

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

22 September 2010

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Mexico: Adoption of the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (*Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia*) in the state of Morelos (2007 - July 2010)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Amnesty International (AI) reports that according to women's organizations in states such as Morelos, violence against women is common, with ineffective prevention and punishment being enforced by local administrations (AI 30 Jan. 2009). The head of the Institute for Women in the State of Morelos (Instituto de la Mujer para el Estado de Morelos, IMEM) indicated that in Morelos 51 percent of women 15 years of age and older have experienced violence, and that 81 percent of married women have experienced violence from their partner (Morelos 14 Sept. 2009). Corroboration for these data could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The Independent Human Rights Commission in Morelos (Comisión Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos, CIDH Morelos) states that since 2000, there have been a total of 232 murders of women committed within the state, with 29 women killed in 2007, 31 in 2008, and 30 as of 15 November 2009 (CIDH Morelos 20 Nov. 2009). The Commission also states that the problem and propagation of violence against women is further aggravated by the [translation] "inadequacy and insufficiency" of action by public agencies (ibid.). An article in the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* reports that according to the IMEM, there has been a 50 percent increase in reporting of violence against women and that every day IMEM receives 8 to 10 phone calls concerning violence against women (*El Universal* 13 Aug. 2009). Most women who call are looking for [translation] "legal advice concerning domestic violence, separation or abandonment" (ibid.).

According to the National Women's Institute (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, Inmujeres), the Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence in the State of Morelos (*Ley de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia para el Estado de Morelos*) was published on 5 December 2007 (Mexico 25 Mar. 2010). The regulation for the law was published on 4 March 2010 (ibid.; *El Universal* 8 Mar. 2010) and came into effect the following day (ibid.). CIDH Morelos indicates that the law of Morelos includes a few sanctions concerning interfamilial violence and sexual harassment, but excludes femicide as specific crime since homicide already exists in the Penal Code (CIDH Morelos 20 Nov. 2009). According to *El Sol de Cuernavaca*, a daily newspaper in Cuernavaca, the regulation of this law specifies the procedures to be followed when dealing with women who are victims of violence and are seeking consultations and support; it also states that public institutions should offer private and secure places where victims can be helped (*El Sol de Cuernavaca* 7 Mar. 2010).

El Sol de Cuernavaca reports that the regulation of the law

[translation]

[...] obligates the executive branch of the State to promote the establishment of shelters for women that are victims of violence, to be temporary places of protection for them and their minor children, if they are in a state of risk or defencelessness, and cannot count on social or family support (ibid.).

According to the article, these places of refuge should be free, should specialize in the promotion of women's independence and self-esteem, and provide services including clothing and food, psychological, medical and legal assistance, social help and personal development, as well as protection and security (*El Sol de Cuernavaca* 7 Mar. 2010). Further information on the implementation of the Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence in the State of Morelos could not be found among sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The government of Morelos, as part of its Seventh Session of the System for Intervention, Sanction, and

Eradication of Violence Against Women (la Séptima Sesión Ordinaria del Sistema para Atender, Sancionar y Erradicar la violencia contra las Mujeres), indicates that 13 state agencies have created plans to implement policies to promote gender equity, to be approved for implementation in 2011 (Morelos 24 June 2010). In addition, the Department of Health (Secretaría de Salud) will distribute a videotape to clinics and medical centres, which will present different scenarios of violence against women, how it can be detected and prevented (ibid.).

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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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- _____. 13 August 2009. Justino Miranda. "Morelos registra aumento en denuncias por violencia contra mujeres." <<http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/619248.html>> [Accessed 28 July 2010]

Additional Sources

Oral Sources: Representatives from the Comisión Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos (CIDH Morelos), Academia Morelense de Derechos Humanos and Instancias del Instituto de la Mujer de Morelos (IMM) in five different municipalities, including Cuernavaca, did not respond within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sources, including: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (Mexico), United Nations (UN) Secretary General Database on Violence Against Women, UN Division for the Advancement of Women.

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