of disappearance

This quarter, EnfoqueDH continued providing technical assistance to Solecito, one of Veracruz’s most prominent collectives of relatives of missing persons. In this regard, an initial assessment was made to identify the main barriers that members of Solecito face with their cases. Among the most important findings are the lack of updated information on their respective cases, the absence of legal advisors assigned to support the families, inconsistencies on the genetic profiles used for investigations, a shortage of search actions, and the lack of a comprehensive framework for the attention of victims. During next quarter, EnfoqueDH will continue to work alongside Solecito to provide its members with tools and legal strategies that can help families of missing persons address these obstacles, and move forward with their respective cases.

-Enabling actions for the investigation of missing persons in Veracruz

During the month of February, EnfoqueDH awarded two sub-grants focused on contributing to the implementation of the GLD in the state of Veracruz. The first one was awarded to the Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia (IMDHD) to promote joint collaborations between relatives of missing persons and local authorities for the search and investigation of missing persons in Veracruz. Through this sub-grant IMDHD will develop pilot platforms to undertake context analysis; promote the creation and use of different specialized tools that use statistical information, investigative methods, and context analysis to strengthen search and identification efforts; and work alongside relatives of missing persons to strengthen their advocacy efforts regarding the implementation of law in Veracruz. In this regard, IMDHD began the process of developing tailored advocacy training sessions for women who are part of family collectives of missing persons in the state, with twenty-seven participants registered thus far.

The second sub-grant was awarded to the Centro de Derechos Humanos Toaltepeyolo. The sub-grant’s objective is to build capacities among local actors in Veracruz, in order to contribute to the implementation of the GLD in the state. To achieve this, the Centro will design and undertake a comprehensive training program - for both authorities and collectives of relatives of missing persons - with the purpose of developing strategies that lead to the implementation of the GLD in Veracruz; promote spaces where collectives of relatives of missing persons can reflect upon the psychosocial impacts of their search efforts and develop self-care strategies to cope with emotional burnout; and disseminate audiovisual materials to create awareness about disappearances in Veracruz.

-Building local capacities for criminal investigation and sanctioning of human rights abuses

Throughout this quarter, CEDEHM continued with the implementation of its Human Rights Seminar. A virtual training so that relevant authorities from the State Prosecutor's Office can incorporate a human rights approach in their day-to-day work. The Seminar consists of 12 four-hour modules, and was expected to conclude in March. However, as the COVID-19 health emergency generated delays within the State Prosecutor's Office, the end date of the Seminar was rescheduled for the end of May so the more than 200 authorities that signed up could complete the course. Furthermore, as a result
of this sub-grant, CEDEHM developed a Continuous Human Rights Specialization Program for Chihuahua’s State Prosecutor’s Office, which was well-received, and will ensure that authorities comply with international human rights standards and principles.

- Offering psychosocial support to victims of disappearances
On March 6 and 7, ITESO held a workshop to provide psychosocial support to victims of forced disappearances in Jalisco. Sixteen women were able to self-reflect on the effects of disappearances and the search for their loved ones, contemplate tools for access to justice, and collectively review self-care strategies. Apart from the individual benefit of these sessions, the cohesion among participants increased, as they consolidated themselves as a community of human rights defenders.

Other Relevant Activities

- Working towards a comprehensive Model of Attention to Victims in Veracruz
From April until the month of August, EnfoqueDH will provide technical assistance to the Government Secretariat of Veracruz to develop a “Comprehensive Model for the Attention to Victims” of crimes and human rights violations.

-Strengthening the CMDPDH’s strategic communication capacity
This quarter, EnfoqueDH, through its contractor SPIN Taller de Comunicación Política, began the second phase of its initiative to strengthen CMDPDH’s communication capacity. Between February and August of 2020, SPIN will build on what has been achieved, to provide the CMDPDH with various tools and strategies to contribute to its consolidation in the public agenda as a relevant civil society organization focused on the defense and promotion of human rights in Mexico. This involves:

- Developing key materials to inform the CMDPDH about its public profile and positioning within the public agenda;
- Identifying key actors that have an influence in the human rights agenda;
- Developing a press dossier to inform media outlets about the work carried out by the CMDPDH;
- Supporting the CMDPDH’s communication department to liaise with new media outlets;
- Designing and implementing a series of communication campaigns pertaining to human rights issues, in coordination with CMDPDH’s staff;
- Developing a repertoire of strategic messages that the CMDPDH can use in different types of media; and
- Working with the CMDPDH’s staff to develop a plan that allows the organization to measure the impact of its communications strategy; identifying areas for improvement, and capitalizing on its strengths.
5. Problems and Delays (and/or Lessons Learned)

As aforementioned, during the final month of this quarter, EnfoqueDH faced a challenging context as the COVID-19 health emergency added a layer of complexity to the implementation of activities across the country. On the one hand, the sudden shift of dynamics became incredibly disruptive, forcing organizations to work remotely, and relying on information and communication technologies to carry out most of their tasks. As EnfoqueDH has observed, this has mostly affected smaller organizations and collectives of missing persons that have limited access to both software and hardware. Moreover, civil society and authorities who usually work in the field on search tasks, were forced to pause activities until the conclusion of the health emergency.

In general, organizations that had already embraced a flexible work model have had a significant head start. We found out that the effectiveness of remote work depends on an organization’s ability to maximize different tools. For example, chat software can be used as a simple way to answer quick questions, while email should be used to record more formal outcomes. Phone calls can be used as means to discuss wider issues, and video conferences provide a deeper sense of community and engagement. With every office moving to a virtual setting, cybersecurity has been an important concern. In the case of EnfoqueDH, staff had received prior training to detect any cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

Finally, school closures meant parents became full-time teachers, making it difficult for them to home-school their children while coordinating with remote colleagues. In addition, the ability to concentrate on being productive became challenging given the current context of social isolation and negative news overflowing the media. A key aspect in overcoming these difficulties has been creating an empathic work culture, and acknowledging the pressures that each staff member is facing. In this regard, EnfoqueDH has established regular check-ins between all employees and encouraged everyone to maintain a healthy balance between work and family life. When sanitary restrictions are lifted, and in order to readapt into the new normal, it will be of key importance to understand everyone’s situation and develop a tailored plan that puts at its core the safety and needs of staff.

6. Major activities or corrective actions

Since March 13, and in order to anticipate the evolving circumstances related to the pandemic, EnfoqueDH held conversations with sub-grantees and consultants to assess potential disruptions to their activities. Until COVID-19 measures are lifted, EnfoqueDH will remain in constant communication with its counterparts to assess how these measures affect implementation. Our partners are aware of the challenges and have demonstrated exceptional commitment to work alongside EnfoqueDH to meet their objectives. Below are the corrective actions that were taken:

Planned Activities for the months of March and April that were postponed

   i. **Sub-grant with CEDEHM:** As part of the final activities, EnfoqueDH and CEDEHM planned to host a conference in Chihuahua with the State Prosecutor’s Office, on March 27, 2020. The objective was to present findings from the Human Rights Training Seminar and to conclude technical assistance that EnfoqueDH, through CEDEHM, had been providing to the State Prosecutor’s Office.

       **Corrective action:** It was agreed with CEDEHM that the conference will be postponed until mid June. If COVID-19 sanitary measures remain in place, a virtual presentation will be carried out.
ii. **Sub-grant with IMDHD:** The organization had planned a series of workshops with relatives of missing persons to strengthen their advocacy efforts regarding the implementation of the GLD in Veracruz. Initially these were planned to start on April 26.

**Corrective action:** It was agreed with IMDHD that the workshops could be postponed without compromising sub-grant implementation. However, this will depend on whether COVID-19 measures remain in effect. These workshops cannot be done remotely, as participants lack access to the technology needed to virtually participate. A potential solution under a complex scenario could be to extend the duration of days of each workshop in the upcoming months to make up for lost time, or to develop alternative materials that participants can access.

**Planned Activities for the months of March and April that can be carried out remotely**

i. **Sub-grant with IJPP:** The organization has been carrying out comprehensive training courses for the implementation of the GLT under the new criminal justice system. The target audiences are government authorities, attorneys, human rights defenders and civil society organizations from the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Jalisco Veracruz.

**Corrective action:** These training courses are being carried out through a virtual platform, as such, EnfoqueDH does not foresee any issues with the completion of these courses.

ii. **Sub-grant with Laboratorio de Litigio Estructural (LLE):** LLE had been carrying out a series of workshops and capacity building courses for the Federal Institute of Public Defense (IFDP for its acronym in Spanish). The objective is to strengthen the IFDP’s technical capacities to address torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments. A second round of workshops and courses had been scheduled for April 1 to April 3.

**Corrective action:** Due to COVID-19 measures, the IFDP will remain closed until further notice. EnfoqueDH and LLE agreed that activities will be reoriented to carry out alternative activities with the IFDP and other relevant actors. First, LLE will hold virtual discussion sessions with authorities from the FGR and international experts on the Istanbul Protocol. Moreover, in order to continue building the capacities of the IFDP, LLE will now provide technical assistance to develop a questionnaire for victims of torture, and to validate the information contained in the IFDP’s database on torture.

iii. **Sub-grant with EAAF:** A training workshop on the spatiotemporal analysis of data was planned with civil society organizations.

**Corrective action:** The workshop will be carried out in the months of June and July through a virtual platform with civil society organizations.
Planned Activities for the months of March and April that were cancelled

i. As part of the technical assistance that EnfoqueDH is providing to the SCJN to update the current “Protocol for Those who Administer Justice in Matters Involving Acts Constituting Torture and III Treatments”, four consultation forums were planned with civil society organizations and government authorities. The fourth and final forum in Mexico City, originally planned for March 19, 2020, had to be cancelled.

Corrective Action: EnfoqueDH, alongside its team of consultants for this activity, and the Supreme Court, will work on an alternative methodology to gather feedback from the aforementioned stakeholders including remote interviews. As for the other areas of technical assistance to the Supreme Court, EnfoqueDH does not foresee any major disruptions.

ii. Sub-grant with IFED: EnfoqueDH had planned to host a workshop on March 26, 2020, with civil society organizations to present, discuss and disseminate IFED’s report on the Supreme Court’s criteria in relation the crime of torture, and its application under the GLT.

Corrective action: A digital dissemination strategy is being designed, and once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, IFED will disseminate the hard copy of their report.

iii. Finally, the After Actions Reviews (AAR) were programmed to be held via teleconferences with sub-grantees.

7. Updates on Evaluation and Learning plans or activities

According to the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP), EnfoqueDH will perform AARs with grantees to identify several aspects under the activities such as positive, negative, and unexpected results; any enabling factors or constraints in the achievement of proposed results; potential new allies; and strengths and weaknesses of EnfoqueDH’s implementation approach.

This quarter, EnfoqueDH’s Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist performed two AARs, one on April 2 with the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, and another on April 3 with Fundación GEA. Next quarter, two more AARs will take place with Documenta A.C. and Fundación Arcoíris. As sub-grants approach completion, EnfoqueDH will finalize AAR dates with remaining grantees. The results of these reviews and accompanying recommendations will be systematized and included in the final evaluation and program report.
8. Financial Projections Report

a) Select the Period you are reporting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Reporting Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 (November - January)</td>
<td>to be reported on February 29th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 (February - April)</td>
<td>to be reported on May 31st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 (May - July)</td>
<td>to be reported on August 31st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 (August - October)</td>
<td>to be reported on November 30th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Please write the estimated amount in USD that your activity anticipates spending in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 Quarter 1</th>
<th>Year 5 Quarter 2</th>
<th>Year 5 Quarter 3</th>
<th>Year 5 Quarter 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(November - January)</td>
<td>(February - April)</td>
<td>(May - July)</td>
<td>(August - October)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$707,373</td>
<td>$775,499</td>
<td>$844,601</td>
<td>$852,075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Exchange Rate used (for projected): MXN 22.23 to USD $1

9. Participant Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Total # of Hours</th>
<th>Total # of Participants</th>
<th># of Females</th>
<th># of Males</th>
<th>Location (State, Country)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application of health assessments in cases of torture. Held by CEPAD, with civil society representatives.</td>
<td>09-12-2019</td>
<td>08-03-2020</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jalisco, Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the enactment to the implementation of the GLT. Held by IJPP, for civil society representatives.</td>
<td>17-09-2019</td>
<td>31-03-2020</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Jalisco, Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Support workshop. Held by ITESO, for relatives of missing persons.</td>
<td>06-03-2020</td>
<td>07-03-2020</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Jalisco, Mexico</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Partnerships Report

See Partnerships Report Tab 2

11. Annexes

Tab 1. Indicator Summary Table
Tab 2. Partnerships Report
Tab 3. Success Story
Building civil society oversight capacity to monitor the implementation of the General Law Against Torture

USAID promotes independent mechanisms to ensure authorities comply with their obligations under the General Law Against Torture

In Mexico, torture is a widespread practice, often carried out by security forces in a shroud of secrecy. The practice is most likely to take place during arrest, in the early stages of detention, and as a method to obtain confessions. Between December 2012 and January 2018, the Attorney General's Office opened more than 9,000 investigations into torture. Furthermore, the United Nations Committee Against Torture highlighted in Mexico’s 2019 periodic review, that out of 3,214 torture complaints made in 2016 alone, only eight resulted in arrest and trial.

To address this situation, government actors, civil society, academia, and international organizations carried out joint efforts to create the General Law Against Torture (GLT), enacted in 2017. The GLT establishes an absolute prohibition on torture and ensures that evidence obtained through torture be excluded from trials. However, three years after its enactment, the law’s implementation has lagged on several fronts. Effective investigations and prosecutions remain scarce, preventive measures have not been adopted, reparations to victims are inadequate, and the publication of accurate data on cases of torture, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences has not been consistent.

In light of the above, civil society organizations face the daunting challenge of holding the government accountable and ensuring that law enforcement authorities follow through with their obligations under the GLT. Towards this end, EnfoqueDH, alongside grantee Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, worked to build a collaborative digital platform - https://sintortura.org- where civil society can monitor implementation of the GLT. To achieve this, strategic alliances were forged with leading organizations that advocate for the eradication of torture including: the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, Documenta A.C., Fundar: Centro de Análisis e Investigación, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

By using access to information requests as its main source, this digital platform centralizes, organizes, and simplifies key official information on torture in the country. Through a set of ten indicators, the platform can measure the number of investigations, sentences, specialized institutions created, medical and psychological assessments, and the number of direct and indirect victims of torture, among others. To ensure the sustainability of this initiative, the management of the platform was entrusted to USAID grantee, Documenta A.C., who will coordinate joint advocacy actions and regular updates to the information through a working group with the above organizations.

Thanks to this collaborative effort, civil society organizations are able to know whether federal and state authorities are complying with their obligations under the law, holding them accountable, and building an effective advocacy voice for targeted legal and institutional measures to further efforts to eradicate torture.