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Mexico: Reports of sexual abuse committed by police officers against homosexuals, and against other vulnerable individuals (2006 - November 2007)

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Reports of police officers sexually abusing homosexuals were scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Two news sources reported incidents of alleged police misconduct against lesbians in Mexico City (CIMAC 28 June 2006; AFP 22 June 2007). In a June 2006 article, Mexican news agency CIMAC Noticias noted the testimony of a woman who stated that she and her girlfriend were harassed by police officers in the neighbourhood of San Pedro de los Pinos (28 June 2006). The lesbian couple alleged that the police officers repeatedly questioned them about their relationship (CIMAC 28 June 2006). The couple reportedly filed a complaint about the incident with the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, CONAPRED) and the police complaints division (contraloría) of the Federal District's Ministry of Public Security (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública, SSP DF) (ibid.). The news report does not indicate whether the couple's complaint was being addressed by the authorities in question. Corroborating and/or follow-up information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In June 2007, in an Agence France-Presse (AFP) article about homophobia in Mexico, the president of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Group of Lesbian Mothers (Grupo de Madres Lesbianas) is quoted as saying that she was aware of cases where police verbally and physically abused lesbians, by insulting, hitting and groping them (22 June 2007).

Mexican news agency Notimex also reported in June 2007 on the results of a study that examined the impact of violence and discrimination on the mental health of homosexual men, bisexuals and lesbians in Mexico City (13 June 2007). In particular, researchers from the Metropolitan Autonomous University (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, UAM) surveyed 506 homosexual men, bisexuals and lesbians in Mexico City and discovered, among other things, that 11 percent of respondents mentioned they had been threatened with extortion and detention by police officers (Notimex 13 June 2007).

Sexual abuse against other vulnerable persons

Various sources reported on specific incidents where law enforcement officers committed sexual abuse against vulnerable individuals in Mexico; in particular, against migrants (*La Jornada* 14 Mar. 2007), individuals detained by the police during civil disturbances (*El Universal* 9 Oct. 2006; CIMAC 17 Nov. 2006; AI 15 Feb. 2007; AI 30 Aug. 2007), and in one case, a former female police officer (AI 24 July 2007).

Regarding migrants, in its 2007 report about the situation of migrant human rights, the Mexican refugee rights NGO Sin Fronteras highlighted an incident whereby an adolescent was raped by an auxiliary police officer (policía auxiliar) (*La Jornada* 14 Mar. 2007).

In the aftermath of the civil disturbances which took place on 3 and 4 May 2006 in the town of San Salvador Atenco, the National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH) concluded that Federal Preventive Police (Policía Federal Preventiva, PFP) officers and other authorities were responsible for use of excessive force against protestors, including the sexual abuse of 26 women who were detained (*El Universal* 9 Oct. 2006).

During federal law enforcement operations to restore order in the city of Oaxaca in October and November 2006, after months of civil unrest (AI 15 Feb. 2007), CIMAC Noticias reported the testimony of a 48-year-old woman who was allegedly sexually abused by PFP officers (17 Nov. 2006). The woman stated that during the afternoon of 16 November, PFP officers surrounded her and touched her repeatedly, including her breasts and vagina (CIMAC Noticias 17 Nov. 2006).

Amnesty International (AI) also reported alleged sexual abuse by law enforcement authorities against detainees arrested in the aftermath of the Oaxaca civil unrest (AI 15 Feb. 2007; AI 30 Aug. 2007). In particular, in

February 2007, a prisoner reportedly stated that "a group of male detainees were sexually assaulted by police officers on the bus that took them from the airport to the penitentiary" (AI 15 Feb. 2007). In August 2007, AI reported another incident where a particular detainee from the Oaxaca City riots was pursuing a complaint against three state judicial police officers who, among other things, "sexually assaulted him" (30 Aug. 2007).

In July 2007, AI reported the case of a female ex-police officer in the town of Alpoyecaca, Guerrero state who "filed a complaint alleging sexual abuse and abuse of power against one of her superiors" (24 July 2007). As a result of her complaint, the former officer has reportedly faced harassment and intimidation on the part of Alpoyecaca municipal officials as well as the state police to drop the charges (AI 24 July 2007).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: 365gay.com, Enkidu, Factiva, Freedom House, Global Gayz, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), Letraese, Notiese, World News Connection (WNC/Dialog).

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