

Mexican Federal Judges File Human Rights Petition to IACHR on Recent Judicial Reform: Vance Center Files on Judges' Behalf

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New York, May 6, 2025 – Fourteen current and former Mexican federal judges last week filed a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights documenting violations of international human rights resulting from Mexico’s recent judicial reform.

The petition states that the judges were “directly affected” by the judicial reform and urges the Commission to respond to the allegations and take action to protect fundamental rights and issue reparations for individuals impacted by the reforms. The reform, which went into effect in September 2024, violates principles of judicial independence and equality and non-discrimination, particularly impacting the participation of women in the judiciary, the petition says.

The document also cites examples of high-ranking officials in Mexico’s executive branch publicly accusing individual judges of corruption and nepotism without evidence or due process, damaging their reputations and undermining public trust in the judiciary.

“Although it appears neutral, the reform constitutes a mechanism for politicizing and capturing the judiciary,” the petition states.

The [Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice](#), a nonprofit program of the [New York City Bar Association](#), filed the petition in representation of the judges.

The goal of the petition is not to repeal the judicial reform or reverse its effects, which will already be in effect by the time the Commission issues any decision. Instead, it seeks “comprehensive reparation for human rights violations resulting from the judicial reform” and to contribute to strengthening judicial independence standards within the Inter-American System for future cases.

“This petition offers an opportunity for the Inter-American System to address alleged violations of judicial independence in Mexico and broader questions regarding judicial reform processes in the region,” said Vance Center Associate Executive Director Jaime Chávez Alor. “While States must be able to ensure their judicial structures and proceedings evolve as needed, these changes should not violate fundamental human rights.”

“While it is too late to undo many of the harmful changes brought by this politicized reform process, it’s not too late to remedy those damages,” said María Emilia Molina, one of the petitioners and the president of the Mexican Association of Women Judges. “We hope this petition will acknowledge the harms suffered by many of our fellow justice operators, and offer guidance to help the justice systems in other countries avoid the same fate.”

The controversial overhaul of Mexico’s judicial system, initiated under previous President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and approved in September 2024, imposes sweeping changes to the country’s

judicial system, including having judges elected by the public rather than appointed through an established selection process.

In August 2024, before the reform's approval, the New York City Bar Association [released a report expressing concern](#) about the proposal. The statement noted that the reform could “have the adverse effect of seriously harming the independence of Mexico's judiciary” and cautioned against changes that could compromise the judiciary's independence and undermine its effectiveness.

Upon receiving the petition, the Commission will begin a verification process and evaluate its claims. If appropriate, the Commission can then make recommendations to Mexico to address any human rights violations that did occur, undertake investigations or offer reparations as needed, and adopt measures to ensure these violations do not happen again.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is one of the central mechanisms of the Inter-American Human Rights System, along with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These two independent, autonomous bodies ensure that member states of the Organization of American States respect and guarantee human rights and uphold their obligations under relevant conventions, treaties, and international instruments. The bodies monitor the status of human rights in member states and, in serious cases, can issue binding recommendations or judgments.