

Peace in Mexico Plummets, Costing 21% of National GDP in 2017

- The homicide rate rose dramatically, with 29,000 victims. Mexico's rate is now amongst the worst in the world, comparable to Colombia and double that of Uganda
- Federal government's investment on violence reduction was only 60% of the average spending of comparable countries and falling
- Corruption and poor government performance remain the factors most closely associated with the loss of peace
- The only indicator that improved over the past year was detention without a sentence
- Improving relations between the public and the police are critical to improving peace

Mexico City, April 10, 2018: The level of peace in Mexico deteriorated by 11% in 2017, according to the 2018 Mexico Peace Index (MPI), published today by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), and based on the methodology of the Global Peace Index, the world's leading measure of peacefulness.

The report finds that the homicide rate in Mexico reached historically high levels with over 29,000 people killed. It is now comparable to Colombia, and roughly double Uganda's rate. There are only thirteen countries with higher homicide rates than Mexico. The increase in homicides was also accompanied by a 36% rise in gun violence, with guns being used in 69% of homicides, up from 57% two years ago. The increase in violence is not only caused by organized crime but also by common criminality and interpersonal violence, with the rise in gun violence occurring across all three categories.

Disturbingly, this violence is underpinned by high levels of impunity. The Global Impunity Index ranks Mexico at 66 out of 69 countries. The number of Mexicans who consider impunity the "most worrisome" issue has nearly tripled in the last five years, increasing from 7% in 2012 to 20% in 2017.

One of the key findings of the report is that Mexico invests much less than required in its security and judicial system, equivalent to just 1% of its GDP, which is only 60% of the OECD average. More alarmingly, federal government spending decreased by 7% in 2017, further widening the gap.

In 2017, the economic impact of violence reached 4.72 trillion pesos, equivalent to 21% of national GDP. This is eight times higher than the public investments made in health and seven times higher than those made in education last year.

The highest economic impact of violence was in Colima at 95,486 pesos per person compared to the lowest in Yucatán at 9,779 pesos. The difference between the two is nearly a year's salary for the average Mexican worker.

“The significant decrease in peace in Mexico over the past year is distressing, with homicides reaching historically high levels,” said Steve Killelea, Executive Chairman of the Institute for Economics and Peace. “At the same time, federal spending on security decreased. Our global research shows that to reduce violence and impunity, appropriate and effective investments in security and the judicial system are needed. With federal government spending at only 60% of the average of comparable countries, improving institutional capacity is crucial.”

According to the MPI, the most peaceful states are Yucatán, Tlaxcala, Campeche, Coahuila and Chiapas, with all these states improving except Coahuila. The least peaceful states are Baja California Sur, Guerrero, Baja California, Colima, and Zacatecas.

The gap between the most and least peaceful states continued to increase, highlighting the rising inequality in peace in Mexico. Yucatán has recorded successive improvements for the last two years, however the least peaceful states, Baja California Sur and Guerrero, have deteriorated over the same period.

The only indicator of the MPI that improved last year was detention without a sentence, with improvements in 24 states. This indicator measures the excessive use of pre-trial detention. In the last two years, 10 states solved their prison overcrowding by bringing prison populations in line with capacity. Overcrowding increased only in Guanajuato, Tabasco and Zacatecas.

The 2018 Mexico Peace Index also analyzes the factors that sustain peaceful societies, or the pillars of Positive Peace: well-functioning government, sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, and low levels of corruption.

In Mexico, three of these pillars show great fragility: well-functioning government, the free flow of information, and low levels of corruption. This is demonstrated by the fact that the percentage of Mexicans who said they had a high level of trust in public security institutions fell to 18% in 2017, its lowest level since 2012. In the same year, 64% of Mexicans reported that they perceived public security institutions as corrupt and 70% perceived judges as corrupt.

“We found that that the public's concerns regarding impunity and their trust in judges rises and falls with the rise and fall in violence,” said Carlos Juarez, Director for the Institute for Economics and Peace in Mexico. “This links political support to building peace. Earning the public's trust will be key to both winning elections and successfully implementing an effective

security policy. This year's elections represent a great opportunity to publicly discuss the need for a comprehensive approach to building peace."

Press freedom remains under threat, with Mexico declared the most dangerous country for journalists outside of a war zone in 2017. Mexico's press freedom rating continued to deteriorate, making 2017 the worst year for press freedom.

The report further finds that community cooperation is closely related to reductions in crime, indicating that improving relations between the public and the police lies at the heart of improving peace. To accomplish this corruption must be reduced.

The findings of the 2018 MPI indicate that a comprehensive and integrated public security and peace framework requires, at a minimum, appropriate funding that effectively addresses corruption and reduces impunity in order to deter criminal activity.

"Building trust between the police and the local community is the key to reducing crime and lowering impunity. Where people cooperate within communities and trust their institutions, there are lower levels of violent crime," concluded Juarez.

For more information on the 2018 Mexico Peace Index, and to download the report and the graphics, go to: www.visionofhumanity.org

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) is an independent, nonpartisan think tank, dedicated to promoting a better understanding of the social and economic factors that develop a more peaceful society.

The Mexico Peace Index is based on a similar methodology to other indices produced by IEP, including the US Peace Index and the UK Peace Index; however, additional measures have been included to better reflect the Mexican cultural and national context.

For the Mexico Peace Index, five indicators were used to analyze peace: homicide rates, violent crime, weapons crime, detention without a sentence and the level of organized crime-related offenses. It should be noted that the study was performed with the guidance of an Expert Panel representing various institutions such as INEGI, World Justice Project, Causa en Comun, Stanford University, Observatorio Nacional Ciudadano, and Jurimetria. The Mexico Peace Index uses data published by the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP) and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).

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