

Joint pronouncement
January 21, 2020

FIRST YEAR OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL IN MEXICO CONCLUDES WITH FEW ADVANCES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY

- **Lack of transparency, appointments without public calls for applications, and the closing of spaces for civil society participation mark the first year of the Prosecutor General's management**
- **Worrisome announcements of legislative reforms that could generate serious setbacks and the consolidation of impunity**

January 18th marked one year since the appointment of Alejandro Gertz Manero as the first Prosecutor General of the Republic (FGR) in Mexico. Last week a group of civil society organizations presented an analysis of the first year of Gertz's administration documenting the breach of several essential aspects of the FGR's governing legislation. A lack of transparency and accountability, the appointment of specialized prosecutors directly and without holding public contests as required by law, the closing of spaces for citizen participation, and the absence of a strategic management plan for the institution are some of the aspects that have characterized the FGR under Gertz's leadership.

The report, entitled "*¿1 año de justicia y autonomía de la FGR? Balance ciudadano a 1 año de gestión del Fiscal General de la República*" demonstrates that there are still enormous challenges for a transition towards a truly autonomous institution with the ability to carry out criminal investigations and prosecutions effectively and independently of political powers, and in doing so, provide a state response to the high crime and impunity rates in the country.

The FGR's organic law, approved in 2018, sought to transform the institutional design and investigative model of the former *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR) to make it an independent and strategic institution. Through a shift towards a flexible and evidence-based investigation model, and the creation of control and accountability mechanisms as well as spaces for citizen participation, the new Prosecutor General's Office appeared to hold the promise of justice for millions of victims of serious human rights violations.

The signatory organizations express our concern about the findings reported by Mexican civil society as well as the Prosecutor General's announcement last week before the Senate of various initiatives to reform key aspects of the criminal justice system. His proposed reforms include changes to the FGR's organic law, whose passage was the result of unprecedented efforts by Mexican civil society and their collaboration with authorities in the current administration. A reform of this significance should not be carried out without civil society participation, and could result in serious setbacks consolidating impunity in the country.

Signatory Organizations:

Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF)
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Latin American Working Group (LAWG)
Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT-France)