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Mexico: Constitutional Human Rights Reform and Implementation

A PROJECT BY THE KAS RULE OF LAW PROGRAM LATIN AMERICA

Background

Since more than a decade, Mexico is undergoing significant efforts regarding its human rights regime, in parallel with democratic reforms initiated during the PAN governments, after seven decades of PRI-regime. Civil society has been pushing strongly for a more effective protection of international human rights standards in public administration and

the judiciary. A number of factors pushed Mexico towards a historical human rights reform. Amongst others, there were a series of sentences of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights declaring Mexico in violation of the American Convention on Human Rights. Also, there was serious concern regarding the impact of an ever stronger organized crime scene in Mexico and the response of the State.



Human rights in the judiciary: Representatives of the KAS Rule of Law Program and the Mexican Federal Judges Academy sign the agreement on the execution of the human rights course for more than 2000 members of the Federal Mexican Judiciary in Mexico City, 2012.

Principles and Practice

In this context, the Rule of Law Program for Latin America of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, through a bundle of diverse activities, supported the efforts of different public and non-governmental stakeholders to promote the effective protection of human rights in the administrative and judicial practice as well as scientific and political initiatives towards a constitutional reform that would open the Mexican legal system towards international human rights standards.

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Training human rights through cases: Moot court competition for law students on human rights in the administrative law practice, Mexico City, 2010.

Recurring to its expert networks in Mexico and Latin America, for several years, the Program supported investigative work, public debate, capacity building and legal drafting in cooperation with academics (professors and students), judges, NGOs, ombudsmen, litigators, politicians et al. Profound advances of the rule of law require a transformation of the constitutional and human rights culture. Legal reform is only effective if it can be sure of broad support in order to be put into practice.

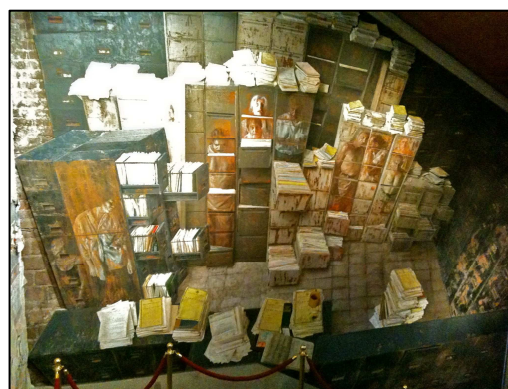
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Perseverance

Thanks to its ongoing presence in the region for more than two decades, the KAS Rule of Law Program was in a position to keep the debate progressing, create awareness, provide scientific and political backing to promoters and take advantage of specific situations in the field. After the constitutional reform, the Program made efforts in order to facilitate the practical implementation of the reform, supporting the initiatives of different responsible actors in the field of education and capacity building.

Practice-oriented instruments

Apart from several publications advancing the reform, the Program recently promoted the publication of two standard reference books on the protection of human rights in Mexico: (1) *Annotations to the human rights provisions of the Mexican Constitution*. (2) *Annotations to the American Convention on Human Rights*. Both books are co-edited with the Mexican Supreme Court and shall provide guidance to legal professionals and academics on a consistent and effective human rights practice.



Delayed justice: Part of a mural by the Mexican artist Rafael Cauduro titled "Seven Crimes plus one" (*Siete crímenes más uno*) in one of the four corner stairways of the Mexican Supreme Court, supposedly where all Supreme Court Judges pass by every day on their way to the office.