

Mexico



Population: 112,468,855 (July 2010 est.)
Population Growth Rate: 1.118% (2010 est.)
Birth Rate: 19.39 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Life Expectancy: *total population:* 76.26 years; *male:* 73.45 years; *female:* 79.22 years (2010 est.)
Literacy Rate: *total population:* 91%; *male:* 92.4%; *female:* 89.6% (2004 est.)
Net Migration Rate: -3.38 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)
Unemployment Rate: 5.6% (2009 est.)
Gross Domestic Product per Capita: \$13,500 (2009 est.)
Religions: Roman Catholic 76.5%, Protestant 6.3% (Pentecostal 1.4%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.1%, other 3.8%), other 0.3%, unspecified 13.8%, none 3.1%
Languages: Spanish 92.7%, Spanish and indigenous languages (includes various Mayan, Nahuatl, and other regional languages) 5.7%, indigenous only 0.8%, unspecified 0.8%
Ethnic Groups: mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 60%, Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian 30%, white 9%, other 1%
Capital: Mexico (Distrito Federal)¹

Trafficking Routes

Mexico is a point of origin, transit, and destination for persons trafficked for sexual exploitation and labor. The vast majority of non-Mexican trafficking victims in Mexico are from Central and South America; lesser numbers arrive from Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, China, Taiwan, India, and Eastern European countries. Victims are trafficked to various destinations within the country and through Mexico to the United States and Canada. Sexual tourism and sexual exploitation of minors are significant problems in the northern border area and in resort areas.² Mexican women are trafficked for the purpose of sexual tourism from southern and central Mexico to northern Mexico, particularly the city of Monterrey, due to its proximity to the United States.³

¹ CIA World Factbook 2010, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html>.

² *Children's Rights: Mexico*, THE LAW LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, May 2010, <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/mexico.php>.

³ *Mexican Sex Traffickers Victimize 10,000 Women Every Year*, LATIN AMERICAN HERALD TRIBUNE, 2008, available at: <http://www.laht.com/article.asp?CategoryId=14091&ArticleId=339639>.

Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Mexico is considered the leading destination in all of Latin America for sexual tourism.⁴ The Mexican human trafficking problem is often categorized with alien smuggling, as well as drug trafficking, and many of the same criminal networks are involved. Corruption within law enforcement inhibits the investigation of trafficking cases. Stricter enforcement on the border between the United States and Mexico has caused many migrants to seek help from “coyotes” or traffickers who exploit and abuse them.⁵

With the growing economic disparity between nations, particularly between Mexico and the United States, trafficking in persons across borders has greatly increased. The United States’ strong reliance on Mexican migrant workers who will work for low wages has exacerbated the issue.⁶

Forms of Trafficking

The majority of victims in Mexico are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Most sexually exploited women trafficked to northern Mexico are brought in by gangs in other regions under the false pretense of jobs.⁷ There are also cases of domestic servitude, and other forms of trafficking for labor exploitation.⁸

Women have been involved in the human trafficking business in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, which brings thousands of illegal migrants from Mexico to the United States each year.⁹ Girls and young women are trafficked within Mexico as commercial sex workers. They are treated as commodities, verbally and physically abused, raped, forced to have abortions and threatened with death.¹⁰

Government Responses

As a result of Mexico’s position as a country of origin, transit, and destination for human trafficking, starting in 2006, the Mexican government began giving visas to victims of this crime. Victims are able to remain in the country and support the judicial process against the perpetrators who traffic human beings. The victims obtain a humanitarian “H” visa and can receive a permit to work in Mexico during their stay.

In 2006, the following states reformed their penal codes to establish adequate punishments to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children: Michoacán, Baja California,

⁴ *Id.* at 3.

⁵ *Congress Sends Strong Message with Passage of Trafficking Victims Protection Act*, NATIONAL IMMIGRATION LAW CENTER, Jan. 7, 2009, available at: <http://www.nilc.org/immigrationpolicy/trafficking/trf002.htm>.

⁶ Susan Tiano, Billy Ulibarri, Carolina Ramos, *Human Trafficking on the US-Mexico Border*, FREEDOM FROM FEAR MAGAZINE, July 21, 2009, available at:

http://www.freedomfromfearmagazine.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=92:human-trafficking-on-the-us-mexico-border&catid=37:issue-1&Itemid=159.

⁷ Latin American Herald Tribune *supra* at 3.

⁸ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *IOM Mexico Provides Assistance to Victims of Trafficking*, (Feb 12, 2008), available at: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pbnAM/cache/offonce?entryId=16571>.

⁹ Claudia Nunez, *Women Are the New Coyotes*, LA OPINION, Dec. 23, 2007, available at:

http://news.ncmonline.com/news/view_article.html?article_id=170fbf6eecd019ad7e93f66eda8d6b8.

¹⁰ *Covering up for Sex Trafficking*, THEUNCHOICE.COM, Jan. 19, 2009, available at:

<http://www.theunchoice.com/News/SexTrafficking.htm>.

Coahuila, Colima, and Quintana Roo. In October 2007, the Mexican National Congress passed anti-trafficking laws in the states of Oaxaca, Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Guerrero, Mexico, Sonora, Tlaxcala and Morelos.¹¹

In August 2007, the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District of Mexico presented a report on the commercial and sexual exploitation of children. Sub-Secretary of the Government of the Federal District Juan Jose Garcia Ochoa announced reforms made to the Federal District Penal Code, which deny the reduction of sentence for crimes related to pornography, human trafficking, corruption, sex tourism, sexual exploitation, and labor exploitation. Penal classifications were modified regarding the sentences for crimes against children who are too young to understand the meaning of the incident. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation of people under the age of 18 were also introduced as classifiable crimes. Ochoa announced that the government would work with airlines in the capital city to emphasize the severity of the crime of human trafficking. The government would also support civil society organizations through the Social Development Programme for Promotion to provide an alternate solution to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.¹²

After three years of efforts to pass the law, in November 2007, the president of Mexico promulgated the law to prevent and punish human trafficking,¹³ and the senate unanimously approved the law. The law seeks to provide protection, attention, and assistance to victims and to protect potential victims, residents, newcomers to the nation, and Mexicans living outside of Mexico. The law creates a comprehensive definition of human trafficking, as well as providing for physical and psychological rehabilitation of victims.¹⁴

In 2008, the Mexican government passed a project proposed under the Procuraduría General de la República for the construction of a shelter for victims of human trafficking.¹⁵

Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses

The director of the Michoacán Institute of Women (IMM), Rubí de María Gómez Campos, announced in 2006 the presentation of proposals to the legislature to reform the penal code and penal procedures in the matter of trafficking in persons, as well as for the crime of pimping. She said that from January to July 2006, the state handled 277 cases related to this subject. The state civil employee indicated that in Michoacán, the evident problem of trafficking in persons, as well as pornography and child prostitution issues, made it necessary to modify some sections of the law to severely punish not only those who commit crimes of sexual exploitation, but also those who participate in this type of commerce. The IMM put on the table

¹¹ *Mexico-Trafficking in Persons Shelter Project (TIPS)*, MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL, available at: http://www.msi-inc.com/index.cfm?msiweb=project&p_id=122, referring to: Los Codigos Penales del Estados de la Republica Mexicana: Michoacan, Baja California, Coahuila, Colima, Quintana Roo, Oaxaca, Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Guerrero, Mexico, Sonora, Tlaxcala y Morelos (last visited July 28, 2009).

¹² Press Bulletin 155/2007, Social Communication Direction General, The CDHDF Presented the Special Report on the Commercial and Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Federal District, Aug. 9, 2007, available at: <http://www.cd hdf.org.mx/index.php?id=pibol15507>.

¹³ Procuraduría General de la República, *Diario Oficial Primera Seccion Acuerdo A/024/08*, (Jan. 31, 2008), available at: <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/Servicios/Normateca/Documentos/ACUERDOS/08/A-024-08.pdf>.

¹⁴ María de la Luz Tesoro, *México: Nueva Ley Contra el Tráfico de Personas*, MUJERESHoy.COM (Oct. 10, 2007), available at: http://www.mujereshoy.com/secc_n/3836.shtml.

¹⁵ Procuraduría General de la República, *Ley para prevenir y sancionar la trata de personas*, DIARIO OFICIAL PRIMERA SECCION ACUERDO A/024/08, Procuraduría General de la República (Jan 31, 2008), available at: <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/Servicios/Normateca/Documentos/ACUERDOS/08/A-024-08.pdf>.

the reform of 18 articles of the penal code, as well as reforms to five articles of the code of penal procedures related to trafficking in persons and pimping.¹⁶

The Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN/OAS) proposed a plan of action for 2007–2011 for members of the Organization of American States, which includes the adaptation[E: adoption?] of laws and policies with special consideration to trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse.¹⁷

Human trafficking prevention campaigns are being driven primarily by civil society, such as a campaign in 2006 and 2007 by Casa Alianza and other public and private organizations against sex tourism. In 2007, Casa Alianza Mexico started a campaign against human trafficking. The organization sponsors Acercatel, a crisis hotline for victims of trafficking and their advocates. At the end of 2007, Casa Alianza participated in a national antitrafficking campaign promoted by the organization Infancia Común.¹⁸

Since May 2007, the Catholic Church in Mexico, through the Pastoral Dimension of Human Mobility, has been conducting an intense campaign against human trafficking.

Multilateral Initiatives

The Operation Against Smugglers Initiative on Safety and Security (OASISS), founded in 2005, has assisted in the prosecution of individuals accused of human trafficking. The OASISS works with both the U.S. and Mexican governments to promote cooperation, collaboration, and commitment to weaken criminal organizations involved in trafficking.¹⁹

For the past three years, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mexico has worked to strengthen the capacities of governmental institutions and civil society and to prevent and respond to human trafficking, including the development and dissemination of information materials to raise awareness among partners and contribute to improve victim identification. In 2007, IOM provided training for nongovernmental organizations with funding from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration .

The IOM Mexico countertrafficking program works with several governmental institutions in Mexico, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Migration Institute, the National Women's Institute, the Children and Family Institute, and the Public Ministry. The IOM also works with consular officials in Mexico City and in other parts of the country to combat trafficking.²⁰

From May 2006 through March 2009, USAID funded the Mexico Trafficking in Persons Shelter Project (PROTEJA), a collaborative effort between the Capable Partners Program, the Academy for Educational Development, and part of the President's Initiative to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The project accomplished the passage of federal anti-trafficking in

¹⁶ América Juárez Navarro, *277 casos de "trata de personas" este año: IMM*, CAMBIO DE MICHOACÁN, Aug. 24, 2006, available at: <http://www.cambiodemichoacan.com.mx/vernota.php?id=49555>.

¹⁷ Instituto Interamericano del Niño, la Niña, y Adolescentes (IIN), *VIII Informe al Secretario General de la OEA sobre las Acciones Emprendidas por los Estados Miembros para Combatir la Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niñas, Niños, y Adolescentes en las Américas*, IIN (July 2007), available at: <http://www.iin.oea.org/IIN/english/index.shtml>.

¹⁸ Nunez *supra* at 9.

¹⁹ U.S., *Mexico Strengthen Human Trafficking Protections*, GOVERNMENT SECURITY, Aug. 9, 2007, available at: <http://govtsecurity.com/news/human-trafficking-protection/>.

²⁰ International Organization for Migration (IOM), *IOM Mexico Provides Assistance to Victims of Trafficking*, (Feb 12, 2008), available at: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pbnAM/cache/offonce?entryId=16571>.

persons legislation as well as legislation in seven states. PROTEJA also worked with local shelters for victims of trafficking, conducted training workshops on how to prosecute and penalize trafficking in persons, and developed local networks and task forces to assist victims.²¹

In June through September 2008, the Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) of the U.S. Department of Justice held a series of training workshops for Mexican prosecutors in Mexico City to educate them on the new trafficking laws, along with techniques, victim assistance, and task force development.²²

The United States passage of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 proposed an increased focus on combating trafficking in children, with \$7.5 million in funding for victim assistance. The act includes provisions that make it easier for foreign victims to remain in the United States, which will benefit the several thousands of victims trafficked into the country from Mexico.²³

²¹ TIPS *supra* at 11.

²² OPDAT, *DOJ/OPDAT: Trafficking in Persons*, available at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/opdat/trafficking/traffic-n-persons.html> (last visited July 28, 2009).

²³ National Immigration Law Center *supra* at 5.