

Open Government Partnership
1110 Vermont Avenue NW
Suite 500/ Open Gov Hub
Washington, DC 20005
United States

Mexican Civil Society Open Letter to the OGP Steering Committee

Tbilisi, Georgia - July 16th 2018

Open Government Partnership
Steering Committee

The Mexican open government process has been in crisis since early 2017 due to the decreased scope of the commitments of the 3rd Action Plan and the revelations of illegal digital government surveillance against renowned journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society leaders (including two health specialists that participated in the co-creation of the 3rd Action Plan commitments and OGP Civil Society Steering Committee founding member, Juan Pardinás). In May 2017, the civil society core group in the open government process left the national governance body (the Tripartite Technical Secretariat), and its involvement in the 3rd Action Plan until the Mexican government could prove that it would provide real conditions for a truthful co-creation and honest relationship with civil society.¹

Mexico's country civic space and open government national process has thus far not improved. Violence against journalist at the end of the current administration is the highest in recorded history, and the 2018 elections were the deadliest ever, with over 100 murdered politicians.² No progress has been done on the criminal inquiry of the digital surveillance cases despite constant claims from victims, civil society organizations, and international rapporteurs on freedom of expression from the UN and OAS.³

In light of OGP's International Summit in Georgia, we once again speak out to the OGP Steering Committee and international community not only to address the domestic issues Mexico faces, but also, to encourage a broader reflection on core issues that require OGP's attention and should provide insights to other open government country agendas.

First, as civic spaces continue to shrink around the world, civil society requires to become not only more resilient, but also more critical on the depth of true, sustainable, and impactful open government. Through Mexico's history with open government, we have highlighted that it requires **true political will at the highest level, so that a country can congruently and effectively follow OGP's principles and implement them in a policy for the entire Mexican State**, not only focus a handful of written commitments.

¹See letter sent to STT in May 23rd, 2017 in English (<https://goo.gl/78q6tt>) and Spanish (<https://goo.gl/4nh8wM>);
See letter sent to OGP in May 23rd, 2017: <https://goo.gl/hGGkfc>

²See Article19's summary of murders against journalists in Mexico:
https://articulo19.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ESTILO-01_vcs5_ALTA-1.jpg

³ See a detailed timeline of milestones on the NSO Group spyware Mexican revelations and responses [Spanish]:
<https://socialtic.org/blog/gobiernoespia-revelaciones-sobre-espionaje-en-mexico-linea-del-tiempo/>

Second, the Mexican illegal digital surveillance revelations have proven to be a risk to an open, safe, and active civic space in the 21st century. At a national level, we won't stop demanding that these sophisticated, perverse, and illegal attacks against civil society be investigated, and that relevant co-creation policy is implemented so that legality, transparency, and accountability can be achieved. After the lack of progress on the criminal inquiries and the evasive political will of the government, **we have submitted the Response Policy to OGP Steering Committee as a last resource** to compel the current or the next administration to address this pressing issue.

And **third**, Mexico is currently undergoing a government transition that will result in the start of a new administration, from a different political party, starting on December 1st, 2018. We will try to involve the new administration so that the Mexican open government agenda can co-create a 4th Action Plan in 2019 and in alignment with OGP's core principles a more sensible approach to the country's needs. In this transition period, we see the **OGP Steering Committee as a key, relevant and legitimate international actor that can foster a fruitful continuation of the open government agenda in Mexico.**

Mexico is a founding member of the OGP and member of the Steering Committee until October 2019. The country's open government trajectory has reflected both the potential and the challenges to achieve openness. From the civil society front, we have always been committed to the open government agenda and values. We have co-created three action plans and supported local civil society as the sub-national open government agenda has grown. We are convinced that sincere reflection, active involvement and true congruence are key factors to overcome that challenges that co-creation of open government naturally undergoes.

As we gather in Tbilisi for the International OGP Summit, we write this letter not only to start open reflections and actions on how to recover the Mexican open government agenda, but also to share our lessons learned so that the international community can better undergo the growing pains of open government. In particular, we hope that within the OGP Steering Committee's in-depth conversations on issues regarding civic space reduction and illegal government digital surveillance against civil society, can lead to stronger positions. **We request that OGP can have an active involvement with the elected government transition team, including a high-level visit to Mexico**, in order to support the continuity of our open government national agenda.

Sincerely yours,

Ana Cristina Ruelas - Article 19

Edna Jaime - México Evalúa

Ernesto Gómez - Contraloría Ciudadana

Tomás Severino - Cultura Ecológica

Haydeé Pérez - Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación

Alejandro González - GESOC, Agencia para el Desarrollo

Juan E. Pardinás - IMCO, Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad

Francisco Rivas - Observatorio Nacional Ciudadano

Juan Manuel Casanueva - SocialTIC

Eduardo Bohórquez - Transparencia Mexicana