

# JUSTICE IN MEXICO

## 2016 Annual Report



“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice”  
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“El brazo del universo moral es largo, pero se dobla hacia la  
justicia”  
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**JUSTICE IN MEXICO**  
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*Justice in Mexico team  
at UNAM Symposium,  
September 8-9, 2016.*



## About Justice in Mexico

*We envision a more secure, just, and peaceful future for Mexico and we work to understand the rule of law challenges that Mexico faces, build an informed consensus about how to resolve them, and advance better responses and outcomes.*

### OUR MISSION:

- **Informing Policy:** We generate rigorous, authoritative research to inform policy makers and the public.
- **Promoting Dialogue:** We host public forums and disseminate our findings through leading media outlets.
- **Making an Impact:** We work directly with U.S. and Mexican authorities, civic groups, and key actors to address real world problems.

### WHAT WE DO:

Based at the University of San Diego, Justice in Mexico works to improve citizen security, strengthen the rule of law, and protect human rights in Mexico. We generate cutting edge research, promote informed dialogue, and work to find solutions to address these enormously complex issues. As a U.S.-based initiative, we partner with key stakeholders, experts, and decision makers, lending international support to help analyze the challenges at hand, build consensus about how to resolve them, and foster policies and programs to bring about change.

*Bi-national panel of U.S. and Mexican judges at “Promoting the Rule of Law in Mexico” conference on June 10, 2016.*



## Justice in Mexico at the 15 Year Mark...

*The 2016-17 academic year marks Justice in Mexico's fifteenth anniversary and an important opportunity to take stock of our major accomplishments, and consider the long and uncertain road ahead for Mexico and U.S.-Mexico relations.*

Over the last fifteen years, Justice in Mexico has raised more than \$6 million from public and private sponsors, including current support from the U.S. State Department and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and previous funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation. Thanks to this generous support, our program has generated dozens of widely cited publications, hosted numerous high level forums and events, and worked to positively impact security, the rule of law, and human rights in Mexico.

### **MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS:**

- **Research & Analysis:** Our program has generated dozens of widely cited books, articles, and special reports.
- **Public Outreach:** We have hosted multiple major events and provided commentary in over 650 news articles.
- **Education and Training:** We have trained over 500 lawyers, law professors, judicial sector operatives, and undergraduate students.



## ...And the Long Road Ahead

*The past year made clear that Mexico continues to face serious rule of law challenges, including ongoing problems of crime and violence, major problems of corruption and public sector accountability, and grave human rights abuses.*

Justice in Mexico is a long term venture. While the past fifteen years have seen important progress to strengthen the rule of law in Mexico, violence, corruption, and impunity remain far too prevalent. In 2016, Mexico saw continuing increases in violent crime, as well as major instances of public sector corruption. Meanwhile, the failure to resolve major human rights cases—notably the 2014 Ayotzinapa massacre—have contributed to low levels of public confidence in the Mexican judicial system and authorities in general. Improvements on each of these fronts are sorely needed in the coming years.

### **KEY CHALLENGES REMAINING:**

- **Improving Law Enforcement:** Mexico suffers from especially low levels of confidence in police and prosecutors.
- **Fighting Corruption:** Widespread public and private sector corruption present major obstacles to the rule of law.
- **Protecting Victims:** Victims of crime and human rights abuses have little recourse or resolution due to widespread impunity.



## Key Program Areas

*Justice in Mexico has four main program areas that deal with crime and violence, monitoring, judicial sector evaluation, international education and training, and pro bono legal assistance for individuals facing serious human rights abuses.*

### OUR PROGRAMS:

- ❖ **JUSTICIABARÓMETRO:** Our judicial sector survey series assesses the profile and attitudes of actors throughout the justice sector—police, prosecutors, public defenders, and judges—and provides a key barometer of the state of criminal justice.
- ❖ **MEMORIA:** Our violence monitoring effort helps to compile data on homicides, memorialize victims of violence, and provide vital information for policy makers and the public.
- ❖ **TESTIGO:** Our pro bono expert witness testimony has helped dozens of victims seeking asylum in the United States through written and in-court declarations about country conditions in Mexico.
- ❖ **OASIS:** The Oral Adversarial Skill-building and Immersion Seminar (OASIS) is supported by the U.S. State Department to provide oral adversarial litigation trainings to prepare Mexico's next generation of professors and attorneys.

OASIS Lead Instructor Janice Deaton recognized as USD Distinguished Alumna in June 2016.



## Highlights from 2016

*In 2016, the Justice in Mexico program made a significant impact through our research, outreach, and engagement on several fronts, particularly our judicial sector monitoring and training efforts.*

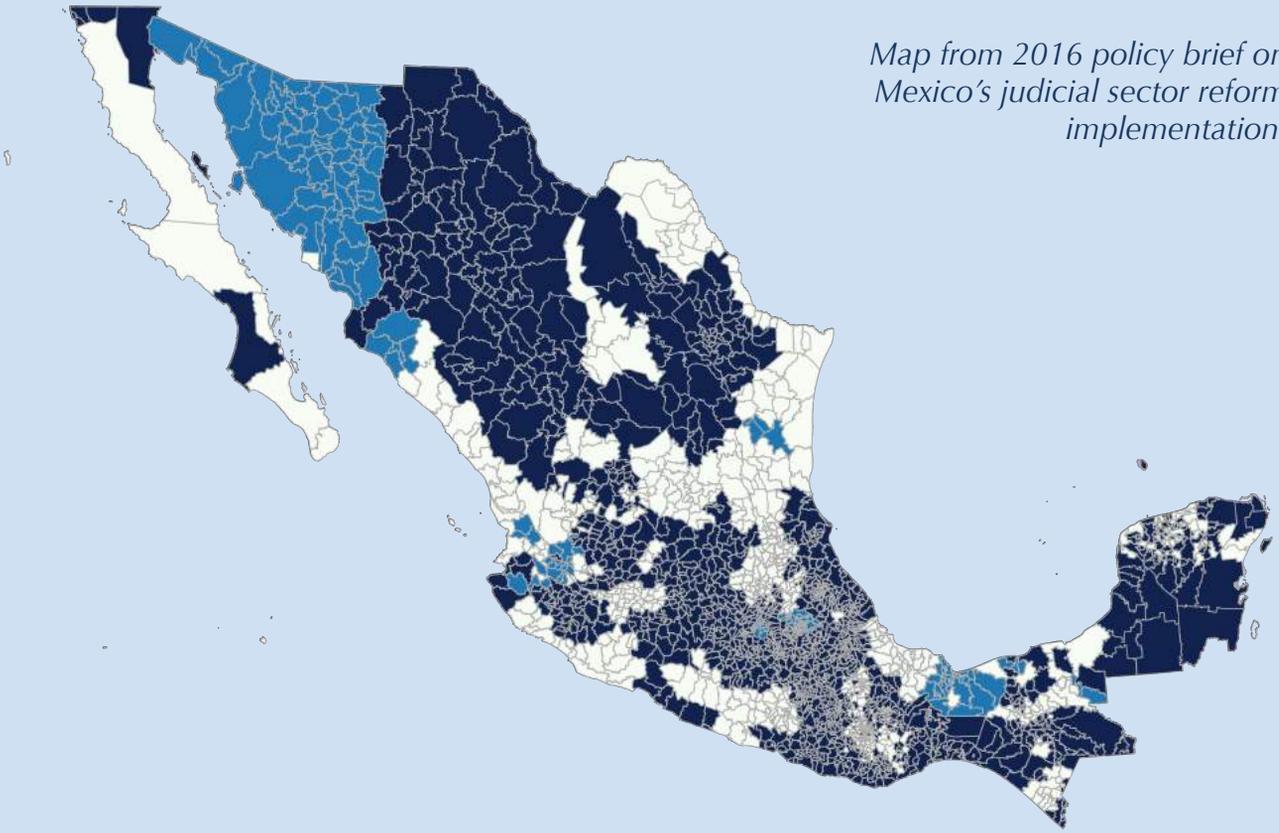
### **A WATERSHED YEAR?**

The past year was one of many accomplishments and important recognition for Justice in Mexico, and one that many saw as a critical juncture in Mexican efforts to reform the administration of justice. Accordingly, in addition to work through our oral adversarial training program, representatives from our team attended the Mexican federal government's inauguration of the new criminal justice system that went live on June 18, 2016, which has been the focus of much of Justice in Mexico's research and programmatic efforts for nearly a decade.

### **KUDOS**

- ✧ Janice Deaton, a federal public defender and the lead instructor for OASIS, was one of ten USD distinguished alumni recognized for their career accomplishments.
- ✧ Program Director David Shirk received the international impact award for Justice in Mexico's work at the University of San Diego.
- ✧ Program Coordinator Octavio Rodríguez published a new journal article in the *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, helping to reach a substantial international audience.

Map from 2016 policy brief on Mexico's judicial sector reform implementation.



## Research and Analysis

*Justice in Mexico's research provides sustained monitoring and analysis on crime and violence, police and judicial reforms, and human rights issues to provide reliable independent assessments of Mexico's justice sector.*

Justice in Mexico is well known for developing cutting edge studies and analysis on diverse and complex issues related to security, rule of law, and human rights in Mexico. In 2016, specifically, as part of our policy research and monitoring efforts, Justice in Mexico continued to compile widely consulted datasets, published special reports on drug violence and judicial sector reform in Mexico, and contributed to six peer reviewed publications.

### MAJOR PUBLICATIONS:

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Justiciabarómetro Study:** The Justice in Mexico team produced its second survey of 700+ judges, prosecutors, and public defenders and presented results in the U.S. and Mexico.
- **Peer Reviewed Publications:** Our team contributed to six publications: the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Handbook of Security Studies*, *Security & Human Rights in Mexico*, *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica*, *Contemporary Mexican Politics*, and *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*.

*Dean Stephen Ferruolo speaks on distinguished panel at UNAM Symposium in September 2016.*



## Outreach and Public Events

*Justice in Mexico is a leading source of information and commentary about Mexico and U.S.-Mexico cooperation on diverse and complex issues related to security, rule of law, and human rights.*

Justice in Mexico helps to promote greater public awareness and education about the priorities and strategies for improving the rule of law in Mexico through public forums, regular media updates on the project's findings, a widely consulted website, and other forms of outreach. These efforts are part of Justice in Mexico's mission to inform policy dialogue and help educate the public. In 2016, the Justice in Mexico team contributed information and commentary to major media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *NPR*, *Fox News*, and *CBS News*.

### **OUTREACH & EVENTS IN 2016:**

- **Promoting the Rule of Law in Mexico:** conference on judicial reform implementation on June 10, 2016.
- **La reforma de la justicia penal en México:** Symposium at the UNAM in Mexico City on September 8-9.
- **Public Presentations:** The Justice in Mexico team presented its work at public events at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., the University of California-Berkeley, and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City.

Octavio Rodríguez (right) at the Mexican Senate forum on criminal justice reform on May 12, 2016.

## SENADO DE LA REPUBLICA



12 Mayo  
2016

Reforma a la Justicia Penal: cuando los transitorios nos alcancen

Simposium

## Policy Engagement

*From our special reports on crime and violence to policy briefings on judicial reform, Justice in Mexico's data and analysis provides objective and timely information that directly influences public policy decisions and implementation.*

Justice in Mexico strives to be as influential as possible in prevailing upon policy makers to heed our advice and recommendations. This is very difficult to measure concretely, as there are many other voices and influences working toward the same goal. Often it is impossible to know whether it was our study, commentary, or direct advice that influenced a particular decision. However, Justice in Mexico has developed close working relationships with U.S. and Mexican government and non-governmental organizations, and serves as a facilitator for exchange across both countries.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2016:

- **Briefing the Mexican Senate:** Program Coordinator Octavio Rodríguez presented at the Mexican Senate's forum on criminal justice reform on May 12, 2016.
- **OASIS trains UNAM faculty & students:** In its second year, Justice in Mexico's litigation training program prepared 240 UNAM faculty and students to assist in Mexico's judicial reform efforts.



## Evaluating Our Impact

*Dedicated to rigorous analysis, Justice in Mexico is committed to carefully evaluating our own impact, critically assessing our own weaknesses and limitations, and identifying ways to make the strongest possible contributions to our cause.*

### PROGRAM ASSESSMENT:

Given the challenges facing Mexico's justice system, we try to be modest in assessing our own achievements. Still, we are proud of our influence on public discourse (with commentary in 90+ news outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *El Economista*, and *CBS News*), public policy (including continuing improvements in judicial sector reform and U.S.-Mexico security cooperation), and ordinary people (dozens of student volunteers, hundreds of trainees, and thousands of social media subscribers) as key measures of impact.

### BY THE NUMBERS:

- **TESTIGO:** Expert testimony in 6 cases involving victims of organized crime; 2 resulted in asylum, others are pending.
- **MEMORIA:** 50 volunteers collected details on 1400+ individual cases of organized crime related homicides.
- **OASIS:** Our instructors trained over 240 UNAM law professors and students on oral litigation techniques.
- **JUSTICIABARÓMETRO:** 700+ judicial sector personnel participated in our survey on criminal justice in Mexico.



*Octavio Rodríguez and a student volunteer gather information for the Memoria dataset.*

## How to Support Justice in Mexico

*As an independent program based at the University of San Diego, Justice in Mexico is made possible entirely through generous donor support from grant-making institutions and individuals.*

Justice in Mexico's host institution, the University of San Diego, is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, and any outside financial support helps to ensure that our work has a larger and most lasting impact. More than two-thirds of all funds we receive go directly to programmatic costs, while the remainder typically supports general operations. In 2016, we enjoyed the generous support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, as part of the U.S.-Mexico Mérida Initiative.

### HOW TO CONTRIBUTE:

- **Scholars and Volunteers:** Our network of scholars and volunteers works with us to advance our research and monitoring efforts.
- **Interns:** University students contribute to our work and receive upper-division credit as part of our Fall, Spring, and Summer internships.
- **Donors:** Corporate and individual donors can contact us directly at [justiceinmexico@sandiego.edu](mailto:justiceinmexico@sandiego.edu).

“Where there is little justice it is dangerous to be right.”  
—Francisco de Quevedo

“Donde hay poca justicia es un peligro tener razón.”  
—Francisco de Quevedo

