



# Promoviendo la Rendición de Cuentas por los Derechos Humanos (RED-DH) YEAR 2. Annual Progress Report

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Activity Start Date and End Date: August 7, 2020 to August 6, 2025

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Prime Implementing Partner: Chemonics International Inc.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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## ACRONYMS

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| CCC      | Centro de Colaboración Cívica                                       |
| CEEAIIV  | State Executive Commission for Attention to Victims of Veracruz     |
| CEEAIJ   | State Executive Commission for Attention to Victims of Jalisco      |
| CEBV     | State Search Commission of Veracruz                                 |
| CEPAD    | Centro de Justicia para la Paz y el Desarrollo                      |
| CEPIADET | Centro Profesional Indígena de Asesoría, Defensa y Traducción A.C.  |
| CNB      | National Search Commission  |
| CRIH     | Coahuila's Regional Center for Human Identification                 |
| CSO      | Civil Society Organization  |
| EAAF     | Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense                            |
| EU       | European Union  |
| FAFG     | Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation                         |
| FEIDT    | Special Prosecutor for Investigation of the Crime of Torture        |
| FGR      | General Prosecutor's Office   |
| FJDL     | Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos Fray Juan de Larios A.C. |
| GLFD     | General Law on Forced Disappearances                                |
| GLT      | General Law on Torture  |
| GOM      | Government of Mexico  |
| IACHR    | Inter-American Commission on Human Rights                           |
| ICMP     | International Commission on Missing Persons                         |
| IFDP     | Federal Institute of Public Defense                                 |
| IJCF     | Jalisco's Institute of Forensic Sciences                            |
| IMDHD    | Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia                 |
| ITESO    | Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente         |
| LLE      | Laboratorio de Litigio Estructural                                  |
| MEIF     | Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism                     |
| MEL      | Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning                                |
| NPPT     | National Program to Prevent Torture                                 |
| RED-DH   | Promoviendo la Rendición de Cuentas por los Derechos Humanos        |
| RENADET  | National Registry for the Crime of Torture                          |
| SDA      | Special Declaration of Absence                                      |
| USAID    | United States Agency for International Development                  |
| UNFPA    | United Nations Fund for Population Activities                       |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Activity Name</b>               | RED-DH. Promoviendo la Rendición de Cuentas por los Derechos Humanos   |
| <b>Activity Start and End Date</b> | August 7, 2020 – August 6, 2025  |
| <b>Place of Performance</b>        | The place of performance for this contract is Mexico.  |
| <b>Purpose</b>                     | The purpose of RED-DH is to build the capacity of Mexico’s human rights institutions to more effectively and accountably respond to, and prevent human rights violations – in particular forced disappearances and torture – at both the federal and state levels. Improved capacity to respond will reduce impunity and help to prevent future violations.  |
| <b>Objective</b>                   | RED-DH is a five-year cost plus fixed fee completion contract that will enhance the capacity and commitment of the GOM to provide effective and accountable responses to grave human rights violations, such as forced disappearances and torture, by strengthening national oversight mechanisms and enhancing inter-governmental coordination, supporting state-level implementation of laws and safeguards to prevent and respond to human rights abuses, and providing targeted forensic technical assistance to address the backlog of unidentified remains in five priority states.  |
| <b>Activity Description</b>        | The GOM has responded to the human rights crisis with diverse initiatives. To further select initiatives, the General Laws on Torture and on Forced Disappearances 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. To ensure the previous, RED-DH will work with GOM counterparts at the federal and state levels - including decentralized and autonomous institutions and targeted subnational government entities, forensic experts, victims’ collectives and civil society. |
| <b>Theory of Change</b>            | IF the effectiveness of Mexico’s human rights system is strengthened - including the ability to provide oversight, coordination, and implementation of public policies and laws to address forced disappearances and torture; ensure meaningful implementation of the laws at the state level; and tackle the immense backlog of forensic cases and unresolved disappearance cases THEN the government will provide better responses to human rights abuses and greater accountability and closure to victims and their families, contributing to improved citizen trust and greater government accountability.  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Perspective</b> | <p>The situation of insecurity and the high numbers of disappearances, kidnappings, torture, threats and harassment suffered to a greater extent by certain groups either for historical discrimination (women, children, migrants, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants or people deprived of their liberty) or for their professional activities (human rights defenders and journalists) remain a major concern. RED-DH's priority population includes women, the LGBTI community, indigenous people, minors, people with disabilities and journalists.</p> |
| <b>Target Beneficiaries</b>                           | <p>The target beneficiaries of the activity are both victims - families and relatives - of grave human rights violations, including forced disappearances and torture in Mexico. Institutional beneficiaries will also include federal and state-level Search Commissions as well as offices of the Attorney General.</p>  |
| <b>Grants Under USAID contracts</b>                   | <p>RED-DH will be able to execute up to USD \$11,103,605.88 in grants and subcontracts on behalf of USAID.</p>   |
| <b>Reporting Period</b>                               | <p>Year Two, Quarter Four.<br/>July 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022.</p>  |

## BACKGROUND

Understanding the political context and human rights situation under which RED-DH was designed is essential to better comprehend the objectives and expected results. Below, are key political events and contextual elements that occurred in Mexico prior to RED-DH.

- Mexico is a country of tremendous cultural, economic, and environmental diversity, historically recognized as an economic powerhouse and cultural leader in Latin America. However, the country became notorious in the last decade due to the alarming levels of violence, human rights violations, and an almost complete state of impunity.
- In 2015 (five years before RED-DH started), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, stated: *"For a country that is not engaged in a conflict, the estimated figures [in Mexico] are simply staggering."* He continued, *"part of the violence can be laid at the door of the country's powerful and ruthless organized crime groups, which have been making life a misery for people living in several of Mexico's 32 States ... But many enforced disappearances, acts of torture and extra-judicial killings are alleged to have been carried out by federal, state and municipal authorities, including the police and some segments of the army, either acting in their interests or collusion with organized criminal groups."*
- For several years, Mexico has been going through a severe crisis of violence and insecurity, which increased with the so-called "war on drugs" in 2006, leading to alarming levels of crimes and human rights violations. The human rights crisis includes violence and abuses committed directly by state agents and the government's failure to provide justice and protection against widespread violence perpetrated by criminal groups.
- The ineffectiveness of law enforcement agencies has weakened the rule of law, creating structural conditions of impunity and challenges that the Government of Mexico must address urgently.
- Failure to provide access to justice has created a situation of structural impunity that perpetuates and, in some cases, fosters the repetition of gross human rights violations.
- **Torture and forced disappearances** have become two of the most pressing challenges regarding human rights violations. Moreover, the **forensic crisis** has become a prevalent problem.
- **Forced disappearances** have occurred in Mexico at different times and with varying intensities particularly from the 1960s until the 1980s. However, these increased drastically after 2006. According to public data, the highest number of recorded disappearances occurred in 2011-2012.
- The practice of **torture** in Mexico has been alarming in the last ten years. Frequently, authorities punish detainees for extracting false confessions or information. Victims are often forced to sign declarations under torture and, in many cases, are convicted solely based on those statements. International organizations have pointed out that torture is generalized and frequently occurs in detention —usually arbitrarily—before

the individual is presented to a judge. They have also reported how officials in Mexico often fail to investigate the complaints of torture victims, and forensic doctors working for the government often ignore signs of this practice.

- Due to countless actions and constant pressure from families, victims, and civil society organizations, Mexico has undertaken significant efforts to address its human rights challenges.
- The GOM published the **General Law on Torture (GLT)** in the Federal Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF for its acronym in Spanish) on June 26, 2017, **and the General Law on Forced Disappearance (GLFD)** on November 17, 2017. Both laws put in place ambitious steps that the GOM should follow to prevent and respond to these violations.
- **President Andres Manuel López Obrador came into power in December 2018** after the GLT and GLFD were enacted. At that moment, essential components of both laws were yet to be implemented.
- In 2019, torture and disappearances were two of the most pressing challenges to address regarding human rights violations, and the forensic crisis became a priority in the political agenda.
- Since taking office, the administration has acknowledged the enormous challenges the State faces in addressing human rights violations and recognized the need to take decisive actions. In this regard, under the leadership of Alejandro Encinas, Undersecretary for Human Rights, there have been significant commitments to advance the human rights agenda.
- The government has prioritized addressing the forensic crisis and has undertaken various actions promoted by groups of victims and authorities. Specifically:
  - **The Extraordinary Forensic Identification Mechanism (EM)** was created to address the forensic identification backlog on December 5, 2019. The EM is an extraordinary, multidisciplinary mechanism with technical-scientific autonomy to carry out the appropriate expert assessments on the bodies or remains that have not been identified and are within its faculties. The creation of the EM was published in the DOF on March 19, 2020. In August 2021, the EM's Coordinating Group formally began its activities.
  - **In August 2020, the GOM inaugurated the Regional Center for Human Identification (CRIH)**, created to gather, organize, and analyze all available information regarding unidentified remains in Coahuila and adjacent states.

**ABOUT RED-DH**

RED-DH is a five-year activity, that **began implementation in August 2020**. Its purpose is to enhance the capacity and commitment of the GOM to provide effective and accountable responses to grave human rights violations, such as forced disappearances and torture, and to provide targeted forensic technical assistance to address the backlog of unidentified remains in five priority states: Coahuila, Jalisco, Puebla, Sonora, and Veracruz.

- The theory of change for RED-DH is as follows:



For its implementation, RED-DH has one objective and three components with specific outcomes and key results.



**OBJECTIVE:** Enhance the capacity and commitment of the GOM to provide effective and accountable responses to grave human rights violations, such as forced disappearances and torture, and to provide targeted forensic technical assistance to address the backlog of unidentified remains in five priority states: Coahuila, Jalisco, Puebla, Sonora, and Veracruz.



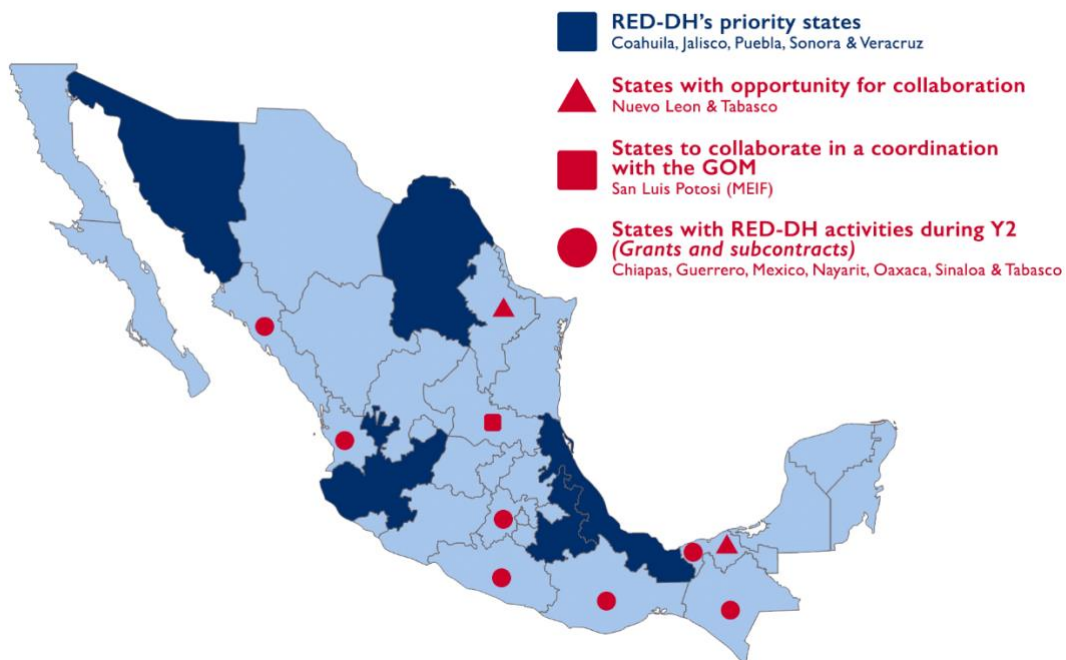
## Geographic Scope

To begin activities in Year 1, RED-DH carried out political economy analyses (PEAs) to better understand political actors, relations, and the power dynamics in the local human rights systems. Based on the analyses, RED-DH proposed the following five priority states: 1. Coahuila; 2. Jalisco; 3. Puebla; 4. Sonora; and 5. Veracruz. These were approved in Year 1 (2020).

At the beginning of Year 2, on October 27, 2021, USAID notified RED-DH to suspend any activity involving assistance or collaboration with Veracruz's Prosecutor's Office as the US Government limited any direct work with this office. The suspension has had two effects on activity implementation: 1) It suspended any potential efforts that would advance Component 3 objectives in Veracruz, and 2) it limited assistance options to advance implementation of the general laws in the state.

In light of the current restrictions to collaborate with the State Prosecutor of Veracruz, RED-DH and USAID agreed during Year 2 to reinforce forensic identification work in the priority states of Coahuila, Puebla, Sonora, and Jalisco. Over the course of Year 2, RED-DH continuously identified strategic opportunities to reduce the forensic identification backlog.

During Year 2, RED-DH identified opportunities for assistance in states outside RED-DH's priority geography, always in coordination with state authorities - in particular, the CNB and the FGR and/or with human rights organizations, based on the legal accompaniment of cases.



## **CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR YEAR 2**

### ***Relevant moments and events which had an impact on RED-DH activities: October 2021-September 2022***

- On October 8, 2021, a U.S. delegation led by Secretary of State Blinken traveled to Mexico City to participate in the first U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue with the GOM. Both governments renewed their commitment to forensic cooperation to solve the thousands of forced disappearances for the benefit of victims' families and in the fight against impunity.
- On November 4, 2021, the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJN) presented the "Protocol to Judge Cases involving Torture," which allows judicial authorities to comply with their obligations to eradicate this practice. A month later, the GOM published the Operating Guidelines of the National Registry of the Crime of Torture.
- From November 15 to 27, 2021, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) conducted its first visit to Mexico. The CED held more than 80 meetings with authorities, hundreds of victims, and dozens of civil society organizations from all over the country. On November 26, the CED released its preliminary balance.
- On December 1, 2021, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador delivered his third government report. In terms of human rights, the President emphasized the efforts to build peace without human rights violations, such as torture, forced disappearances, and extrajudicial executions. In addition, López Obrador highlighted progress in elaborating the National Search Program and investigating the disappearance of the 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College.
- On December 13, the Undersecretary of Human Rights, Alejandro Encinas, delivered his third annual report. Encinas noted that in the three years of the current administration, the GOM allocated 2,198 million pesos (109 million USD) to infrastructure and capacity-building in human rights institutions, out of which 1,247 million (600 million USD) were to strengthen state search commissions. However, he recognized that there was still much work to do. As part of its achievements, the Undersecretary mentioned the results of the CRIH in Coahuila, where USAID provided key support.
- At the beginning of Quarter 1 of Year 2, the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing. During the second quarter, RED-DH resumed face-to-face activities and travel, but in a restricted manner, given Mexico's regulations and anticipated contagion levels.
- On March 31, 2022, the President submitted to Congress an initiative amending and adding several provisions of the GLFD and creating the National Center for Human Identification (CNIH). On May 13, the creation of the CNIH as an administrative unit with technical-scientific independence attached to the CNB was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation. The decree creating the CNIH came into force on May 16, stating that the Center should begin functions within ninety days (approximately September 20, 2022).

- On April 12, 2022, the Department of State presented the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021. In the case of Mexico, the report highlighted issues related to the crimes of torture and forced disappearances and warned that impunity and meager prosecution rates remained a problem for all crimes, including human rights abuses. It also identified unlawful killings committed by government agents, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture, and restrictions on the freedom of expression as Mexico's most significant human rights issues. The report noted that 11 journalists had been killed in 2022 (since the report's publication, the number has risen to 12) and a 137% increase in femicides between 2015 and 2021.
- **On May 16, 2022, Mexico reached the grim number of 100,000 people registered as disappeared or missing. [National](#) and [international organizations](#), including the [US Embassy](#), issued communications and press releases expressing concern and urging the GOM to work through the crisis.**
- On June 2, 2022, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued its 2021 Annual Report, which includes a chapter on the sixth follow-up report to the recommendations made to Mexico after its 2015 visit. The report welcomed Mexico's adoption of measures to implement the GLFD, such as installing and operating Local Search Commissions, creating a National Roundtable for the Search for Disappeared Migrant Persons, and the publication of the Additional Protocol for the Search of Children and Adolescents. The IACHR also recognized efforts to strengthen forensic capacities through building infrastructure for forensic activities and the operation of the EM. However, the IACHR also pointed out that the National Search Program, the National Exhumation and Identification Program, the implementation of a National Forensic Data Bank, a National Registry of Unidentified Deceased Persons, and a National Registry of Graves were pending. Therefore, it called on the GOM to *"redouble its efforts to fully comply with its programmatic and regulatory obligations in connection with disappearances."*
- **On June 20, 2022, USAID participated in a workshop held by the CNB with embassies, international cooperation agencies, and international organizations to [share experiences supporting the GOM's search and forensic identification efforts](#). USAID shared current actions through grantees CEDEHM, CADHAC, and its RED-DH Activity.**
- On June 26, 2022, Mexico commemorated the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, which also marked five years since the GLT came into force. Civil society organizations that comprise the Observatory Against Torture issued an urgent call for authorities to overcome delays in the publication and implementation of the National Program to Prevent Torture (NPPT). Without this critical public policy, government authorities in charge of torture prevention, investigation, and sanction cannot effectively coordinate actions to address and eradicate this crime. The GOM made significant progress during this year concerning the National Program proposal. However, the Program has not been officially approved or presented.
- During July 2022, RED-DH carried out planning and evaluation activities to prepare the Year 3 work plan, which was on time and approved on August 23, 2022.

- In August, 2022, Bruce Abrams, Mission Director of USAID/Mexico, Emily Wann, Director of USAID/Mexico’s Governance, Human Rights and City Security Office, and Bárbara Pérez-Martínez, USAID/Mexico Human Rights Team Lead, visited the facilities of the CRIH. During the visit, USAID delivered supplies to aid the CRIH during exhumations and DNA collection of unidentified human remains. Moreover, Ricardo Martínez Loyola, State Search Commissioner, and Yezka Garza Ramirez, General Coordinator of the CRIH, gave USAID a tour of the facilities where they explained the methodology applied for human identification and how USAID’s contributions to the CRIH were being used.
- On August 30, 2022, USAID published the article [“Addressing the Problem of the Disappeared in Mexico. USAID is helping combat a forensic crisis through DNA kinship matching.”](#) which describes the forensic crisis in Mexico and what USAID, through its RED-DH activity, is doing to accompany the efforts of civil society and government.
- August – September 2022, The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate began the approval process to extend the temporality of military presence in public security tasks. Modifications will be defined at the beginning of October.
- September 2022. It has been 8 years since the enforced disappearance of the 43 students from Ayotzinapa.
- On September 8, 2022, the Executive Branch of Government delivered the 2023 Economic Package to Congress, which is under review for approval. [According to it](#), for 2022, the CNB received 747.4 million pesos, while for 2023, the federal government contemplates 1,970.3 million pesos, an increase of 41%. Of this amount, 811.4 million will be earmarked for subsidies to State Search Commissions. In addition, it was proposed that the Contributions Fund for Public Security should receive a total of 8,786 million pesos, an increase of 4.87 percent from last year. Congress must approve the federal Budget by November 15.
- The year 2022, was particularly active in terms of the relationship between Mexico and the United States. During RED-DH Year 1, the [visit to Mexico of US Vice President Kamala Harris](#) on June 8, 2021, marked a significant milestone. Both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding on international cooperation on that day. Among its highlighted areas of cooperation, noteworthy is the commitment by both governments to engage in a forensic collaboration that will help solve the thousands of enforced disappearances in Mexico for the benefit of victims’ families and their fight against impunity.
  - Four months later, starting RED-DH’s Year 2, on October 8, 2021, a [US delegation led by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken traveled to Mexico City](#) to participate in the first U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue. Both governments agreed on a [new security collaboration framework: the Bicentennial Understanding on Security, Public Health and Secure Communities](#), which replaces the Mérida Initiative. The occasion reinforced the commitment of both governments to forensic cooperation to address the thousands of cases of forced disappearances. The agreement was officially published on January 31, 2022. Its contents can be reviewed [here](#). Following the publication of the agreement, RED-DH identified a particular increase in activities, dialogues, and commitments made within the US-Mexico relationship, under which human rights stand out.



- On May 18, 2022, Mileydi Guilarte, Deputy Assistant Administrator for USAID’s Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, visited Mexico for the second time, nine months after her first visit<sup>1</sup>. During this visit, Ms. Guilarte met with civil society organizations and implementing partners of USAID/Mexico to review efforts on economic development, climate change, and the rule of law. Specifically, she met with several human rights organizations to discuss the importance of [incorporating a gender perspective in policies to prevent human rights violations](#) and [with the National Search Commissioner](#) to assess current collaborations to strengthen the respect and protection of human rights in Mexico.
- On June 6, 2022, seventeen [members of the United States Congress sent a letter to State Secretary Anthony Blinken and USAID Administrator Samantha Power](#), asking “for information on US Cooperation and efforts to address Mexico’s disappearance crisis.” The official communication urged strong bilateral cooperation guided by consultation with the families of disappeared persons and civil society organizations working on the matter. The Members of Congress also pushed to promote the correct implementation of the Unified Search Protocol, increase support to tackle Mexico’s backlog of unidentified bodies and remains, and ensure authorities have the resources to investigate these cases and obtain justice.
- On June 23, 2022, the [Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission](#) of the U.S. House of Representatives held a public hearing on Human Rights Challenges in Mexico, with testimonies from members of the Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, ARTICLE 19, Human Rights Watch, and the Washington Office on Latin America. During the hearing, the attendees delivered an overview of the human rights crisis in Mexico, which according to them, has become exacerbated by the high levels of corruption and impunity. The hearing can be [watched here](#). Four days later, the US Ambassador to Mexico, Ken Salazar, met with Undersecretary Encinas to review and move forward with the commitments set under the Bicentennial Security Framework.
- On July 12, 2022, US President Joe Biden met President López Obrador. As he welcomed the Mexican leader into the White House, Biden remarked that the US “sees Mexico as an equal partner.”
- On September 30, 2022, Ambassador Salazar met with human rights organizations in which they shared their work for the rights of missing persons and their accompaniment of victims’ families.  
<https://twitter.com/USAmbMex/status/1575936457721597952>
- During the end of Year 2, the dialogues and exchanges between the two governments continued. It is expected that several high-level discussions and important exchanges will take place in October.

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<sup>1</sup>In late August 2021, [Guilarte visited the Mexican capital](#) for three [days](#). Ms. Guilarte and Mission Director Bruce Abrams, [met with SEGOB](#) and held a series of roundtables on climate change, [human rights](#), and [civil society](#).

## YEAR 2: STATE CONTEXT OVERVIEW

The GLFD and the GLT, as general laws, are applicable throughout the country and should be the basis for all the local rules and policies formulated to address both issues. Therefore, each state must implement them by harmonizing their legal frameworks and implementing specific policies. Nonetheless, implementation at the state level has lagged. One of the main causes relies on the need to organize and implement specific mechanisms to address and prevent these violations. For example, under the GLFD, each of Mexico's 32 states should create a parallel search system with a local law on disappearances, a search commission, a registry, a forensic system, a local search citizen council, and a specialized prosecutor. In the case of the GLT, there are concerns from civil society because several states have failed to create special prosecutor offices to investigate torture.

### COAHUILA

**Governor: Miguel Riquelme Solís**

**Period: 2017 - 2023**

**Party: PRI**



- In Year 1 – on March 19, 2021, RED-DH signed a collaboration agreement with the State Search Commission to strengthen the search and location of missing persons and the identification of deceased persons per the provisions of the GLFD.
- For RED-DH's second year, the alliance with the State Search Commission and the CRIH was fundamental to implementing crucial actions.
- At the same time, RED-DH continued collaborating with the Fray Juan de Larios to support advocacy actions.

### JALISCO

**Governor: Enrique Alfaro Ramírez**

**Period: 2018 - 2024**

**Party: Movimiento Ciudadano**



- On October 28, 2021, Governor Enrique Alfaro presented his third security report.
- RED-DH collaborated with the Centro Universitario por la Dignidad y la Justicia Francisco Suárez (ITESO) and the Centro de Justicia para la Paz y el Desarrollo (CEPAD).
- RED-DH provided technical assistance to the State Government through its grantee Delibera.
- On February 1, 2022, General State Prosecutor, Gerardo Octavio Solís Gómez, resigned for health reasons from the position he held for more than three years (since November 26, 2018). The governor then requested Congress to ratify Luis Joaquín Méndez Ruíz, who served as Executive Prosecutor for Criminal Investigation, as the new State Prosecutor. On February 3, 2022, Mr. Méndez was ratified.
- The State Search Commissioner, Francelia Cuevas, left her position on July 1, 2022 with Víctor Hugo Ávila, who served as an advisor to the Secretariat of Planning and Citizen Participation, temporarily occupying the position. The announced departure of the Commissioner comes after groups of relatives of disappeared persons and civil society organizations denounced irregularities in the operation of the Commission, such as the constant rotation of personnel who had proven to be efficient. To select a new Commissioner, the state government must issue a public, open, transparent, and

inclusive call, where relatives of disappeared persons are allowed to participate in all stages of the process.

- On July 21, 2022, the local Congress elected Luz del Carmen Godínez González as head of the Human Rights Commission of Jalisco. She took office on August 2, 2022 and will hold this position for five years. Civil society organizations have pointed out that her profile does not comply with the provisions of the State Commission's Law, which establish that the person selected must not have held a position within the public administration during the two years before the date of appointment.

## **PUEBLA**

**Governor: Miguel Barbosa Huerta**

**Period: 2019 - 2025**

**Party: Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional**



- The state government began its term in 2019 and will end in 2024. On December 14, 2022, - Year 2 - Governor Miguel Barbosa delivered his third government report.
- During Year 2, RED-DH had the opportunity to continue collaborating with the Secretariat of Human Rights and Crime Prevention and the Public Defender's Office.
- On the other hand, RED-DH strengthened its collaboration with the Ignacio Ellacuría Rights Institute of the Ibero-American University to support victims' collectives and promote the implementation of the state law on disappearances.

## **SONORA**

**Governor: Francisco Alfonso Durazo Montaña**

**Period: 2021 - 2027**

**Party: Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional**



- The first quarter of Year 2 began in Sonora with a new state government administration. In June 2021, Alfonso Durazo, from MORENA, was elected as Sonora's governor and took this position in September. He is the second non-PRI governor in the last 92 years.
- During Year 2, RED-DH built alliances with the State Search Commission and the State Prosecutor's Office. This will change in Year 3 after the resignation of the State Search Commissioner and the entrance of a new actor, the President of the State Human Rights Commission. Through grantees Centro de Colaboración Cívica and IDHEAS, RED-DH maintains collaborative relationships with the 14 groups of relatives of victims of disappearance formed in the state.

## **VERACRUZ**

**Governor: Cuitláhuac García Jiménez**

**Period: 2018 - 2024**

**Party: Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional**



- The current governor Cuitláhuac García began his term in 2018, with elections planned for 2024. The state's policy framework is based on the Veracruz Development Plan 2019-2024, which has been complemented by the Declaration of the Emergency Program for the Crisis in Veracruz.
- On November 16, 2021, Governor Cuitláhuac García delivered his third progress report.



- RED-DH maintains lines of work and permanent dialogue with most mapped actors based on the various collaboration agreements signed during 2021. In particular, RED-DH governmental partners in Veracruz are the State Commission for the Search of Persons, the State Commission for Human Rights, the State Executive Commission for Comprehensive Attention to Victims, and the Office of Advisors to the .
- The civil society partners are Toaltepeyolo Human Rights Center, Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy, Colectivo Solecito and the Institute for Human Rights Research and Gender Studies from the non-governmental sphere.

## **GRANTS, SUBCONTRACTS AND CONSULTANTS BRIEF**

On September 18, 2020, RED-DH submitted the Grants Under Contracts Manual to USAID, which was approved on October 15, 2020. For the implementation of activities, RED-DH has relied heavily on the issuing of grants and subcontracts to advance the implementation of the GLT and GLFD and to decrease the backlog in forensic cases.

As part of the strategy for Year 2, on November 8, 2021, RED-DH published an Annual Program Statement (APS) titled: “Initiatives to Foster the Implementation of the General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances” (APS-RED-DH-2020-001). Its purpose was to attract innovative projects focused on supporting the implementation of the General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances at the federal and state levels and decrease the backlog in human identification.

**The total available funds under the APS are USD 1.5 million and will close on November 9, 2022.**

From the publication of the APS in November 2021 until September 30, 2022, **21** concept notes were submitted. Out of these, **5 ended up in grant awards amounting to USD 1,065,460.** In addition, **2** are under review.

### **Year 2 achievements & lessons learned in the area of grants, subcontracts and consultants**

Today, RED-DH’s network of grantees and subcontractors is comprised of local, national and state-level CSOs; search collectives; research institutions; forensic expert organizations (international and domestic); other nongovernmental organizations (not-for-profit and for-profit); private enterprises; private universities; and public international organizations (PIOs). Through a variety of grants and subcontracts signed in Year I and Year 2, RED-DH has built partnerships across the Mexican human rights system, increased institutional capacity, spurred collective action, and promoted sustainable external accountability.

**On July 29, 2022, USAID awarded RED-DH a cost increase of USD 1.6 million to enhance the capacity and commitment of the GOM to provide effective and accountable responses to the grave human rights violations of enforced disappearances and torture. This cost increase resulted in the increase of the Grants & Subcontracts fund from USD 10 million to USD 11.3 million.**

In total, during Year 1 and Year 2, RED-DH has awarded 37 grants and 19 subcontracts amounting to **USD 6,849,524.39** and **USD 372,519.17 for consultants**

### Consultants

- Year 1. Between October 2020 and September 2021, RED-DH onboarded 19 consultants (13 women and six men) for direct technical assistance to authorities and to support the Solecito Collective in reviewing their case files.
- Year 2. Between October 2021 and September 2022, RED-DH onboarded 23 consultants (15 women and eight men) for direct technical assistance to authorities and to continue supporting the Solecito Collective in reviewing their case files.

### Grants

- Year 1. Between October 2020 and September 2021, RED-DH awarded 22 grants amounting to USD \$3,005,490.88
- Year 2. Between October 2021 and September 2022, RED-DH awarded 15 grants and one costed modification amounting to USD \$3,488,033.26

### Subcontracts

- Year 1. Between October 2020 and September 2021, RED-DH awarded 08 subcontracts amounting USD \$254,797.67
- Year 2. Between October 2021 and September 2022, RED-DH awarded 11 subcontracts amounting USD \$101,202.58

## **GRANTS AND SUBCONTRACTS LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES DURING YEAR 2**

*RED-DH a facilitator.* To achieve scalable and sustainable impacts, RED-DH must keep embracing interventions owned by and tailored to system stakeholders and their political realities. Working through state-level partners, RED-DH has been a facilitator that brings system actors together to design locally led strategies.

*Unique Entity ID (UEI, generated by SAM.gov).* On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (UEI, generated by SAM.gov). Consequently, businesses and organizations that have received or want to receive funding from the US government must request a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). This transition allowed the US government to streamline the entity identification and validation process, thus making it easier and less burdensome for entities to do business with the federal government. For RED-DH, all new subcontracts and grants that previously required a DUNS (any subcontract equal to or above USD 30,000 and typically any grant matching to or above USD 25,000) will need a UEI number. However, since the transition to the UEI occurred, the system has experienced delays in assigning UEIs. Many organizations must validate their entity business name and address, which has overwhelmed SAM.gov's ticket processing times. This has led to delays in executing planned grants and subcontracts. In this regard, RED-DH has maintained constant communication with USAID to keep it informed about current issues and delays this issue has caused. In addition, RED-DH's grants team has been in continuous communication with grantees and subcontractors to support them in obtaining the UEI number and to periodically document that they are making every possible effort to receive it.

## INDICATOR PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

USAID approved RED-DH’s MEL Plan on June 4, 2021. It includes 19 indicators (two context indicators and the remaining 17 with specific goals established in the contract) designed to strike a balance of indicator data needed for management decision-making and reporting at the RED-DH and USAID/Mexico levels.

| Indicators Year 1 & Year 2<br><br>The first column of each box shows Year 1 indicators, the second presents Year 2 results.<br><br>During Year 1 RED-DH surpassed the targets of 13 indicators. In Year 2 we exceeded 15 indicators' targets. | INDICATOR 1.<br>Number of torture and other ill-treatment complaints received by National and State Human Rights Commissions in RED-DH priority states                | INDICATOR 2.<br>Number of missing persons registered.   | INDICATOR 3.<br>Number of supported GOM actors who report to the National Registry of Victims of Torture or to the National Registry for the Crime of Torture.<br><br>COMPONENT 1. FIXED FEE DELIVERABLE. |                                    | INDICATOR 4.<br>Number of strengthened GOM service delivery systems to victims of torture and disappearance.  |  |                                  |                                  |                                   |
|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | CONTEXT INDICATOR   | CONTEXT INDICATOR   | Y1<br>Target: 1<br>Achieved: 1  | Y2<br>Target: 2<br>Achieved: 2     | Y1<br>Target: 1<br>Achieved: 1  | Y2<br>Target: 4<br>Achieved: 5         |                                  |                                  |                                   |
| INDICATOR 5.<br>Number of torture and disappearance cases that show progress in criminal proceedings.   | INDICATOR 6.<br>Percent decrease in the backlog of unidentified remains at the federal level and in RED-DH priority state.<br><br>COMPONENT 3. FIXED FEE DELIVERABLE. | INDICATOR 7.<br>Number of missing persons identified.   | INDICATOR 8.<br>Number of public policies proposed to or adopted by the GOM to address torture and disappearances.<br><br>COMPONENT 1. FIXED FEE DELIVERABLE.   |                                    | INDICATOR 9.<br>Number of communication campaigns to raise public awareness on torture and disappearance.<br><br>COMPONENT 2. FIXED FEE DELIVERABLE.  |  |                                  |                                  |                                   |
|   |   |   | Y1<br>Target: 0<br>Achieved: 1  | Y2<br>Target: 0<br>Achieved: 1     | Y1<br>Target: -5%<br>Achieved: -5%  | Y2<br>Target: -10%<br>Achieved: -26.31 | Y1<br>Target: 6<br>Achieved: 6   | Y2<br>Target: 11<br>Achieved: 30 | Y1<br>Target: 6<br>Achieved: 12   |
| INDICATOR 10.<br>Number of reports or analyses developed with project support to improve the prevention and investigation of torture and disappearances carried out by GOM authorities.<br><br>COMPONENT 2. FIXED FEE DELIVERABLE.            | INDICATOR 11.<br>Number of torture and disappearance cases supported, to improve investigations and/or administrative measures for victims and families.              | INDICATOR 12.<br>Number of strategies developed for prosecution authorities to advance with the investigation of torture and disappearance cases. | INDICATOR 13.<br>Number of coordinated ventures among state and non-state actors involved in the protection of human rights.  |                                    | INDICATOR 14.<br>Number of human remains processed to obtain DNA information.   |  |                                  |                                  |                                   |
|   |   |   | Y1<br>Target: 6<br>Achieved: 16   | Y2<br>Target: 24<br>Achieved: 28   | Y1<br>Target: 15<br>Achieved: 61  | Y2<br>Target: 25<br>Achieved: 106      | Y1<br>Target: 1<br>Achieved: 2   | Y2<br>Target: 4<br>Achieved: 16  | Y1<br>Target: 6<br>Achieved: 10   |
| INDICATOR 15.<br>Number of family reference samples collected and processed.  | INDICATOR 16.<br>Number of notifications to families about the identification of missing persons.   | INDICATOR 17.<br>Number of human rights organizations trained and supported.<br><br>COMPONENT 2. FIXED FEE DELIVERABLE.                           | INDICATOR 18.<br>Number of government officials receiving USG-supported human rights training.  |                                    | INDICATOR 19.<br>Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations. |  |                                  |                                  |                                   |
|   |   |   | Y1<br>Target: 450<br>Achieved: 761  | Y2<br>Target: 500<br>Achieved: 521 | Y1<br>Target: 0<br>Achieved: 2  | Y2<br>Target: 1<br>Achieved: 6         | Y1<br>Target: 10<br>Achieved: 42 | Y2<br>Target: 12<br>Achieved: 40 | Y1<br>Target: 30<br>Achieved: 294 |

The Indicator Summary Table, which includes detailed information about RED-DH’s indicators as defined in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, is presented in **Annex 1**.

During Year I and Year 2, RED-DH reached or surpassed the targets of 17 indicators. Although reaching the target for indicator 3 in both, Year 1 and Year 2, this indicator has been a constant challenge as it involves political complexities (actors that report to torture registries). Proof of these complexities are the slow creation of RENADET, which just began, and the dilatory collaboration between state authorities.

During year 2 of RED-DH, of the 17 indicators, the target for 16 indicators was exceeded.

The following section briefly describes the goals accomplished during year 2. **Annex 1** details every activity behind to achieve goals and **Annex 5** the data sources. In addition, the **Accomplishments and Overall Status** section also narrates details of activities by component.

**Context Indicator 1. Number of torture and other ill-treatment complaints received by National and State Human Rights Commissions in RED-DH priority states.**

This reporting period considers July, August and September 2022. RED-DH requested this data on October 4, 2022. However, as of October 18, 2022, the GOM has not provided data belonging to this quarter despite RED-DH's efforts to obtain it. This information will be reported next quarter.

**Context Indicator 2. Number of missing persons registered<sup>2</sup>.**

The data retrieved on October 11, 2022, from the National Registry of Disappeared or Non-Located Persons, which regularly updates its information and can be reviewed publicly online. The data considers missing or disappeared persons *from 1964 to September 30, 2022*.

| Location | Men    | Women  | Undetermined | Total   | 14 y/o or younger |
|----------|--------|--------|--------------|---------|-------------------|
| National | 79,020 | 26,254 | 735          | 106,009 | 8,462             |
| Coahuila | 2,759  | 858    | 9            | 3,626   | 189               |
| Jalisco  | 12,726 | 2,286  | 19           | 15,031  | 456               |
| Puebla   | 1,505  | 849    | 3            | 2,357   | 303               |
| Sonora   | 3,474  | 933    | 6            | 4,413   | 304               |
| Veracruz | 5,519  | 1817   | 32           | 7,368   | 482               |

**Indicator 3. Number of supported GOM actors who report to the National Registry of Victims of Torture or to the National Registry for the Crime of Torture.**

Target Y2: 2

Accomplished: 2

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 100%

In August 2022, RED-DH delivered a document titled “Alignment for the Information Registry on Torture and Ill-treatment” to the Human Rights Commission of Veracruz (CEDHV). Moreover, RED-DH delivered to Puebla's Institute of Public Defense a policy brief and a list of

<sup>2</sup> The data retrieved on October 11, 2022, from the National Registry of Disappeared or Non-Located Persons, which regularly updates its information and can be reviewed publicly online. The data considers missing or disappeared persons from 1964 to September 30, 2022.

recommendations concerning RENADET and its use. Both documents are part of an effort to support systematizing information about torture cases, allowing the institution to manage, accompany, and respond to such violations while reporting data to RENADET. In both cases, the documents were well-received by the authorities who acknowledged them as tools that will help them report to RENADET once it is operational.

**Indicator 4. Number of strengthened GOM service delivery systems to victims of torture and disappearance.**

Target Y1: 4

Total accomplished: 5

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 125%

Between October 2021 and April 2022, RED-DH delivered, through technical reports 03 plans for the Executive Commission for the Attention of Victims of Veracruz, 01 plan for the Executive Commission of Victims of Jalisco and 01 plan for the FGR.

**Indicator 5. Number of torture and disappearance cases that show progress in criminal proceedings.**

Target Y2: 0

Total Accomplished: 1

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: Targets have been set from Year 3 onwards.

Monica Ruth Rojas was forcibly disappeared in the State of Mexico on October 21, 2019. Her last known location was her employer's facility. A year later, on October 11, 2020, her body was found in Ocosingo, Morelos, a nearby state. After significant efforts and legal support from grantee IDHEAS, the case officially moved to the trial phase. On February 28, 2022, the first hearing was held. On August 12, 2022, [Monica's case concluded](#) with a sentence of 17.6 years in prison for one of the perpetrators.

**Indicator 6. Percent decrease in the backlog of unidentified remains at the federal level and in RED-DH priority state.**

Target Y2: -10%

Total Accomplished: -26.31%

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: -26.31%

During Year 2, in Coahuila, grantee FAFG collected and processed 516 DNA reference samples from relatives of disappeared persons and 652 samples from human remains. Additionally, in Coahuila, grantee Fray Juan de Larios, while supporting disappearance cases, collected and processed 5 DNA reference samples from relatives of disappeared persons and nine samples from human remains. At the national level, while supporting FGR in the validation of DNA extraction methods grantee, the ICMP took and processed 20 human remains samples.

**Indicator 7. Number of missing persons identified.**

Target Y2: 11

Total Accomplished: 30

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 273%

During Q2Y2, the mass exhumations work in Coahuila, coordinated by grantee FAFG in support of the CRIH, identified 06 disappeared people. On August 15, 2022, FAFG reported 24 new identifications of disappeared people from Coahuila as a result of RED-DH support.

**Indicator 8. Number of public policies proposed to or adopted by the GOM to address torture and disappearances.**

Target Y2: 12

Total Accomplished: 15

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 125%

Between December 2021 and August 2022, RED-DH submitted 15 public policy proposals to various authorities. In particular, 01 to the Sonora's Prosecutor's Office; 03 for the FGR; 02 for Jalisco's Executive Commission for Victims Attention; 06 for the CNB; and 03 for the Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of the Interior.

**Indicator 9. Number of communication campaigns to raise public awareness on torture and disappearance.**

Target Y2: 15

Total Accomplished: 20

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 133%

Between November 2021 and September 2022, RED-DH supported campaigns in Jalisco, Veracruz, and at the national level to disseminate information on the general laws against disappearance and torture and at the state level to inform citizens in particular of their rights and the obligations of the authorities.

**Indicator 10. Number of reports or analyses developed with project support to improve the prevention and investigation of torture and disappearances carried out by GOM authorities.**

Target Y2: 24

Total Accomplished: 28

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 117%

Between October 2021 and August 2022, RED-DH delivered reports and analyses to the Jalisco Prosecutor's Office, the FGR, the EM and the CNB.

**Indicator 11. Number of torture and disappearance cases supported, to improve investigations and/or administrative measures for victims and families.**

Target Y2: 25

Total Accomplished: 106

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 424%

Throughout the year, RED-DH supported a total of 89 cases through the following projects and collaborations: CEPAD (Jalisco)= 13; IMDHD (Veracruz)=7; FJDL (Coahuila)=18; FJEDD (Tamaulipas)=06; Solecito (Veracruz)=61; FJED: Tamaulipas=1

**Indicator 12. Number of strategies developed for prosecution authorities to advance with the investigation of torture and disappearance cases.**

Target Y2: 4

Total Accomplished: 16

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 400%

During the first half of 2022, RED-DH collaborated, through its grantees to develop strategies for Jalisco, Veracruz and Coahuila, as well as at the federal level to the FGR and the CNB.



**Indicator 13. Number of coordinated ventures among state and non-state actors involved in the protection of human rights.**

Target Y2: 8

Total Accomplished: 14

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 175%

Between December 2021 and June 2022, RED-DH supported a wide range of coordinated ventures at the national and state levels. These ranged from collaboration for forensic identification, case support, policies to aid the search process, and the documentation of torture.

**Indicator 14. Number of human remains processed to obtain DNA information.**

Target Y2: 200

Total Accomplished: 681

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 341%

During Year 2, in Coahuila, grantee FJDL delivered 09 human remains to a laboratory for DNA processing. Moreover, grantee FAFG processed 652 samples from human remains within its intervention with the CRIH. Finally, as part of the collaboration with FGR, the ICMP processed 20 samples at its laboratory in the Hague.

**Indicator 15. Number of family reference samples collected and processed.**

Target Y2: 500

Total Accomplished: 521

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 104%

During Quarter 1, grantee FJDL brought 05 family reference samples to a laboratory for processing. In Quarter 2, grantee FAFG processed 239 family DNA reference samples, and in this quarter, FAFG processed 136 family reference samples. Finally, the CRIH processed 141 family reference samples independently using the genetic analyzer donated by USAID through RED-DH.

**Indicator 16. Number of notifications to families about the identification of missing persons.**

Target Y2: 1

Total Accomplished: 6

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 600%

On March 7, 2022, grantee FAFG reported that the CRIH notified 06 families about identifying their disappeared relative.

**Indicator 17. Number of human rights organizations trained and supported.**

Target Y2: 12

Total Accomplished: 40

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 333%

Between October 2021 and June 2022, training in Jalisco, Sonora and Veracruz was prioritized. Overall, RED-DH trained 171 representatives of human rights organizations and family members/victims of human rights violations, out of which 19 were men and 152 were women.

**Indicator 18. Number of government officials receiving USG-supported human rights training.**

Target Y2: 75

Total Accomplished: 157

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 209%

From October 2021 to May 2022, RED-DH carried out training activities in Veracruz and Jalisco, as well as with FGR authorities. Specifically, RED-DH trained 157 public officials, 78 men and 79 women (all vetted).

**Indicator 19. Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations.**

Target Y2: 20

Total Accomplished: 31

Percentage of Y2 Achieved: 155%

Between September 20, 2021, and February 4, 2022, grantee Delibera trained 31 police officers from Guadalajara's Metropolitan Area (16 women and 15 men). This training included a module called "uses of the gender perspective in cases of disappearances." That module aimed to strengthen police officers' capacities from a gender perspective, differentiated approach to females using gender procedures, a legal framework aimed at women as a vulnerable group, and steps to systematize women's rights from these Municipal Search Cells.



## **YEAR 2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OVERALL STATUS**

**COMPONENT 1. Establish and sustain national oversight, coordination, and implementation mechanisms to deliver GOM commitments under the 2017 General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances.**

**Key Outcome 1: National oversight, coordination, and implementation mechanisms to deliver GOM commitments under the 2017 General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances established and sustained.**

**Key Result 1.1 National plans/programs, policies, and oversight mechanisms in place for the EM on Forensic Identification of Disappeared Persons to oversee commitments and coordinate implementation with GOM agencies.**

**1.1.1. Recover experiences and best practices in forensic investigation for the EM.**

**1.1.1.a. Recover experiences and best practices in forensic investigation for the EM.**

**1.1.2. Provide technical support to track, identify, and report on disappeared persons and their remains.**

**1.1.2.a. Promote technical support for the creation and enforcement of minimum forensic standards**

On December 5, 2019, the EM was created to address the forensic identification backlog. Consequently, on March 19, 2020, its creation was enacted through the publication in the DOF. The EM is an extraordinary, multidisciplinary mechanism with technical-scientific autonomy to carry out the appropriate expert assessments on the bodies or remains that have not been identified and fall within its attributions. In August 2021, the EM's Coordinating Group formally began its activities. In November 2021, the EM concluded the planning for 2022, which constitutes Phase I of a six-year strategic plan (2022-2027) that is still under construction. For the first year of operations, a 40 million pesos (USD 2 million) budget from the Federal Government was assigned to the EM via the United Nations Population Fund.

### **Year 2 Activities:**

- On March 3, 2022, grantee Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (FJEDD) delivered a report to the EM which compiles important lessons learned over the more than seven years of the work of the Forensic Commission<sup>3</sup>. The document highlights best practices and systematizes approaches to identify bodies and remains. It also includes interviews with relatives of disappeared persons and information that can aid the EM in the definition of forensic investigation criteria.
- On June 1, 2022, RED-DH awarded a grant to the Centro de Colaboración Cívica (CCC) to support the dissemination of the EM's work among relatives of disappeared persons. Specifically, during year 2 and year 3, this grant will: 1. Enable dialogue and capacity building for groups of relatives of disappeared persons and civil society to develop public policies for the search and identification of persons in Mexico. 2.

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<sup>3</sup> The Commission was formed in September 2013 after an agreement was signed between the General Prosecutor's Office, the Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense, and eleven non-governmental organizations from Central America and Mexico, represented by the FJEDD. Its purpose was to identify the remains found in mass graves related to three massacres of migrants perpetrated between 2010 and 2012.

Connect groups of relatives of disappeared persons, civil society, and federal authorities to advance the adoption of policies focused on the search and identification of disappeared persons. 3. Foster spaces with groups of relatives of disappeared persons to disseminate the work of the EM.

- Also, currently, RED-DH is collaborating with the EM to establish a technical support mechanism to aid the EM's work in 2023.

## **Key Result 1.2 CNB provides effective oversight of search efforts with states.**

### **1.2.1. Provide needs-based support to CNB**

On January 13, 2022, USAID, through RED-DH, met with the CNB to explore areas of technical assistance following the collaboration agreement signed on February 4, 2021, that has guided joint efforts for more than a year.

#### **Year 2 Activities:**

- An essential part of the collaboration in Year 2 between RED-DH and the CNB consisted in reviewing and analyzing relevant regulatory frameworks regarding forced disappearances and designing proposals to strengthen the CNB's capacities and legal attributions. This support is a critical contribution to more effective search processes and guaranteeing the rights of disappeared persons and their families.

#### **1.2.1.a. Enable tools for state-level Context Analysis Units for Search and Investigations in coordination with FGEs.**

A central objective of RED-DH has been to ensure that national and local search commissions have the necessary capacities to systematize, analyze and update information related to the disappearance of persons, as mandated by the GLFD.

#### **Year 2 Activities:**

- At the request of the CNB, since January 2021, RED-DH has provided technical assistance through a team of specialized consultants to build the capacities of Context Analysis Units. By strengthening the skills of authorities in charge of searching for disappeared persons, RED-DH has advanced with the GLFD implementation. The second stage of technical assistance began on October 8, 2021 and ended on April 28, 2022. The work focused on developing specialized training courses, methodologies, and analysis, expanding from what the first group of consultants developed.
- On November 25, 2021, RED-DH delivered to the CNB three methodological proposals to (1) Strengthen Context Analysis Units of Jalisco and Guerrero; (2) systematize context analysis practices carried out by local search commissions; and (3) update the CNB's context analysis guidelines.
- On November 30, 2021, RED-DH, in collaboration with grantee DragonLab and the CNB, presented the publication "Locating, linking, and framing: A brief on context analysis tools" along with a [digital toolkit](http://dragonlab.mx/toolkit/): <http://dragonlab.mx/toolkit/>. The

publication focuses on identifying the dynamics surrounding disappearances in Mexico.

- To complement the work carried out with the CNB, in June 2022, RED-DH awarded a grant to Lantia Intelligence to improve the FGR's capacities to investigate and prosecute forced disappearances through the application of specialized context analysis. Specifically, Lantia will: 1. Support the investigation of cases of disappearance by developing specialized context analysis on the matter. 2. Elaborate and analyze the institutional dynamics that led to forced disappearances in the abovementioned cases. 3. Train FGR authorities to capture relevant information in databases to conduct context analysis. 4. Develop a comparative study of disappearances, describing the most prevalent modalities, their regional variation, and how each affects vulnerable groups. This study will offer a general framework to the authorities responsible for implementing preventive policies

#### **1.2.1.b. Design with a participatory vision the construction of the National Search Program (PNBP)**

As part of its obligations under the GLFD, the CNB has the mandate to issue the National Search Program (PNBP) 180 days after its creation. Despite this, its publication has been delayed for more than three years. Against this backdrop, RED-DH has been supporting the CNB since September 27, in the design of the PNBP, with the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, so it can become an efficient policy to guide the national strategy to search and locate disappeared persons in Mexico.

#### **Year 2 Activities:**

- In line with these efforts, NKUC has supported the CNB in developing the PNBP's strategic objectives, creating assessments of contexts under which disappearances occur, systematizing best practices, as well as policy measures in place to address disappearances, designing inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, and developing tools to optimize information-gathering processes relevant to the search of disappeared persons. Moreover, NKUC, and the CNB, held work sessions with stakeholders to review the PNBP's preliminary strategies and acting guidelines and receive feedback. NKUC is finalizing the development of tools to optimize information-gathering processes relevant to the search for disappeared persons and the final version of the National Search Program. This process will conclude next quarter.

#### **1.2.1.c. Foster the implementation of the Unified Search Protocol (PHB).**

#### **1.2.1.d. Develop and disseminate differentiated summarized targeted versions of the Unified Search Protocol for different stakeholders.**

The PHB is a legal instrument that sets out the obligations of public officials and institutions in searching and locating missing and disappeared persons.

#### **Year 2 Activities:**

- On March 8, 2022, for the commemoration of International Women's Day, RED-DH collaborated with the CNB and UN Women to produce a social media campaign to

raise awareness about the authorities' obligations under the PHB in the search for disappeared women, adolescents, and girls. The campaign also addressed the importance of incorporating a gender perspective and the differentiated approach during search and location processes.

- RED-DH continued working with the CNB to review the contents of four didactic summarized versions of the PHB aimed at criminal justice operators, public security institutions, diplomatic representations, and local search commissions. Their purpose is to share critical information with authorities regarding their obligations in the search for disappeared persons. This work is expected to conclude at the end of 2022 after the review and approval process of the Implementation Commission of PHB<sup>4</sup>.

### **1.2.2. Support GLFD mutual accountability**

#### **1.2.2.a. Create a GLFD evaluation instrument for CNB to apply in states, focusing on infrastructure, human resources, institutional framework, and legislative alignment.**

In December 2021, the CNB applied a self-assessment tool designed by RED-DH for Local Search Commissions (LSC). Based on the information collected, in January 2022, the CNB assessed each state's capacity to search for disappeared persons. The CNB also identified areas of opportunity for the 29<sup>5</sup> LSCs that provided information in four categories: (1) human resources, (2) infrastructure and equipment, (3) regulations and processes, and (4) management quality. Moreover, to compare the self-perception of the commissions, the tool was adapted so that Local Citizen Councils could answer it. Of the 14<sup>6</sup> councils around the country, nine responded<sup>7</sup> to the evaluation. The results from the overall assessment have served as key inputs in the design process of the PNBP. The information is being used for the work of the Program. In year 3, reports will be presented.

### **Key Result 1.3 Full implementation of the National Program to Prevent Torture (NPPT) and other Cruel Treatments.**

#### **1.3.1. Build capacity to promote full implementation of the NPPT.**

##### **1.3.1.a. Follow up on the publication of NPPT.**

##### **1.3.1.b. Organize work sessions with key actors to review the final version of the NPPT.**

The NPPT, a key element under the GLT, was initially expected to be issued by the GOM in December 2019. However, at the time this annual report was drafted, the NPPT had not been published, although some progress has been made. On March 25, 2022, the FGR contacted RED-DH to follow up on potential collaborations related to the publication and subsequent implementation of the NPPT. Consequently, on April 7, the FGR presented among civil society, international organizations, and federal government institutions, the proposed version to be published. In general, this version takes into account the work of analysis and

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<sup>4</sup> The CNB chairs the Implementation Commission. The rest of the members correspond to a representative of each Local Search Commission, two members of the CNC, and a person designated by the CNPJ. It also has the participation of international organizations as permanent guests and experts.

<sup>5</sup> The LSC of Chiapas, Hidalgo, and Yucatan did not submit their self-assessments by the closing date of the reception period (January 3, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Mexico City, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico, Michoacan, Puebla, Sonora, Veracruz, Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Hidalgo, Morelos, Tamaulipas and Zacatecas.

<sup>7</sup> Mexico City, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico, Michoacan, Puebla, Sonora, and Veracruz.

recommendations supported by USAID through its EnfoqueDH Activity in 2019 and updates the assessment of torture with the new data from the ENPOL.

The proposal also incorporates a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to implement the NPPT through a Committee chaired by the Undersecretary for Human Rights and the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights, with the participation of various international and civil society organizations. Nevertheless, conversations have stalled in the past months, and to date, the NPPT has not yet been published in the DOF.

**1.3.1.c. Review of the Standardized Protocol for the Investigation of Torture.**

**1.3.1.d. Provide technical assistance to the FGR for the design of a Prosecution Plan for the Crime of Torture**

RED-DH maintained regular communications with the Special Prosecutor for the Crime of Torture (FEIDT) to lay out steps to update the Unified Protocol for Investigating Torture.

**Year 2 Activities:**

1.3.1.c. During the first quarter, RED-DH conducted a technical review of the Unified Protocol for the Investigation of the Crime of Torture in light of the General Law on Torture (GLT) and recommendations from international organizations to the GOM. This work identified critical aspects that the GOM must update to comply with national and international standards on the matter. In November 2021, RED-DH and the FEMDH agreed on a route to update the Protocol and to present progress made to the Specialized Prosecutor for the Crime of Torture (FEIDT). These activities will be carried out in Year 3.

1.3.1.d. In March 2022, RED-DH, through subcontractor Fortis, concluded the first phase of technical assistance provided to the FEIDT focused on defining the strategic objectives that should guide the investigation and prosecution of the crime of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. The next phase of technical assistance will begin implementation next quarter. It will involve a pilot exercise that will allow the FGR to evaluate the classification of criminal phenomena related to torture and operate a case management tool and a prioritization model to address this crime.

1.3.1.e. Support GOM actors who report to the National Registry of Victims of Torture or to the National Registry for the Crime of Torture. Articles 83 through 85 of the GLT regulate the National Registry for the Crime of Torture (RENADET), which is defined as an investigation and informational tool that must compile data on all cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatments that are being investigated, including the number of victims.

According to the FGR, at the federal level, RENADET became active in May 2019, while its [operating guidelines](#) were approved and published on December 15, 2021. However, the process of gathering information and interconnecting the Registry to data sources from the state level has yet to be completed.

*Year 2 Activities:*

In Quarter 4, RED-DH met with the FGR to set up a strategy to promote the usage of RENADET among State Prosecutor's Offices. This strategy will be carried out in Year 3.

- In Veracruz, RED-DH developed recommendations for the State Human Rights Commission to align its information on torture with the data fields of RENADET. Namiko Matsumoto, State Human Rights Commissioner, acknowledged the usefulness of the recommendations and reiterated the Commission's commitment to incorporate these to populate RENADET once it is operational.
- In Puebla, RED-DH delivered to Puebla's Institute of Public Defense (PIPD) a policy brief regarding RENADET and recommendations for using the tool. The document is part of an effort to support PIPD in systematizing information about torture cases, allowing the institution to manage, accompany, and respond to such violations while reporting data to RENADET. The Head of Public Defenders in Puebla noted that the institution would use the report's recommendations to comply with its obligations to report cases of torture.

### **1.3.2. Strengthen GLT oversight and accountability**

#### **1.3.2.a. Collaborate with the Observatory Against Torture to continue promoting the platform that monitors GLT implementation at the federal level and in RED-DH's priority states.**

RED-DH continued to actively participate in meetings with the Observatory Against Torture to review strategies that promote the GLT's implementation, particularly the NPPT.

#### **1.3.2.b Build capacity of public defenders at the Federal Institute of Public Defense.**

On January 2022, RED-DH began the second phase of work to strengthen the Federal Institute of Public Defense's technical capacities by enhancing public defenders' abilities to detect, investigate and sanction torture. Through a grant awarded to Laboratorio the Litigio Estructural (LLE), RED-DH will: 1. Disseminate and train government actors on principles that aim to end accusatory, coercive, and other confession-driven practices during investigations (also known as the Mendez Principles). 2. Develop a guide for Public Defenders to document torture and other ill-treatment cases in contexts where people are deprived of their liberty. 3 Train Public Defenders using a practical guide for the documentation of torture and a questionnaire to attend torture victims. 4. Promote the exchange of best practices to address torture between the Federal Institute of Public Defense and local institutes of public defense from RED-DH's priority states.

On March 9, 2022, through grantee LLE, RED-DH presented the "[Practical Guide for the proper use of the assistance form in cases of torture](https://www.ifdp.cjf.gob.mx/resources/documentos/2022/guiaUsoAdecuadocedulaAtencion.pdf)" <https://www.ifdp.cjf.gob.mx/resources/documentos/2022/guiaUsoAdecuadocedulaAtencion.pdf> developed in collaboration with the Federal Institute of Public Defense. This practical tool seeks to explain the phenomenon of torture clearly, without losing depth, as it incorporates relevant regulations and current standards. The document also guides those who have first contact with victims of torture to keep an orderly record of all the relevant data that helps identify clues and lines of investigation. RED-DH printed 800 additional copies of the guide for further dissemination among stakeholders.

On May 4, 2022, grantee LLE organized a [webinar with government authorities on the "Méndez Principles"](#) and their usefulness in a practical context. The principles propose a concrete alternative to interrogation methods that rely on coercion to extract confessions. They aim to improve the results of investigations while respecting human rights and enhancing trust in the State. A total of 185 government officials attended the event.



Between July 4 and 8, 2022, LLE carried out training on documentation of torture, during the stages of detention and deprivation of liberty, at the facilities of the Federal Institute of Public Defense, to which local public defenders from Puebla and Veracruz attended as part of the exchange of best practices.

Next quarter RED-DH will keep working with LLE to conclude activities with the Federal Institute of Public Defense to prioritize work in the states.

**Key Result 1.4. Increased collaboration between EM, FGR, CNB, and state-level governments, search commissions, and AGOs to consolidate databases, registries, and other data tools and effectively respond to disappearances and forensic remains.**

**1.4.1. Support the development of interoperable registries and their sustainable maintenance and operation.**

**1.4.1.a. Provide technical assistance to the FGR and CNB to collaborate in the Registration and Information System that aims to improve the capacity to register, control and follow up on the information corresponding to the crime of Disappearance of Persons.**

**1.4.1.b. Improve with the CNB the technological development that facilitates the organization and analysis of information from the enforced disappearances that have occurred since the 1960s to structure search actions and learn the fate of persons.**

**1.4.1.c. Collaborate with the CNB in strengthening the Mass Graves Module (MFC), which is part of the National Register of Mass Graves and Clandestine Graves (RNFCFCFC)**

**1.4.2. Strengthen efforts and capacities to actively pursue acts of Forced Disappearances and to curb a culture of impunity.**

**1.4.2.a Collaborate with the FGR on mechanisms for the review of files and lines of investigation of crimes of disappearance through experts and civil society organizations.**

**1.4.2.b Develop tools aimed for judges to comply with the correct implementation of the GLFD.**

During Year 2, RED-DH provided technical assistance to strengthen the CNB's general search actions in mass graves. With this effort, RED-DH integrated and standardized burial records in common graves from municipal cemeteries. Specifically, federal authorities received a series of public policy recommendations to implement a generalized search methodology on mass graves. Additionally, RED-DH provided reports describing the process of data digitization and analysis, as well as the information entered into the Mass Graves Module from visits carried out by RED-DH's consultants to cemeteries in Jalisco. Most importantly, according to the CNB, the standardization and comparison of data have provided leads to the possible location of disappeared persons. Finally, on September 1, 2022, RED-DH started a new collaboration with the CNB to finalize processing and collecting information from Jalisco's cemeteries and develop an assessment of common graves and a proposal to carry out a similar intervention in another state.

Since December 2021, RED-DH has been assisting the CNB's Search Unit for Disappeared Persons during the Dirty War with the enhancement of the analytical capabilities of a computer system called "Angelus," which establishes search actions based on the organization and analysis of information. Subsequently, in June 2022, RED-DH, through an expert

consultant, continued strengthening “Angelus” by reviewing, cleaning, and validating the lists of people, organizations, places, events, and institutional processes related to the disappearances that occurred during the period from 1960 to 1980. To improve the quality of the information in the system, the CNB adopted several validation processes to migrate the information contained in the forced disappearance files to the Angelus system, avoiding duplications and errors in the information upload. Additionally, in September, RED-DH awarded a subcontract to Importare Software to build on Angelus's current advantages and further optimize its performance. Finally, in September 2021, RED-DH began supporting the Search Operations Directorate of the CNB to strengthen the development of search methods of people from a database created from the historical records (1968-1982) of the Forensic Medical Service of Mexico City (SEMEFO) and to continue increasing the information uptake of the Angelus system.

Also, after four months of support, in May 2022, RED-DH concluded its technical assistance to the CNB to review the guidelines of the RNPDNO. After analyzing the standards related to the Registry, RED-DH proposed to the CNB several amendments to handle personal data on disappeared persons. These amendments allow public access to official government records while ensuring personal data protection.

### **C. 1. Extraordinary collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and the Attorney General's Office of the Republic. Institutional strengthening for the Undersecretariat for Human Rights.**

#### *C.1.a Design and Development of a Digital Platform for the Follow-up of the National Human Rights Program 2020-2024.*

During Year 2, RED-DH, through subcontractor Importare, collaborated with the General Directorate of Public Human Rights Policy of the Undersecretary for Human Rights to develop a digital platform to monitor the implementation of the National Human Rights Program (PNRH) 2020-2024. After the platform's development phase, on May 18 and 19 2022, Importare organized an induction workshop on the platform's usage with authorities. Then, on June 20, USAID delivered the platform to the head of the Unit for the Defense of Human Rights of the Ministry of the Interior, Enrique Irazoque. The project will continue with an internal testing period of the tool, which will then be unveiled to the public in December 2022.

#### *C.1.b. Design and develop a technological platform for management, attention, and follow-up of cases.*

In Year 2, RED-DH, through subcontractor Virk, developed a technological platform to manage the cases in the responsibility of the Unit for the Defense of Human Rights (UDDH). The technological development concluded this year and is expected to improve the management of information on the actions implemented by the GOM to address recommendations issued by national and international human rights organizations.

#### *C.1.c. Technical Assistance for the design and development of the National Protocol for the Investigation of Crimes Committed against LGBTI+ Persons.*

Through a subcontract to Fundación Arcoiris, RED-DH provided technical assistance to the FEMDH in designing and developing a National Protocol for the Investigation of Crimes



Committed Against LGBTI+ Persons. On December 15, 2021, RED-DH delivered the final proposal to authorities. This collaboration will lay the foundations for policies and procedures that will help guarantee that investigations of crimes committed against the LGBTI+ community adhere to national and international human rights standards. The proposal also contains an in-depth analysis of the existing legal framework and a compilation of best practices, which will aid the development of guidelines that guarantee access to justice.

To date, the FGR has not requested additional technical assistance on the matter. We are waiting for it to be presented at the National Conference of Attorneys General.

## **C.2 Support the recovery of memory, truth and justice for gross human rights violations committed between 1960-1980.**

*C.2.a. Recover experiences of digitization of Historical Archives from 1960 to 1980.*

*C.2.b. Develop documentary and testimonial research on places related to human rights violations that occurred between the 1960s and 1980s.*

*C.2.c. Strengthen the work of the Extraordinary Mechanism for Historical Clarification.*

On October 6, 2021, President López Obrador signed a decree to create the Commission for the Truth and Historical Clarification of Gross Human Rights Violations from 1965 to 1990. As part of the Commission, the GOM established a working group to investigate, monitor, propose, and issue reports on the gross human rights violations of political violence during the mentioned period. On June 22, 2022, President López Obrador announced that the Commission would begin reviewing the Ministry of Defense's archives and military installations where gross human rights violations have been committed. In a meeting held on June 18 with survivors and relatives of disappeared persons, Undersecretary Encinas presented the five points of the work plan agreed upon with the Army, described in the context section of this report.

Since March 2022, RED-DH has liaised with SEGOB to assess possible areas of support to the Commission. In August, RED-DH formalized its support to the Commission through an expert consultant that will design and implement a communications strategy to disseminate information about the Commission's work, progress and objectives.

## **C.3 Provide technical assistance to the FGR on the design and development of the National Protocol for the Investigation of Crimes Committed against LGBTI+ Persons. (Part I)**

*C.3.a RED-DH will work to promote the use of the investigation protocol for crimes committed against LGBTI+, which was developed in Y1*

After six months of work, in December 2021, RED-DH's subcontractor Fundación Arcoíris finished elaborating the National Protocol for the Investigation of Crimes Committed against LGBTI+ persons. In addition to drafting the final version of the National Protocol, Arcoíris analyzed the legal framework and the investigation process of the crimes against LGBTI+ persons. The FGR approved both products in the same month, thus fulfilling the commitment established in the collaboration agreement signed between USAID and the FGR in March 2021.

**C.3 Provide technical assistance to the FGR on the design and development of the National Protocol for the Investigation of Crimes Committed against Migrants. (Part II)**

*C.3.b Provide technical assistance to the FGR on the design and development of the National Protocol for Migrants.*

**C.4 Provide technical assistance to the Unit for the Investigation of Crimes against Migrants from the FGR.**

*C.4.a RED-DH will strengthen, through technical assistance, the Unit with clear guidelines for investigating crimes related to migrants.*

In May 2022, RED-DH concluded the selection of a team of experts to provide technical assistance to the FGR for designing and developing the Approved Protocol for the Investigation of Crimes Committed by and against Migrants and Subjects of International Protection. This protocol will provide critical support for the FGR's Unit for the Investigation of Crimes Against Migrants. In June, a group of two technical experts began coordinating with the FGR. Towards this end, the experts have so far carried out an analysis of the legal framework and the investigation process along with a mapping of primary processes of inter-institutional coordination within the framework of investigations.

**COMPONENT 2. Enhance implementation of the 2017 General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances in five priority states: 1. Coahuila; 2. Jalisco; 3. Puebla; 4. Sonora; and 5. Veracruz.**

**Key Outcome 2: Implementation of the 2017 General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances in five priority states enhanced.**

**Key Result 2.1 Strategies, work plans, budgets, and processes in place in five priority states to implement the General Laws on Torture and Forced Disappearances.**

- 2.1.1 Conduct state-level PEAs to map actors and assess GLT and GLFD implementation status.
  - 2.1.1.a. Elaborate annual state reports for: Coahuila, Jalisco, Puebla, Veracruz, and Sonora.
  - 2.1.1.b. Design a proposal for state legislative harmonization in accordance with the GLD and GLT.
- 2.1.2. Facilitate system alignment through State Systems through CEBs or other established platforms for coordination across the system.
  - 2.1.2.a Design and follow-up drafts for State and /or Regional Search Plans. Stage 1.
  - 2.1.2.b. Develop Directives clarifying the roles and responsibilities of CEBs and support oversight of state-level search efforts in line with the Unified Search Protocol.
- 2.1.3. Facilitate system alignment through State Systems for the Prevention of Torture.
  - 2.1.3.a Design a draft plan for each State.

In 2019, the CNB, in coordination with state authorities and with USAID's support, consulted with stakeholders to develop the Northeast Regional Search Program (PRB-NE). The CNB plans to continue developing regional search strategies during the second semester of 2022. Specifically, the CNB will conduct an initial assessment of the Bajío region, which comprises the states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Queretaro, Jalisco, Michoacan, and Zacatecas. On August 8, 2022, RED-DH began providing targeted support through a team of expert consultants. RED-DH's support involves technical assistance in designing and applying methodologies for consultative spaces with non-state actors to obtain inputs for developing regional search strategies.

**Coahuila.** On September 13, 2022, RED-DH renewed its collaboration with grantee Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos Fray Juan de Larios (FJDL) to continue advocacy strategies that focus on implementing the GLFD in the state. FJDL will implement activities in the following four areas: 1. Oversight of search and identification processes in Coahuila; 2. Comprehensive case support; 3. Strategic litigation; and 4. Advocacy to promote the harmonization of the State Constitutional Reform on Human Rights and the State Prosecutor's Office reform.

**Jalisco.** On June 28, 2022, RED-DH awarded a follow-on grant to the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) to continue fostering actions to implement the GLFD in Jalisco. Specifically, ITESO will: 1. Create awareness of the stigmas faced by disappeared persons, their families, and the organizations that support them through the dissemination of communication materials. 2. Enable spaces for learning and collaborative advocacy between different social actors and groups of disappeared persons from Jalisco. 3. Disseminate, among civil society, various communication and advocacy materials with actions to prevent and respond to disappearances. 4. Promote compliance with international recommendations at the state level in matters of disappeared persons through the implementation of certified training on attention to victims for local authorities in charge of

addressing cases of disappearance. 5. Promote the adoption of a methodology so state authorities and civil society can follow up on Jalisco's compliance with international recommendations. As part of this grant, on August 18, ITESO presented a Legislative Memoir of the approval process of Jalisco's State Law on Forced Disappearance and the Law on Special Declaration of Absence. The event occurred at Jalisco's Congress before families of disappeared persons, international organizations, and local members of Congress. The publication narrates how families and civil society organizations that accompany them advocated for the state of Jalisco to comply with its obligations under the General Law on Forced Disappearances.

**Sonora.** On June 1, 2022, RED-DH awarded a grant to the CCC to build the capacities of groups of relatives of disappeared persons so they can advocate for the implementation of the General Law on Forced Disappearances in Sonora and at the national level. In Sonora, the CCC will design and implement training sessions to consolidate the capacities of relatives of disappeared persons and enable spaces for dialogue between victims, civil society organizations, international organizations and other sectors of the state to promote collaborative work aimed at the implementation of the General Law of Disappearance in Sonora. Thus far, the CCC has developed an assessment of the context of disappearances in Sonora, which included mapping groups of relatives of disappeared persons, their characteristics, structure and the types of activities they perform.

**Puebla.** As part of the grant awarded to the Iberoamerican University of Puebla to build the capacities of collectives of disappeared persons and foster the implementation of the State Law on Forced Disappearance, on June 17, the University facilitated a dialogue between groups of relatives of disappeared persons and local authorities in Puebla. During the discussion, the families shared with the state government and the prosecutor's office the findings of a report about disappearances in the state published last year by the University. The conversation also raised awareness of the needs of families and the insufficient attention provided by the authorities thus far.

**Veracruz.** On August 24, 2022, RED-DH awarded a grant to the Instituto para la investigación de los Derechos Humanos y Estudios de Género (IIDHEG). This grant aims to update the State Law on Forced Disappearance in Veracruz following national and international standards through a participatory process involving relatives of disappeared persons, civil society, and government institutions. To achieve this, IIDHEG will: 1. Carry out a comprehensive review of the State Law on Forced Disappearances. 2. Establish participatory mechanisms with relatives of disappeared persons and human rights specialists. 3. Gather proposals and observations from the State Search Coordination Mechanism and the State Search Citizen Council. 4. Undertake a comparative study of legal reforms that have been carried out in other states and best practices at the international level. 5. Formulate a proposal to reform the law incorporating the stakeholders mentioned above.

**Key Result 2. 2. Improved capacity of state-level commissions, autonomous institutions, prosecutors, and judges to detect and track disappearances and torture cases, as well as to coordinate the investigation, identification, notification, referral, and integral reparation.**

2.2.1. Assess and build capacity to detect and track disappearances in coordination with other system actors.

2.2.1.a In coordination with the CNB, promote capacity building in Local Search Commissions (LSC) to conduct context analysis.

**Coahuila.** On June 1, 2022, RED-DH and the LSC began exploring strategies to improve internal communication materials, such as their internal procedures manual and the induction kit for newly hired employees. In Year 3, RED-DH will start the implementation of these efforts.

**Jalisco.** During the first semester of Year 2, RED-DH held discussions with the LSC to award it an in-kind grant to strengthen its capacity to conduct context analysis by donating state-of-the-art software. This work would contribute to the formulation of location hypotheses, development of search strategies, and location of people through an analysis of the dynamics of violence and criminality that lead to disappearances. However, Francelia Hernández, Local Search Commissioner, resigned on July 1, with Víctor Hugo Ávila, who served as an advisor to the Secretariat of Planning and Citizen Participation, temporarily occupying the position. In the coming months, RED-DH will continue to assess the viability of this grant with the interim head of the LSC.

**Sonora.** On June 1, 2022, RED-DH awarded a follow-on grant to Fortis Consultoría to develop the second phase of work with Sonora's LSC. The grant focuses on the technical strengthening of the LSC through piloting an internal registry of disappeared persons, assessing disappearances in the state, and designing a management model to strengthen the immediate search actions established in the PHB. During this period, Fortis elaborated an assessment to follow up on the regulatory framework and institutional context of disappearances. It also kickstarted the development of a management model, implementation and sustainability plans for collecting and systematizing information for the LSC. Finally, from August 5 to 9, Fortis carried out training for LSC on the Management Model. The training focused on three main areas: the presentation of the Management Model, sources of information and variables for the generation of search hypotheses and context analysis, as well as the process for collecting and systematizing information.

2.2.1.b. Build capacities in searching for persons with a differentiated and gender approach (Alba and Childhood Protocols).

As part of the International Women's Day commemoration on March 8, RED-DH collaborated with the CNB and the UN Women to produce a [social media campaign](#) regarding the search for missing and disappeared women and girls, considering the specific impact on them.

This quarter Q4 Y2, RED-DH began reviewing proposals to collaborate on additional actions to build authorities' capacities in searching for persons with a differentiated and gender approach.

#### 2.2.1.c. Strengthen Units for the Search of Persons

RED-DH liaised with the LSCs of Coahuila and Veracruz to discuss strategies to strengthen these Units.

#### 2.2.1.d. Build the capacities of law enforcement authorities from Jalisco.

**Jalisco.** On February 4, 2022, grantee Delibera concluded the Training Program for Municipal Police on the Search for Disappeared and Missing Persons in the State of Jalisco. The program began on September 21, 2021 and included the participation of a teaching team of 17 subject-matter experts. The program focused on the legal framework of forced disappearances, the incorporation of a gender perspective, the Unified Search Protocol, victims' rights, information analysis, and self-care strategies. Delibera implemented the course simultaneously in two workgroups comprised of 31 police officers.

2.2.2. Assess and build capacity to detect and track torture cases in coordination with other system actors.

2.2.2.a. Support public defenders, victims' advisers, and judicial personnel in the five priority states by equipping them with better tools and understanding regarding their role in preventing and responding to torture.

**Puebla.** Grantee LLE concluded an Assessment on Torture to present to Puebla's Institute of Public Defense during the last quarter of 2022. The report analyzes the material and human resources available and current actions carried out for the prevention and punishment of torture. LLE provides recommendations focused on registries, staff capacity building, and interinstitutional coordination.

**Veracruz.** Grantee LLE drafted an analysis on the implementation of the GLT in Veracruz using data from access to information requests and other official sources. The document aims to account for the current state of torture in Veracruz and propose strategies to strengthen GLT implementation based on the identified findings. In June, LLE presented a preliminary analysis of the implementation of the GLT to the State Human Rights Commission for feedback and met with Veracruz Public Defense to show the tools designed in collaboration with the Federal Institute of Public Defense for the identification, documentation, complaint, and litigation of cases of torture. In addition, LLE held meetings with the Public Defense Institute of Veracruz to provide them with tools for the identification, documentation, complaint, and litigation of cases of torture.

### **Key Result 2.3. Data systems track and report torture cases, number of disappearances, and unidentified human remains.**

2.3.1 Promote the development, use, and integration of state-level registries for torture cases.

2.3.1.a. Support State actors to report to the National Registry for the Crime of Torture.

**Sonora.** As part of its follow-on grant, Fortis Consultoría is providing technical assistance to the State Prosecutor's Office in the design and piloting of tools to detect cases of torture, the development of a Criminal Prosecution Plan for Torture, and the development of a database of torture cases linked to the National Registry of Torture. During this period, Fortis elaborated

an assessment to follow up on the state's regulatory framework and institutional context of torture. It also kickstarted the development of the management model, implementation and sustainability plans for the collection and systematization for the attention of cases of torture for Sonora's State Prosecutor's Office.

Next quarter RED-DH will report on areas of collaboration on the matter established with authorities from Veracruz on Puebla.

2.3.2. Promote the development, use, and integration of state-level registries on the number of disappearances and unidentified human remains.

2.3.2.a. In coordination with the CNB, provide technical assistance for using the National Registry for Missing or Disappeared Persons. In addition, the use of different types of registries will be promoted among state search commissions.

Since January 2022, RED-DH has been collaborating with the CNB to provide technical assistance to strengthen the National Registry of Missing or Disappeared Persons. RED-DH has reviewed the guidelines of the Registry and provided recommendations in light of personal data protection standards to guarantee the rights of disappeared persons and their families. RED-DH has also been working with the CNB to propose recommendations on burial and registration practices in cemeteries and mass graves at the state level. The efforts include protecting and registering the corpses of unidentified deceased persons and unclaimed persons.

**Key Result 2.4 Strengthened services to victims of torture and families of disappeared persons, including psychological, social, and administrative support, in five priority states.**

2.4.1. Integrate victim services across RED-DH support.

2.4.1.a. Support victims and families defend and enforce their rights.

2.4.1.b. Provide institutional capacity building to victims' service providers to budget sufficient resources for specialized services and design effective strategies to fulfill their obligations.

2.4.2.c. Elaborate tools to make visible the effects of torture on the victims and their families.

2.4.2. Increased public awareness of the issue of disappearance and torture.

2.4.2.a. Design and disseminate communication campaigns with civil society to raise public awareness on torture and disappearance cases.

2.4.2.b. Elaborate with civil society tools to inform the public about "What to do in case of a disappearance."

On April 4, [the Ministry of the Interior opened to the public the exhibition This Search of Yours](#), made up of 48 photographs and 16 videos produced by grantee Centro de Derechos Humanos Toaltepeyolo. The videos present the life stories of forcibly disappeared persons and narrate a more personal side of the victims. At the same time, the photographs, which have been edited through illustration, allow the families to observe themselves with their absent relatives.

On May 16, grantee LLE kickstarted a campaign to raise awareness of the Méndez Principles among victims, civil society, and GOM institutions with responsibilities related to combating torture. The campaign aims to disseminate information focused on concrete alternatives to interrogation methods that rely on coercion to extract confessions, thereby improving the



results of investigations while respecting human rights and enhancing trust in the State. The second stage of the campaign will started in August 2022 will run through January 2023.

On July 4, grantee IDHEAS launched the dissemination of communication materials on the Supreme Court of Justice's decision to recognize the mandatory nature of the Urgent Actions issued by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

**Coahuila.** In coordination with victims' families, the LSC and RED-DH began printing and disseminating the publication titled: "Historias que no pedimos." This work, supported by the Government of Coahuila and the LSC, contains 27 short stories gathered after a testimonial writing workshop with relatives of disappeared persons in the cities of Piedras Negras and Allende in 2019. This publication uses hand-written texts from victims' relatives to raise awareness about forced disappearances and the effects suffered by the affected families. Following the re-design and publication, the LSC and the local Ministry of Culture will launch a series of events around the country to disseminate the book.

**Puebla.** During the last quarter Q4 Y2, grantee Ibero Puebla held workshops on "Tools for search process of disappeared persons" in Puebla. The purpose was to share with the relatives of disappeared persons the steps to follow in the search process. Moreover, it also held encounters for psychosocial support with a gender perspective, to which relatives of disappeared persons, boys, girls, and adolescents attended.

**Jalisco.** On August 23, 2022, ITESO began implementing the certified training on attention to victims for 31 local authorities from the State Search Commission and the Executive Commission for Attention to Victims. The training will conclude on December 16, 2022. In addition, on August 24, in the presence of families of disappeared persons, federal authorities, and international organizations, ITESO presented in Guadalajara the publication: "No One Deserves to Disappear." The document depicts the stigmatization suffered by victims of disappearance and their families. In essence, whoever suffers from a stigma is discredited in the eyes of society for a completely arbitrary reason, such as being a victim of disappearance. In the case of disappeared persons and their families, the stigma built around them has generated practices that have hindered access to human rights as fundamental as equality, truth, justice and reparation.

**Veracruz.** On June 18, 2022, grantee IMDHD concluded the training of ten search groups of relatives of disappeared persons in Veracruz. Over five months, participants developed skills in case documentation, context analysis, and the use of legal mechanisms involving the Special Declaration of Absence due to Disappearance. With these actions, relatives of disappeared persons were empowered to demand the authorities' compliance with their obligations and respect for victims' rights.

On July 6, 2022, RED-DH awarded a follow-on grant to the Centro de Derechos Humanos Toaltepeyolo. The grant aims to empower groups of relatives of disappeared persons through efforts focused on recovering the memory of their loved ones and providing psychosocial support to boys, girls, and adolescents who have a disappeared family member. To achieve this, Toaltepeyolo will: 1. Produce and disseminate videos on the life stories of disappeared persons from five groups of relatives of disappeared persons, narrated in the first person by a relative, emphasizing elements of their daily life. 2. Take and disseminate photographs of relatives of disappeared persons together with illustrations where a mother, sister, or father is observed with an image of their disappeared family member. 3 In alliance with the State



Search Commission of Veracruz, create four murals in the cities of Coatzacoalcos, Poza Rica, Port of Veracruz, and Xalapa to raise awareness about the issue of disappearances in Veracruz. 4. Provide psychosocial support to boys, girls, and adolescents from groups of relatives of disappeared.

To date, Toaltepeyolo began implementing activities focused on photography and illustrations of relatives of disappeared persons, producing videos on life stories, and creating the four murals that would start materializing in the next period. It also kickstarted the implementation of psychosocial support workshops that will be reported next quarter.

**Sonora.** From July to August 2022, grantee IDHEAS held four in-person workshops with groups of families of disappeared persons in Sonora to review national and international mechanisms to protect the rights of disappeared persons and their families; and to build case documentation capacities. Moreover, from September 23 to 24, the grantee CCC began implementing training sessions to consolidate the abilities of relatives of disappeared persons in Sonora to exchange experiences and define common objectives in order to promote coordinated advocacy actions. The first session focused on the organizational aspects of collectives of disappeared persons, while the second one addressed advocacy processes with government authorities.

At the national level, on August 31, 2022, IDHEAS held the first session of a “National Workshop on the Disappearance of Persons and Access to Justice for Families and Groups of Disappeared Persons.” The workshop was conducted on a hybrid model with four virtual sessions between August and October and an in-person closing session on October 15 in Mexico City. The project aimed to provide families with practical tools to participate in the effective implementation of the GLFD and the Unified Search Protocol.

### **Key Result 2.5. Increased case documentation and legal representation of torture and disappearance cases by CSOs and victims’ families, leading to an investigation**

2.5.1. Empower collectives and CSOs, including Citizen Councils, to advance human rights cases.

2.5.1.a. Support the participation of families of missing persons in developing investigations or public policies through legal advice, elaboration of advocacy strategies and strategic litigation of cases of disappearance before national and international human rights protection institutions.

2.5.1.b. Strengthen capacities and tools at the disposal of local actors for the adequate documentation, follow-up, and visibility of torture cases.

**Veracruz.** This quarter, RED-DH continued to provide legal assistance to the Solecito Collective. Assistance included an assessment of the Collective’s cases to document their status, identify proceedings and pending investigations, generate recommendations to improve investigations and provide the Collective with inputs to follow up on its cases. To develop the assessment, RED-DH has been collecting, analyzing, and systematizing the information contained in investigation folders or preliminary inquiries filed with Veracruz’s General Prosecutor’s Office related to the investigation of the disappearance in as many cases as possible from a list of 78 files previously selected by the Collective. Additionally, grantee IMDHD has continued with the documentation and support of cases corresponding to disappearances in the central zone of the state of Veracruz.

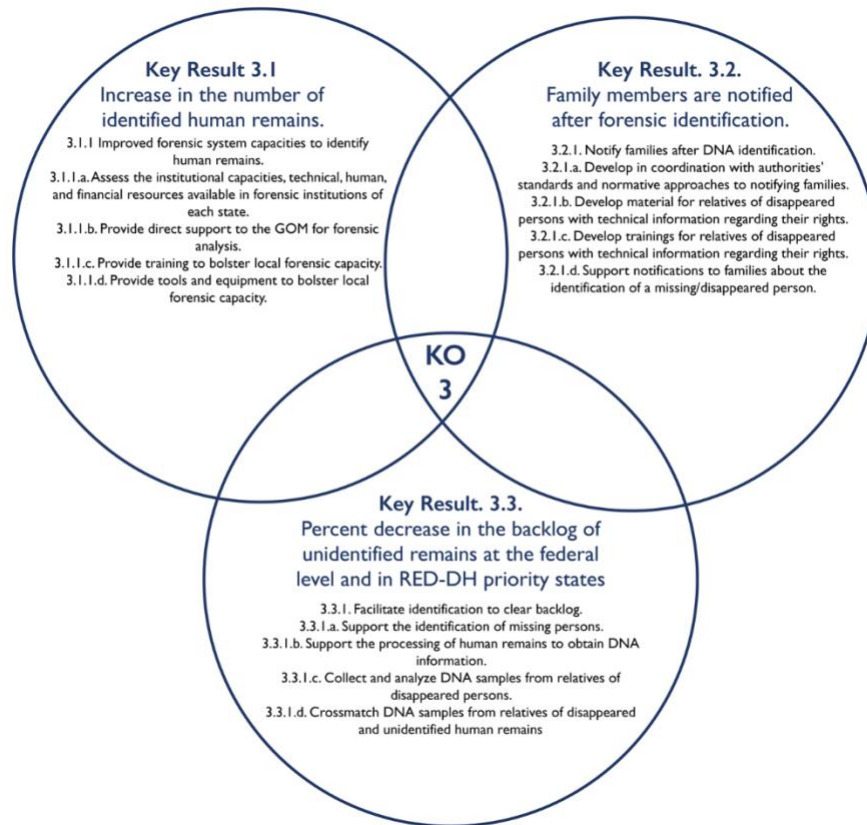
**Sonora.** On April 28 and 29, grantee IDHEAS held an in-person workshop with groups of families of disappeared persons in Sonora to provide technical information on the documentation of human rights violations, emphasizing the forced disappearance of people.

**Puebla.** Grantee Ibero Puebla continues to provide legal support to 30 cases of disappearance in Puebla. Twenty-five corresponds to the “La Voz de los Desaparecidos” Collective, and five to the “Uniendo Corazones Collective.”

**National.** On July 14, 2022, RED-DH awarded a grant to Fundación Arcoiris to strengthen the work carried out by civil society organizations to address cases of forced disappearance of LGBTI+ persons in Mexico. To achieve this, Fundación Arcoiris will: 1. Carry out workshops to strengthen the documentation and follow-up skills of civil society organizations that address cases of forced disappearance of LGBTI+ persons. 2. Disseminate communication materials focused on following-up disappearances of LGBTI+ persons in Mexico. 3. Design a proposal for state government mechanisms and actions that contribute to monitoring the implementation of the General Laws on Forced Disappearances with a particular focus on LGBTI+ persons. In this regard, from September 23 to 27, Arcoiris held the first workshop for civil society organizations. During the four-day workshop, 32 representatives of different civil society organizations from 28 states in the country reflected on the differentiated approach that the attention and follow-up of these cases should have, with a particular focus on the documentation and registration of cases of disappearance of LGBTI+ persons.

## COMPONENT 3. Decrease the backlog in forensic cases in priority states.

### Key Outcome 3: Backlog in forensic cases in priority states decreased.



Through this component, RED-DH provides targeted and urgently needed technical assistance to priority states to process and significantly decrease the backlog of unidentified remains. To this end, RED-DH collaborates with GOM counterparts at the federal and state level to procure and deploy teams of forensic investigators, scientists, and archeologists. Together, these teams triage, intake, process, analyze, test, and identify bodies and remains held in state-level facilities in five priority states. This information is later used to identify individuals, provide input to open cases, and refer information to national and other state authorities.

To achieve results for Component 3, RED-DH provides support through grants and subcontracts to leading forensic institutions and non-governmental organizations to build local capacities through implementing proven forensic methods, piloting emerging technologies, and exchanging best practices.

During Year 2, RED-DH made significant progress, which is described below:

#### **Technical assistance to the FGR: “Towards an Effective and Sustainable Strategy to Account for Large Numbers and Complex cases of Missing Persons in Mexico.”**

From July 1, 2021, to August 22, 2022, RED-DH and its grantee, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), supported the FGR in adopting two novel DNA extraction methods in its Central Laboratory. These methodologies are more efficient in obtaining genetic profiles from degraded and fragmented samples. They also require lower quantities of bone powder, a

factor particularly relevant in the Mexican context, where many of the recovered remains are often minimal.

To support the adoption of these methodologies, RED-DH implemented a strategy encompassing the donation of specialized laboratory equipment and supplies, which were crucial in adopting the new methods. Additionally, the ICMP trained 43 officials from the FGR on using this equipment.

To ensure that the FGR developed the skills to implement the new DNA extraction methods, the FGR and the ICMP conducted an inter-laboratory analysis, through which the FGR successfully applied the acquired know-how to extract DNA from highly degraded bone samples. [As a result, the FGR formally incorporated these new methods into its quality system on June 1, 2022. It now has the technical capacity to apply these in specific cases where DNA extraction had been impossible.](#) It is expected that soon, the FGR will establish a route to review and process degraded remains using the new protocols.

In this way, RED-DH promotes efforts that bring together international experts and local authorities to support the extraordinary work of identifying remains and eventually bringing closure to the families of the disappeared.

### **Multidisciplinary forensic support for the Regional Center for Human Identification in Coahuila**

On March 19, 2021, USAID, through RED-DH, formalized a collaboration with the CRIH to provide technical assistance to support authorities in addressing disappearances and reducing the forensic backlog in the state. To achieve this, RED-DH implemented a strategy that focused on providing targeted technical assistance through the Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG) and equipping the CRIH with state-of-the-art technology and supplies.

From March 10, 2021, to April 11, 2022, RED-DH's grant with FAFG strengthened the CRIH's capacities related to forensic identification through guided exhumations, forensic anthropological analysis, genetic analysis, database population, and confirmation of identifications. Specifically, FAFG guided the CRIH through two exhumations in two cemeteries in Coahuila and supported the genetic processing of unidentified skeletal remains and the collection and processing of DNA reference samples from relatives of disappeared persons.

On April 29, 2022, RED-DH awarded a second grant to FAFG to support forensic identification efforts in Coahuila and Sonora. Specifically, FAFG will: 1. Provide technical assistance to the CRIH by guiding it through four exhumations that involve forensic anthropological analysis in gravesites to recover and genetically analyze 540 skeletal remains. 2. Support the documentation and collection of 540 DNA reference samples from family members of disappeared persons in Coahuila. 3. Provide technical assistance to the CRIH to develop an operating system that orders, categorizes, and standardizes access to forensic information.

On November 9, 2022, RED-DH awarded Coahuila's Search Commission an in-kind grant to equip the CRIH with state-of-the-art forensic technology and supplies for identifying persons. As part of this, on November 16, the CRIH received a Genetic Analyzer with its associated equipment and supplies, including USAID Branding & Marking.

- The Genetic Analyzer is a technological system that reads the current DNA information in a biological sample.
- Specifically, it converts genetic information into electronic signals that the Database can analyze. In addition, it contributes to CRIH's long-term capacity to improve identification processes. CRIH has submitted bimonthly reports explaining the progress of the validation process of the donated technology.
- The donation also included computer equipment and specialized software. One for data collection, primary analysis, and quality control of the samples, and another to obtain genetic profiles and read the raw data acquired on the genetic analyzer. As part of the donation, four experts concluded a 16-hour training on using and managing the software.

On July 29, 2022, USAID approved an increase to the grant value so the CRIH can implement additional forensic identification activities through the donated supplies that allow exhuming unidentified remains and bodies in mass graves of Coahuila's cemeteries. On August 26, in the presence of Bruce Abrams, USAID/Mexico Director, the supplies were delivered to the CRIH.

The donated technology and supplies will allow the CRIH to obtain genetic information and subsequently cross-reference DNA profiles to identify individuals. In the long term, through this donation, the CRIH will have the installed capacity to process more unidentified human remains or bodies recovered from mass graves and clandestine pits, and reference samples of families from the region.

### **National Center for Human Identification (CNIH)**

As mentioned in the context section of this report, on March 30, 2022, [President López Obrador sent Congress](#) a proposal to create a CNIH to facilitate progress toward an effective search model and a dignified treatment of unidentified bodies.

Although the CNIH decree came into force on May 13 and mandated the Center to be operational within ninety days, approximately on September 20, 2022, the CNIH is not operational yet. Against this backdrop, in agreement with the CNB, RED-DH hired an expert consultant to draft legal inputs for the CNIH's incorporation into the legal framework. These inputs include modifications to the CNB's internal regulations, guidelines to the information provided by other institutions, a proposal for legislative harmonization of state laws regarding the operation of the CNIH, and a coordination model among the FGR, additional State Prosecutor's Offices, authorities in charge of the Regional Centers for Human Identification, and the EM.

Next quarter, RED-DH will report on the areas of support that were agreed upon with the CNB and USAID to build the capacities of the CNIH.

### **Build capacities and forensic support**

On August 19, 2022, RED-DH awarded a grant to Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF) to strengthen forensic investigation and identification protocols with a differentiated approach and build the capacities of stakeholders that participate in the search and identification of remains of disappeared persons in Mexico.

To achieve this, EAAF will:

Carry out a forensic intervention in Coahuila that involves:

- Collecting, processing, and analyzing 300 DNA samples from relatives of disappeared persons in Coahuila and adjacent states.
- Collecting and processing 300 bone samples recovered from Coahuila's Central and Carboniferous zones for DNA analysis.
- Analyzing, cataloging, and inventorying bone samples from Coahuila's storage facilities.
- Carrying out expert analysis of documents and evidence on the identification of remains in the Central and Carboniferous regions of Coahuila.

Promote a differentiated approach to forensic work with a migration focus by:

- Participating in the National Migrant Roundtable, which the National Search Commission coordinates, and presenting best practices on forensic work with a migration focus.
- Developing and disseminating a protocol that can provide morgue professionals with tools for forensic analysis that are useful for disaggregating the bodies that may correspond to migrants.

Build the capacities of stakeholders that participate in the search and identification of remains of disappeared persons in Mexico.

- EAAF will provide specialized training on forensic matters for government authorities, groups of relatives of disappeared persons, and journalists from the State of Mexico, Veracruz\*(The State Attorney's Office is omitted), Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Sonora. The training will focus on forensic search technologies to examine terrain, documenting and collecting remains and other evidence, and promoting data visualization for context analysis. The workshops will be a mixture of in-person, virtual, and hybrid modalities, when presentations by international experts are required. In particular, EAAF will train at least 171 government authorities, 61 members from different civil society organizations or groups of relatives of disappeared persons, and 80 journalists.

## **STRUCTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS Y2**

- Both the [CED Report](#) published on April 12, 2022, and the [Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Mexico](#) from the IACHR, published on June 2, 2022, recognized challenges and progress in forensic identification efforts carried out in three RED-DH priority states: Coahuila, Sonora, and Jalisco. Moreover, in the case of Sonora and Coahuila, the Northwest and Northeast Regional Plans, which USAID is supporting, were recognized as outstanding public policies for the search for disappeared people.
- Following a cost increase in RED-DH's contract awarded by USAID on July 29, 2022, the Grants & Subcontracts fund increased from USD 10 million to USD 11.3 million. So far, RED-DH has awarded 37 grants and 19 subcontracts, amounting to USD 6,849,524.39. RED-DH expects to spend at least USD 3,428,361.88 in grants, subcontracts and consultants in Y3. These projections reflect a grounded implementation approach that allows RED-DH to meet the indicators and results set out in the work plan and to plan for high-impact activities in Y4 and Y5.



- During year 2 of RED-DH, of the 17 indicators, the target for 16 indicators was exceeded.
- RED-DH has partnered with world-renowned international forensic organizations such as the FAFG, the EAAF, and the ICMP to support the GOM in decreasing the backlog in the recovery, processing, and identification of human remains.
- RED-DH worked alongside federal and state governments to strengthen Forensic Identification Centers. Through planned strategic actions, RED-DH has shown that it is possible to overcome the forensic backlog and to give an effective and dignified response to families who have faced the disappearance of a loved one. At the federal and state levels, RED-DH has been able to forge alliances with non-governmental organizations and key actors working at the local level. RED-DH has also established dialogues with victims of human rights violations to ensure coordination and an approach that addresses the needs and priorities of the government and civil society.
- From July 1, 2021, to August 22, 2022, USAID and grantee, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), supported the General Prosecutor's Office (FGR for its Spanish acronym) to adopt two novel DNA extraction methods in its Central Laboratory. These methodologies are more efficient in obtaining genetic profiles from degraded and fragmented samples. They also require lower quantities of bone powder, a factor particularly relevant in the Mexican context, where many of the recovered remains are often minimal. To achieve the previous, USAID implemented a strategy encompassing the donation of specialized laboratory equipment and supplies, which were crucial in adopting the new methods, along with the training of 43 authorities from the FGR on their application, which the ICMP carried out. To ensure that the skills had been acquired, the FGR and the ICMP conducted an inter-laboratory analysis to validate the former's ability to implement the new DNA extraction methods. Consequently, the ICMP confirmed that the FGR successfully applied the acquired know-how to extract DNA from highly degraded bone samples. [As a result, the FGR formally incorporated these new methods into its quality system on June 1, 2022, and now has the technical capacity to apply these in specific cases where DNA extraction had been impossible.](#) It is expected that in the near future, the FGR will establish a route to review and process degraded remains using the new protocols. In this way, USAID continues to promote efforts that bring together international experts and authorities to support the extraordinary work of restoring the identity of remains and eventually bringing the disappeared back home to their loved ones.
- On November 5, 2021, RED-DH signed a donation agreement with the Search Commission of Coahuila for the donation of specialized equipment for forensic processing, which is valid from November 9, 2021 to March 31, 2025. Within the framework of collaboration with the CRIH and the FAFG during year 2, more than 1,524 genetic profiles have been collected and uploaded to the database for cross-referencing and matches have been obtained, which are reflected in notifications and the dignified delivery of bodies to family members. Likewise, 2 cemeteries and 2 properties have been intervened, obtaining so far bodies with genetic profiles which have been entered into the CRIH database.



## **PROGRAMMATIC CHALLENGES AND/OR LESSONS LEARNED. MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

- **Collaborations with the Veracruz State Prosecutor's Office were suspended.** At the beginning of Year 2, on October 27, 2021, USAID notified RED-DH that any activity that involved assistance or collaboration with the State Prosecutor's Office of Veracruz would have to be suspended, as the US Government had limited any direct work with this institution. Since forensic identification activities in Veracruz involve direct work with the State Prosecutor's Office, USAID's notification eliminated the possibility of RED-DH's involvement in creating the forensic bank of disappeared persons in this state. Considering the current restrictions on collaboration, RED-DH and USAID agreed to reinforce forensic identification work in the priority states of Coahuila, Puebla, Sonora and Jalisco.
- **Complexity in the scientific identification.** The effective scientific identification of large numbers of missing persons involves finding clandestine graves, recovering human remains through proper crime-scene and forensic archaeological operations, examining human remains to document identifying features and the cause or manner of death, sampling human remains for DNA or genetic analysis, conducting specialized high-volume DNA testing from degraded bone samples, obtaining sufficient reference samples from families of the disappeared, and matching DNA from human remains to DNA from family members.
- **The relationship between Local Commissions and the State Prosecutor's Offices** is almost non-existent due to the lack of federal and state collaboration agreements.

## **UPDATES ON EVALUATION AND LEARNING PLANS AND ACTIVITIES**

To carry out evaluation processes, the RED-DH team has undertaken two initiatives in particular: After Action Reviews and Exchange sessions between grantees and states.

### **After Action Reviews**

Between August 15, 2022, and September 1, 2022, RED-DH's MEL team conducted After-Action Reviews (AARs) to identify challenges and lessons learned from six grantees chosen based on their time of collaboration with RED-DH and progress in their activities. As a result, RED-DH systematized the findings and reviews.

For Year 2, the following reviews best exemplify RED-DH's approach to strengthening CSO capacities and the application of an adaptive management approach.

Both CSOs and GOM counterparts agreed that one enabling factor for the success of implementation is the flexibility of RED-DH. On the one hand, grantees highlighted a wide range of flexible approaches from RED-DH. Basic procedural things such as adapting the reception times of deliverables and considering contextual factors that may affect activities are typical examples of this. Additionally, this flexibility enabled grantees to apply new methodologies on legal documentation of cases that they would otherwise not have been able to carry out. These methodologies have allowed progress in cases where criminal proceedings were placed on hold for more than seven years. In addition, victims' relatives have used these

tools to request authorities to conduct forensic proceedings that led to one identification.

This flexibility is not limited to administrative procedures or legal methods. Grantees also referred to RED-DH's approach of not interfering with the technical implementation of projects, which is entirely different from what they have experienced from other donors. Specifically, this factor became an enabler of forensic impacts and coordination between different actors, which RED-DH facilitated.

From GOM counterparts, opinions are similar. Forensic experts showed gratitude for RED-DH support and trust in them, despite being doubtful at the beginning about the results they were to achieve, as their cases had a high degree of uncertainty and complexity.

*RED-DH wishes to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees conducted as part of the AARs. Therefore, no particular reference is made to the organizations and/or persons.*

### **Exchange sessions between grantees and states**

RED-DH's technical team conducted four virtual exchange sessions between partner organizations to share best practices and experiences in the design, execution, and impact of implemented activities. The dialogues and reflections allowed RED-DH to receive recommendations to improve the technical work and to evaluate strategies and priorities for the Year 3 work plan.

The exchange sessions were held between April and June 2022 under the following objectives:

- Session 1 - Processes to strengthen collectives of relatives and victims of disappearance. Wednesday, April 20, 2022.
- Session 2 - Memory Exercises and Campaigns. Wednesday, May 18, 2022.
- Session 3 - Assessments and evaluations of implementing the General Laws on Torture and Disappearance. Wednesday, June 22, 2022.
- Session 4 - Experiences in the accompaniment of cases of disappearance and torture. Wednesday, July 22, 2022.

The sessions also allowed RED-DH to bring together state-level actors to exchange experiences and challenges and share best practices on designing and implementing case management software used during the search process. Technical sessions were also between the State Search Commissions of Jalisco, Veracruz, Coahuila, and Sonora.

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND GENDER ACTIVITIES**

### **Social Inclusion**

During Year 2, RED-DH promoted more diverse collaborations with partners such as Fundación Arcoíris to strengthen the work carried out by CSOs to address cases of forced disappearance of LGBT+ people in Mexico.

Moreover, RED-DH-supported initiatives focused on translating and disseminating materials for indigenous population groups. The work with grantees CEPIADET and Toaltepeyolo has allowed RED-DH to include in the national agenda a series of actions that were not previously considered. For example, in October 2021, grantee Centro de Derechos Humanos

Toaltepeyolo concluded the production and dissemination of one campaign comprised of four podcasts about the GLFD that were broadcasted on local community radio stations in Veracruz. The podcasts are in Nahuatl, a language spoken by more than 360 thousand indigenous people in Veracruz.

**Gender Activities**

According to the Gender Activities Track from Partners Guidelines, RED-DH reports on gender activities listed in the following table. Per the guidance, the “Beneficiaries are not part of RED-DH’s output indicators.”

*\*There is no specific information available for year 2 to present in the table. The box is left blank to follow up on future reports.*

| State | Institution | Type of Activity | Tools or materials used or developed | Duration | Beneficiaries | Notes |
|-------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|---------------|-------|
|       |             |                  |                                      |          |               |       |
|       |             |                  |                                      |          |               |       |

**TRAINET**

RED-DH’s contract states that *"the Contractor must also enter training information into the TraiNet database quarterly. Each quarterly report will include a confirmation that this requirement has been met"*.

However, at the beginning of RED-DH in 2020, TraiNet was in the process of being substituted by USAID TEAMS, a similar platform with a user-friendly interface, and implementing partners were not obliged to upload data to TEAMS.

Later we were informed that USAID was testing the Development Information Solution - DIS.

Accordingly, RED-DH will wait for USAID's instructions on how and when to upload data to DIS.

## **SECURITY**

Security was and will remain a concern, though Mexico's crime threat can vary significantly across locations and crime categories. Over the last ten years, Mexico has experienced significant security challenges in several regions. Most of these challenges have been related to turf wars between organized drug cartels, fuel theft and other illegal activities, as well as to the federal government's clampdown strategy to break up these groups. As of June 2022, the Global Organized Crime Index, designed to measure levels of organized crime in each country and assess its resilience to organized criminal activity, ranked Mexico 4th out of 193 worldwide.

Regarding RED-DH's five priority states, violent crime and gang activity occur in areas of each state. In cities like Guadalajara, Guaymas, Xalapa and Córdoba, and Coahuila, territorial battles between criminal groups, take place in tourist areas. Shooting incidents between criminal groups have also been reported. To overcome these situations, RED-DH is carrying out a continuous assessment of the risk environment in each state to determine whether risks are acceptable, tailor mitigation actions, brief staff and provide advice, monitor journeys and activity progress, and help support any emergency response.

## **COVID**

The COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world. The virus has had and will continue to impact healthcare, economies and business.

Two months after RED-DH began activities, in November 2020, the country surpassed 1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and exceeded 100,000 deaths, becoming the fourth country to do so.

During Year I, the COVID-19 health emergency added a layer of complexity to implementing activities across the country. The sudden change of "normality" forced governmental and nongovernmental organizations to work remotely and rely on information and communication technologies to carry out most of their tasks. Among the activities mostly affected by sanitary and travel restrictions were training and workshops with collectives of victims, civil society, and government authorities. The virtual courses posed a challenge for authorities, as it is complicated to keep them fully engaged since they must respond to work requests while taking the courses. On the other hand, there were delays in the delivery of some grantee milestones as their staff or other members associated with the implementation became infected. RED-DH learned to maintain close communication with grantees and key partners to anticipate any setbacks from the dynamic COVID-19 context or any other circumstance. Thus far, most activities have been positively carried out with minor disruptions to implementation.

As of September 19, 2022, Mexico has confirmed 7,059,936 cases of COVID-19 within its borders since the beginning of the pandemic and a total of 329,767 COVID-19-related deaths. Mexican authorities report declining COVID-19 cases with occasional increases in patients with new COVID-19 variants. According to Mexico's Department of Public Health, as of

September 2, 63.1% of the country had been vaccinated. Mexico approved the emergency use of the AstraZeneca, CanSino, Pfizer, Sinovac, and Sputnik V vaccines. Mexican citizens, migrants, and permanent and temporary residents in Mexico are eligible to receive the vaccine.

Currently, there are no COVID-19 travel restrictions for entry/exit of Mexico's land or air borders, and no COVID-19 travel restrictions are in effect within Mexico. The GOM updates available data almost daily and has implemented a stoplight system for movement based on data per location: <https://coronavirus.gob.mx/datos/#SemaFE>.

### **A LOOK AT YEAR 3: OCTOBER 2022- SEPTEMBER 2023 FOR RED-DH**

The presidential elections in Mexico are scheduled for June 2, 2024. Furthermore, the successor of Andrés Manuel López Obrador will take office on December 1, 2024, when RED-DH will begin its last year of implementation.

Years 3 and 4 of RED-DH must be effective and provide essential results beyond those expected in the face of the forensic crisis in Mexico. With the legal and institutional foundations in place for authorities to address the current human rights crisis, RED-DH can act as a catalyst to enable a framework of collaboration and accountability so the GOM, alongside civil society, families, and victims of human rights violations, can reverse current trends.

### **New opportunities for Year 3**

Throughout Year 2, three issues have gained relevance and strength, representing opportunities to boost RED-DH's overall impact.

First, on October 6, 2021, President López Obrador signed a decree to create a Commission for the Truth and Historical Clarification of Gross Human Rights Violations from 1965-1990. The Commission is constituted as a particular working group to investigate, follow up on, supervise, propose, and issue reports on gross human rights violations during the period of political violence from 1965 to 1990. It has the task of ensuring that necessary actions are taken to clarify the truth and promote justice, comprehensive reparation, and the right to memory. The Truth Commission has been formed and is about to begin its work.

Second, in 2014, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions noted that "undocumented migrants transiting through Mexico put their lives at serious risk, although it is difficult to obtain reliable figures on the number of those killed." There appears to be a direct link between the disappearances and murders of migrants, organized crime and the collaboration of law enforcement, investigative and other authorities. Faced with this problem, international organizations such as EAAF and the Colibri Center have taken necessary steps and demonstrated that efforts focused on humanitarian priorities could significantly reduce the disappearance of a migrant.

Third, on March 31, 2022, the President submitted to Congress an initiative amending and adding several provisions to the GLFD and creating the National Center for Human Identification (CNIH). The initiative was turned over to Congress and the Senate at the beginning of April for relevant discussion and analysis. On April 26, the initiative was approved and turned over to the President for publication in the DOF. On May 13, the creation

of the CNIH as an administrative unit with technical-scientific independence attached to the CNB was published in the DOF. The decree creating the CNIH came into force on May 16, stating that the Center should begin functions within ninety days (approximately September 20, 2022). Once the operation starts, the CNB will have until January 25, 2023, to issue the guidelines to regulate the information provided by the FGR and other authorities. In addition, the National Search System and the National Law Enforcement Conference must complete the necessary adjustments to the Unified Investigation Protocol and Search Protocols.

RED-DH intensified collaborative initiatives in the five priority states. Moreover, implementing RED-DH's activities has attracted the interest of authorities from other states. For example, the State Prosecutor's Office of Tabasco has reached out to RED-DH to discuss strategies surrounding the implementation of the General Laws. In addition, the work at the federal level has opened potential collaborations in Chiapas, Nayarit, San Luis Potosi, the State of Mexico and Nuevo Leon, which will be explored in further detail with USAID.

***Following a cost increase in RED-DH's contract awarded by USAID on July 29, 2022, the Grants & Subcontracts fund increased from USD 10 million to USD 11.3 million. So far, RED-DH has awarded 37 grants and 19 subcontracts, amounting to USD 6,849,524.39. RED-DH expects to spend at least USD 3,428,361.88 in grants, subcontracts and consultants in Y3. These projections reflect a grounded implementation approach that allows RED-DH to meet the indicators and results set out in the work plan and to plan for high-impact activities in Y4 and Y5.***

Finally, and in line with the Key Results stated under the Contract, RED-DH will engage with grantees to incentivize innovations and to procure forensic equipment for government counterparts in priority states. RED-DH will ensure that a balance is kept between the funds allocated to all Components to ensure the targets and results set out in the Contract are met. Based on the progress achieved during Year 2, RED-DH is positioned to continue strategically accompanying activities to implement relevant aspects of the general laws against torture and disappearance and continue injecting resources to reduce the identified forensic backlog.

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## **Annexes**

**Annex 1.** Indicator Summary Table

**Annex 2.** Success Story

**Annex 3.** Grants, Subcontracts and consultants Report

**Annex 4.** Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Report

**Annex 5.** RED-DH's verification methods for Y2 Deliverables under the contract

**Annex 6.** Campaigns, Publications and Reports: Public Section and Confidential Section

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