



Killings, threats, and attacks against human rights defenders in Oaxaca

January 2019 to June 2020

**Citizen Report to UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of
human rights defenders**



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PRESENTATION

This report was written within the context of a call for contributions from the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor. That public call for contributions was looking to gather information about the situation on killings, threats, and good practices in cases of attacks against Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).¹ The present report gathers, in that sense, facts, and information related to those issues, considering specifically the period between January 2019 and June 2020.

The information presented is focused on the situation of the State of Oaxaca, same that, since 2010, is ranked in the first place on attacks against women human rights defenders (WHRDs), and in second place on attacks against defenders nationwide.² Furthermore, based on data from the Mexican Center for Environmental Law, MCEL (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental CEMDA), during 2019, Oaxaca registered the highest number of aggressions against environmental defenders.³

The information systematized by “Consortio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca A. C. (Consortio Oaxaca)” is based on the registry of Attacks against HRDs of Consortio Oaxaca during 2019, and on the registry of Attacks against WHRDs of the National Network of Women Defenders of Human Rights in Mexico, and of Consortio Oaxaca, during 2020. It is based also on the information gathered through the accompaniment to HRDs, and on first-hand experience of attacks.

1. Call for contribution and questionnaire for civil society of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/CFI-killings-human-rights-defenders.aspx>
https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Defenders/CFI_killings/questionnaire-cs-sp.pdf

2. CEJIL, SCO Space. National Network of WHRDs in Mexico and Mesoamerican Initiative of WHRDs' report. The situation of human rights defense and freedom of speech in Mexico since the COVID-19 pandemic. February 2021. Available for consultation at: <https://espacio.osc.mx/mexico-informe-expone-ataques-sistematicos-contra-personas-defensoras-de-ddhh-y-periodistas-en-el-marco-de-la-pandemia/> And World Organization Against Torture. The state of Oaxaca, first place nationwide in attacks against WHRDs; March 2015. Available for consultation at: <https://www.omct.org/es/recursos/declaraciones/the-state-of-oaxaca-national-leader-on-atacks-against-women-human-rights-defenders>

3. Mexican Center for Environmental Law, MCEL (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental CEMDA), During 2019 thirty-nine attacks against environmental defenders were registered, fifteen of them were killed. Available for consultation at: <https://www.cem-da.org.mx/en-2019-se-registraron-39-ataques-contra-personas-defensoras-del-medio-ambiente-15-de-ellas-fueron-asesinadas/>

REGISTERED ATTACKS DURING 2019

During 2019, three hundred and ninety attacks were registered, most of them against individuals and collectives that defend:

- 1) The rights of indigenous peoples, land, and territories: **36 %**
- 2) The rights to defend human rights: **22 %**
- 3) Women's rights (sexual and reproductive, women's political and communitarian participation, the right for a life free from violence): **20 %**
- 4) The right to freedom of expression and information: **10 %**

Killings

During the first three years of Alejandro Murat's administration, there were documented twenty-one killings in Oaxaca: six in 2017, nine in 2018, and six in 2019. From there, of the three hundred and ninety reported attacks during 2019, six were killings:

- **Gustavo Cruz Mendoza**, indigenous peoples' rights defender from the region of Cuenca de Papaloapan, killed on January 20th, 2019.
- **Bernardino García Hernández**, defender of indigenous peoples' rights and of the right to truth, justice, and reparation from the Mixteca region, killed on January 21st, 2019.

- **Óscar Cazorla López**, sexual diversity rights defender (muxe) from Istmo de Tehuantepec, killed on February 8th, 2019.
- **Luis Armando Fuentes Aquino**, defender of the right to land and of the territory of Istmo of Tehuantepec, killed on April 11th, 2019.
- **Telésforo Santiago Enríquez**, a communitarian journalist from the Costa region, killed on May 2nd, 2019.
- **Catalino Barradas Santiago**, indigenous peoples' rights defender from the Mixteca region, killed on November 30th, 2019.

The six killings were committed against indigenous defenders, using firearms on five of them, and a bladed weapon on the last of them; two killings were perpetrated in the Istmo, one in the Mixteca, one in the Costa region, and the last one in the Cuenca del Papaloapan.

About the context in which the killings took place, it is worth noting the impunity, the exacerbation of violence, the increase of conflicts due to the imposition of mega-projects, the vulnerability of communitarian defenders, and the repeated attacks patterns, which seriousness is increasing continuously, as pointed out in the next examples:

- The killing of Luis Armando Fuentes happened a day after leading a protest against mega-projects in the Istmo region within a context of repeated attacks against the organization "Sol Rojo" which the victim was part of. As a precedent, we remind the enforced disappearance, on May 10th, 2018, of Ernesto Sernas, lawyer of members of "Sol Rojo", that had been criminalized. Also, during the previous weeks to the murder of Luis Armando Fuentes, threats were registered against members of the organization in the Istmo.⁴
- Acquaintances of the indigenous journalist Telésforo Santiago Enríquez reported that he had received threats few days before being killed.⁵

4. Urgent Call MEX 005 /0419/ OBS 034 from the Observatory for protection of human rights defenders. Available for consultation at: <https://www.fidh.org/es/temas/defensores-de-derechos-humanos/mexico-asesinato-del-integrante-de-sol-rojo-luis-armando-fuentes>
 5. Alert. Article 19 Telésforo Santiago Enríquez was killed in Oaxaca, the third one this year. May 3rd, 2019. Available for consultation at: <https://articulo19.org/asesinan-a-telesforo-santiago-enriquez-en-oaxaca-el-tercer-comunicador-comunitario-en-el-ano/>

It should also be noted that the severe damages originated by the mentioned killings also affect others; sometimes they are even collective attacks, as in the case of the murder of Gustavo Cruz Mendoza, as an armed squad broke into the community, killing Gustavo Cruz, trying to kill Carlos Mendoza Ramos, and threatening and attacking other HRDs, members of "CIPO and UCIN" organizations.

The killings have been condemned by local and national organizations as well as by international organizations. We will mention, in this regard, the statements of the OHCHR Office in Mexico on the cases of Oscar Cazorla⁶ and Telésforo Santiago⁷ in which they also mention the case of Bernardino García. Several UN Special Rapporteurs also made a statement on the killing of Luis Armando Fuentes.⁸ The killings of Gustavo Cruz⁹ and Catalino Barradas were also publicly condemned by civil society organizations.¹⁰

As Consorcio Oaxaca is not providing legal accompaniment to these cases, the current status of the respective investigations is not known. However, it is necessary to mention the little expectation on access to justice as we have documented systematic negligence and lack of differentiated perspective of the Attorney General's Office for the State of Oaxaca (AGOSO) in their investigations of crimes against HRDs, including killings. We point out, in this sense, that as a response to a request on access to information from Consorcio Oaxaca in September 2019, the AGOSO only reported one homicide against one journalist in the Papaloapan region during 2017, 2018, and 2019,¹¹ this contrasts with the registry of twenty-one cases of Consorcio Oaxaca, making evident the lack of application of differentiated protocols to attend complaints of crimes committed against HRDs or journalists, crimes that due to the nature of the activities of the victims cannot be treated like the rest of the cases.

AGOSO lacks of differentiated protocols to investigate crimes against HRDs.

6. Statement: UN_HR condemns the murder of Oscar Carzola Human Rights Defender in Oaxaca, February 12th, 2019. Available for consultation at: https://www.hchr.org.mx/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1227:onu-dh-condena-asesinato-del-defensor-de-derechos-humanos-oscar-cazorla-en-oaxaca&Itemid=265

7. Statement: UNHR condemns the murder of indigenous journalist Telésforo Santiago in Oaxaca. May 3rd, 2019. Available for consultation at: https://www.hchr.org.mx/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1260:la-onu-dh-condena-el-asesinato-del-periodista-indigena-telesforo-santiago-en-oaxaca&Itemid=265

8. AL MEX 7/2019. UN Special Procedures Urgent Call. May 8th, 2019. Available for consultation at: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/T-MResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=24587>

9. Press releases available for consultation at: <https://desinformemonos.org/asesinan-al-activista-gustavo-cruz-mendoza-oaxaca/>, <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/denuncian-asesinato-de-activista-y-desaparicion-de-otro-en-oaxaca> and <https://www.rioaxaca.com/2019/01/22/bloque-de-organizaciones-protesta-por-asesinato-de-activista-del-cipo/>

10. Press releases available for consultation at: <https://oaxaca.eluniversal.com.mx/seguridad/11-12-2019/morena-pide-justicia-por-el-homicidio-de-activista-de-derechos-humanos-en-y> and <https://www.contralinea.com.mx/archivo-revista/2019/12/03/policias-municipales-asesinan-en-oaxaca-al-defensor-indigena-barradas-santiago/>

11. Request registered with n° 00859519

Threats and analysis of patterns of attacks

Out of the three hundred and ninety attacks documented in 2019, **fifty-one were threats:** against seventeen male defenders, thirteen female defenders, and seven organizations and collectives.

Two cases are particularly illustrative regarding the reiterative characteristics of these attacks, same that in most cases have been registered more than once against the same person or organization.

Committee for the Defense of Indigenous Peoples' Case (CDIP)

CDIP registered at least 42 attacks against the organization and its members during 2019.

During 2019, at least forty-two attacks against the Committee for the Defense of Indigenous Peoples (CDIP) and their members were registered. Among the documented attacks, five were arbitrary detentions,

which occurred on two occasions with temporary enforced disappearances; in two cases the defenders were also criminalized: there is currently an open investigation file in the case of Gerardo Froylán González Cruz, and remand in the case of the spokesman of CDIP, Fredy García Ramírez.¹² The other detentions were only for few hours.

About Gerardo Froylán González Cruz's case, it is important to mention that he is an elder HRD that suffers from high blood pressure, and diabetes; he was arbitrarily detained on February 11th, 2019, within the context of a pacific protest. He was beaten, held in solitary confinement, and tortured; he received deficient medical care that

12. Statement SCO Space. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of Fredy García Ramírez. Available for consultation at: <https://espacio.osc.mx/exigimos-liberacion-inmediata-e-incondicional-de-fredy-garcia-ramirez/>

caused the need to transfer him twice to a public hospital during the time of his detention.¹³

During October 2019, the defamation campaign against CDIP was intensified: eleven slanders were registered¹⁴ in media, setting the stage for the arbitrary detention of Fredy García in November 2019. Four cases of physical aggressions were registered too, an attempted murder, two threats, one forcible retention, and the protective measures by the National Mechanism for Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists were omitted, even though, since July 2019, members of the Political Commission from CDIP, were incorporated to that mechanism.

It is also important to mention that during 2018 five killings were documented¹⁵ against members of CDIP, same that to date remain unpunished.

From the mentioned above, it is obvious that the impunity around the attacks against the CDIP, added to the delegitimization campaigns of their work, have allowed the continuous attacks and the arbitrary detention of their spokesman, despite the multiple warnings stated by the civil society and international organizations.¹⁶

Attacks against women defenders of the right to decide

During the last ten days of September 2019, twenty-eight attacks against women defenders of sexual and reproductive rights took place: six were threats, nine were expressions of hatred; six were defamations, other six were intimidatory acts and harassment, and one was incitement to violence. These attacks were done mainly on social networks, twenty on Facebook and two on Twitter.

In the context of decriminalizing abortion, 28 attacks against women defenders of sexual and reproductive rights were registered.

To understand this wave of attacks and its impact, it should be known that on Septem-

13. Urgent call MEX 002 /0219/ OBS 014 from the Observatory for protection of human rights defenders. Available for consultation at: <https://www.omct.org/es/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/mexico/2019/02/d25242/>

14. During 2019, thirteen slanders against CDIP were registered, 11 in October. Examples of defamatory articles: <https://netnoticias.mx/opinion/codedi-brazo-politico-de-grupos-armados-radicales/>, <https://www.elpinero.mx/exigen-justicia-para-vecino-asesinado-de-la-colonia-20-de-noviembre-huatulco-presuntamente-por-integrantes-de-codedi/>

15. More information available at: <https://www.omct.org/es/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/mexico/2018/10/d25091/> and at <https://www.jornada.com.mx/ultimas/politica/2018/07/19/condena-onu-asesinato-de-defensor-de-derechos-indigenas-7544.html>

16. Some of the international statements and calls were issued by the International Observatory for the Protection of HRDs, Front Line Defenders, and UN Special Procedures, and are available for consultation at: <https://www.omct.org/es/recursos/llamamientos-urgentes/asesinato-de-noel-castillo-aguilar-integrante-del-codedi-en-el-contexto-de-una-campa%C3%B1a-de-ataques-sistem%C3%A1ticos-en-contra-de-la-organizaci%C3%B3n>; <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/es/organization/codedi>; <https://spcom-mreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gid=24055>

ber 25th, 2019 the reform of the Criminal Code for the State of Oaxaca was approved, decriminalizing the legal interruption of pregnancy until the twelfth week. The WHRDs and organizations participating in this debate became the target of the attacks.

Among the defamations, threats, and hatred expressions documented within this context, the following stand out:

- "Psycho infanticides: medieval plague of Oaxaca"
- "Antisocial misfits, vandals"
- "Thoughtless, hollow and irrational women"
- "Irreverent even with themselves, full of low self-esteem and with their minds wandering aimlessly about what they supposedly want, unable to express their true needs without the use of violence"
- "All that they do to still be able to spread their legs having the chance to ingloriously abort to be considered as a poor girl. This kind of women don't know anything about moral principles"
- "Keep on encouraging this fucking bunch of nonsense broads so they can keep on their mess, damn, they don't respect anymore; they should be in their houses washing dishes, mopping, instead of doing their fucking foolishness"
- "Some do it because it is their profession, some others because it is their need, but these, they do it because they like it"
- "Let's repeat the Tlatelolco massacre, but of feminazis"
- "Put them to sweep, they are just doing bullshit"
- "Decriminalize abortion. Decriminalize killing feminists"

This kind of public and particularly violent attacks implies a high risk for the lives of women involved, as they use and take pictures of WHRDs on social media to intimidate them, defame them, threaten them, express hate, incite to violence, and expose, in that way the image and identity of the WHRDs. From there, if it is true that it has not been documented any attack against the life of any of the defenders that were attacked in the social media, it has been documented that those have driven from the digital to the physical space, for example, in the case of the harassment and intimidation held in front of the Consorcio's Oaxaca organization office.

REGISTERED ATTACKS AGAINST WHRDS DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF 2020

During 2020's first semester, one hundred and forty attacks have been registered against WHRDs, collectives, and mixed organizations. 62% of these acts were committed since the COVID-19 sanitary emergency confinement was decreed in Oaxaca.

The attacks were against twenty-two WHRDs, ten journalists, and nine collectives and organizations that defend:

- Women's rights (sexual and reproductive; political and communitarian participation, the right for a life free from violence): 43%
- The rights of indigenous peoples, land, and territories: 28%
- The right to freedom of expression and information: 20%.

WHRDs suffered 43%
of all the
attacks registered.

The attacks have increased against these three particularly vulnerable sectors within the context of the pandemic because 1) the increase of violence against women during the contingency impacts and increase also the risk of WHRDs accompanying women suffering violence; 2) in the framework of the pandemic, the logic of looting and extractivism has been favored and increased, this situation has allowed the escalation of attacks against women defenders of land and territory that are opposing mega-projects, like the wind power plants and the Transistmic Corridor; 3) because exposing information about the pandemic and the mismanagement of the State of it, increases the risk of women journalists and communicators.

Half of the attacks registered happened on social networks.

Half of the attacks (50%) happened on social networks: particularly on Twitter and Facebook. It is concerning, in this sense, the increase of attacks in the digital space, as the online defamations and hatred expressions propitiate delegitimization of the work and increase the risk against the life, as it is exposed in the

previous chapter.

The most frequent attacks have been slanders and discredit campaigns (38%), intimidation and harassment (20%), threats (12%), surveillance and tracking (6%), hatred expressions (4%), and attacks to personal patrimony (4%).

Consortio's Oaxaca case

During 2019, fifty attacks against the organization and their members were registered, most of them were slanders and discredit campaigns (48%), as well as intimidation and harassment (40%). During 2020's first semester, Consortio Oaxaca was the object of twenty-four attacks; most were hatred expressions (33%), slanders and discredit campaigns (25%).

In 18 months Consortio Oaxaca registered 74 attacks against the organization and its members.

Besides de defamation and intimidation, a repeated form of attack against the WHRDs has been the interception of communications and electronic devices.

Some examples of this:

- Noises are heard during phone calls using mobile devices or apps, known in the Mexican context as "the recorder", characteristic of telephone interception.
- Some secure apps fail in specific contexts, mostly when important and sensitive activities are being held.

- E-mail and social network notifications are received reporting login attempts on the accounts of the members.
- Computers and cellphones failures are registered that are not related to technical problems; the type of failure documented points out espionage practices.

The most serious attack perpetrated against Consorcio Oaxaca during the last two years was a threat of femicide executed on June 15, 2020, when a black plastic bag with pieces of meat, apparently the head of an animal, was placed at the door of the office. Besides the bag, there was a cardboard with a written message saying "CUT IT OUT BITCH THE NEXT ONE IS YOURS ATT. CJNG". That threat happened within the context of the accompaniment of the digital campaign "Hasta Que la Justicia Llegue" (Until justice is achieved), intended to clarify the truth about the femicide of Maria del Sol Cruz Jarquín, daughter of the WHRD Soledad Jarquín, murdered on June 2nd, 2018.¹⁷

To understand the context of risk and increase of attacks against the organization it is necessary to take into consideration:

- The gender aspect of the attacks that WHRDs from Consorcio Oaxaca suffer, that consist of defamation and threats based on gender and sexist stereotypes; many of these defamations invade the private life of the WHRDs to discredit them. They also face hatred expressions and violent commentaries because they defend the rights of women to a life free of violence as well as their sexual and reproductive rights; the attacks are also registered in the WHRDs' households where they are attacked at an intimate level. Besides, within the context of the exponential increase of femicide violence in the State of Oaxaca, and almost complete impunity in these cases, the members of the organization are exposed and face related risks just because of their gender condition, being the street harassment the most frequent of them.
- Since 2012, the organization has been a beneficiary of protective measures from the Office of the Ombudsperson of Oaxaca, measures that have never been fulfilled, as, with the sporadic police patrols and as an aggravating factor, the police assigned requested signatures for unfulfilled patrols and carried out surveillance tasks staying in front of the office for a long time, without any reason

17. UA/MEX/7/2020. Joint urgent call of UN's special procedures. June 23rd, 2020. Available for consultation at: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25372> Joint press communication of UN's Special Procedures. June 29th, 2020. Available for consultation at: <https://www.protecting-defenders.org/en/news/una-serie-de-amenazas-contra-integrantes-del-consorcio-oaxaca>

- Between 2011 and 2018, the organization and its members suffered burglaries that were denounced and, as a consequence, eight investigation files were started, the first five at the Attorney's Office for the Investigation of Social Transcendence Crimes (AOC) and the other three on the Attorney General's Office. However, these denouncements didn't reach convincing results. In March 2017 was decreed a no exercise of legal action, and were sent to reserve, four inquiries opened in the AOISTC,¹⁸ on two burglaries to the office, and two burglaries to the households of members of the direction of the organization. On the fifth inquiry (28/FIDTS/2012) there was some progress in the sense of the arrest of the alleged perpetrator, who was released on bail shortly after being detained in 2017. About the last three complaints filed in the Attorney General's Office¹⁹ to date, there is no significant progress registered.

- The State Government has constantly denied the evident risk the WHRDs face. That situation has become critical since the beginning of Alejandro Murat Hinojosa's government, the current State Governor. It is important to mention that on December 20th, 2017, without making any risk analysis, the Secretary of Public Security requested the withdrawal of the protective measures to Consorcio Oaxaca.

- Facing this scenario, and after June's 2020 threat, the organization decided to denounce these facts to the Attorney General's Office of the Republic requesting their enrollment to the National Mechanism for Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, achieving the incorporation of the organization and their members into this mechanism (file MEC/CEN/054/D/O/2020) and getting covered for some urgent measures (delivery of 5 panic buttons, notification of the incorporations to local authorities, strengthening of security measures of the office) pending still others (provision of 20 more panic buttons, patrols by the National Guard to the office and households, strengthening of security measures in the WHRD's households, public acknowledgment of the work of the organization, and other measures to cope with the digital attacks).

18. A n°12(FIDTS/2011, 06(FIDTS/2012, 16(FIDTS)/2021 and 37(FIDTS)/2015
 19. n° 2260/U.A.T-S.M./2016, 853/D.F./Z.C./2017 and 121/OAXACA/2018

COMPLAINTS FOR THREATS

In Oaxaca, HRDs do not frequently denounce threats, due to the lack of trust in authorities and because of impunity in the whole State for all kinds of crimes, including the attacks against defenders. Let's remember, in that sense, the lack of a differentiated perspective of the Attorney's Office and the impunity mentioned in previous chapters; for example, the five killings of CDIP members perpetrated in 2018, and the eight burglaries denounced by Consorcio Oaxaca.

The lack of access to justice, in cases of threats, is pointed out in the next specific examples:

Razhy's González Rodríguez case

On August 4th, 2015, around 12:45 hrs, Razhy González, the Defender Specialized in Journalists and Human Rights Defenders Protection from the Office of the Ombudsperson of Oaxaca, started receiving insults and threats messages from the phone number 5541312187: "*Call me*"; "*Dun't knuw whu am I dun't play the fool that how many we ar3*"; "*Stop foolin callme*"; "*Er!*" "*You're a pussy you know fuck*"; "....".

That same day, González Rodríguez submitted a complaint for threats at the AOISTC, which was registered as 08/FIDTS(DCLE)2015.²⁰ The complaint was dismissed deciding the No Exercise of Legal Action, under the consideration that the crime was not configured. Immediately, the victim filed a federal appeal, that remained unfinished after a series of obstacles on its conduct because, to notify the aggressor, and not letting him defenselessness, the victim should bear the cost

20. Subsequently identified 801/FEDA/2017

of the publications of the edicts,²¹ to notify the aggressor and guarantee due process, something that implied an impossible cost to cover by the defender González Rodríguez.

Consortio's Oaxaca case

The threat referred to in the previous chapter, from June 15th, 2020, was denounced at the Attorney General's Office of the Republic on July 17th of that same year. After more than two and a half months of having submitted the complaint, there is no progress at all, not even information about the instrument's registry.

21. The State's Attorney Office informed that the phone number from where the threat was done was related to an address; however, the address does not exist, even though we requested information at the National Electoral Institute, that answered that there was no registration under that name in their database, neither at the Federal Commission of Electricity. Based on the foregoing, there was an obligation to pay for the publication of the edicts to not let the aggressor defenseless. So, it seems that the Attorney's Office lied in their report, as it seems that such person does not exist and from there the need to publish the edicts.

GOOD PRACTICES SO THAT THREATS DO NOT END UP BEING KILLINGS

From Consorcio's Oaxaca experience facing direct attacks against the organization as well as from the accompaniment to other HRDs, we consider that the following practices have allowed preventing more serious attacks after threats and defamation campaigns.

Increase of political cost:

- The request of protective measures, specifically to the National Mechanism for Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists.
- Denounce attacks at the Attorney's Offices, particularly the General Attorney's Office of the Republic.
- Raise the profile of the defenders at risk.

If it is true that this hasn't been redundant to access justice; denouncing, demanding justice, and making public these demands allows to increase the political cost of new attacks and in that sense contain them.

Communications from international organizations

- International organizations' statements, Special Procedures particularly from the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.
- Public and private statements by the diplomatic corps, and inclusion of emblematic cases in political dialogues.

International statements are also a measure that increases the political cost and allows to contain new attacks. For example, in the case of the femicide threat against Consorcio Oaxaca, the number of communications and statements showing concern sent to the Mexican Government, together with the legal complaints and request of protective measures to the National Mechanism, influenced and prevented more serious attacks to happen. Certainly, after the international response, if it is true that the defamation, intimidation, and surveillance continued, there haven't been registered more serious attacks.

Self-protection networks

- Joint actions and the establishment of defenders' networks.
- Shelter in secure places promoted by civil society.
- Carrying out risk analysis.

Facing the inefficiency of the responsible authorities to guarantee the protection and investigation, and because many times they are pointed out by the defenders as the responsible for the attacks, self-protection is fundamental. In several cases of threats documented by Consorcio Oaxaca, after carrying out the appropriate risk analysis and finding high probabilities of killing, measures of relocation and shelter have been taken. These measures were built by the defenders with an integral Feminist Protection perspective, and with the accompaniment of WHRDs networks from Oaxaca, Mexico, and Mesoamerica.

Role of social networks

- As a matter of urgency, social networks, specifically Twitter and Facebook, need to assume a strong role in fighting against online attacks.

The companies administrating these networks should not limit themselves to censure and eliminate violent contents and attacks against defenders, moreover: 1) through publications and specific campaigns they should take a clear stand of support to the work of defenders, particularly women, which are especially vulnerable to those types of attacks, and 2) supply information that allows locating the aggressors so they can be taken to justice.

The differentiated risk analysis in each case and the adoption of self-protection measures, together with international statements and complaints at the correspondent authorities, as well as promoting an active role of social networks, are some of the strategies that we have adopted and that we consider fundamental and complementary to avoid attacks that implies more serious dangers.

To achieve structural change and influence in the eradication of the attacks against defenders, more than react to them, it is needed to enable access to justice to HRDs victims of attacks, and the creation of mechanisms and specialized attorney's offices with a differentiated perspective, that consider and protect the condition of the particular vulnerability of WHRDs. It is also needed to point out the impunity patterns and bad practices in the investigations of the attacks against HRDs, and demand the exemplary punishment of officials that maintain and perpetuate impunity. The contribution of the former Special Rapporteur on HRDs, Michel Forst, on impunity and its recommendations to Governments for eradicating it, offers relevant proposals that are important to follow-up.²²

22. A/74/159. Report about impunity presented by the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders at the Council for Human Rights; July 15th, 2019. Available for consultation at: https://www.protecting-defenders.org/pdfjs/web/viewer.html?file=https%3A//www.protecting-defenders.org/sites/protecting-defenders.org/files/A_74_159_Spanish.pdf



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