U.S. Embassy, representatives of the Mexican Judiciary, and UNAM present the first volume of Mexico's first Judicial Guide for the Evaluation of Forensic Evidence

April 29, 2022 -- The Mexican Federal Judiciary, the Mexico City state judiciary, Mexico's Attorney General's Office (FGR), the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM), along with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) and the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) inaugurated the first volume of Mexico's first Judicial Guide for the Evaluation of Forensic Evidence, a manual to standardize the assessment and admission of forensic evidence in criminal proceedings across Mexico. Thanks to funding from the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), this practical tool is now available for judges, prosecutors, and defense counsel in Mexico's criminal justice system with the aim of lowering impunity in complex criminal cases.

The manual's first volume covers fingerprint analysis, genetics, voice analysis, and toxicology. The second will be published in 2023 and will address video analysis, physical anthropology, forensic odontology, psychology, crime scene analysis, ballistics, and forensic medicine. This product is the first of several practical tools that OPDAT and INL are developing in collaboration with the Mexican federal and state judiciaries to improve the efficiency and efficacy of Mexico's criminal justice system – a key goal of the Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities. OPDAT's Bench Books for Criminal Hearings and Trials, which will be released in June, will provide a holistic guide on how hearings should be conducted, including best practices.

Deputy Chief of Mission Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath provided opening remarks for the inauguration. "One of the principal benefits of these manuals is that they increase the potential for justice for victims, and the potential for families to live in secure communities. It is yet another example of our strong security cooperation, because Mexican government experts and U.S. government officials created it together."

Members of the Federal Judiciary, the President of the Mexico City state judiciary, UNAM's forensic sciences department director, and FGR officials joined Syptak-Ramnath at the manual's launch.