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### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2t56p1b2>

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### Publication Date

2003-05-15



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## **Civic Action for Accountability: Anti-Violence Organizing in Cd. Juarez-El Paso**

by

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### ***USMEX 2003-04 Working Paper Series***

Originally presented at the conference on “Reforming the Administration of Justice in Mexico” at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, May 15-17, 2003.

**ABSTRACT:** This paper focuses on anti-violence organizing in the Cd. Juarez-El Paso region of two million people. The border is a violent place for men and women, but our focus is on the organizing efforts around the murders of girls and women over the last decade, numbering over 320 deaths, a third of which involve mutilation (Washington Valdez 2002; Gonzales 2002; Benitez et.al 1999; Staudt and Coronado 2002: Ch 6; Ortiz 2002).

# **Civic Action for Accountability: Anti-Violence Organizing in Cd. Juarez-El Paso**

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For all the praise about Mexico's "transition to democracy," civic activists still have great difficulty obtaining political accountability, professional response from the criminal justice system, or even respectful acknowledgement of public problems, particularly those affecting women and families from poverty backgrounds. In fact, some activists face threats, harassment, and intimidation for their efforts to make public problems visible and criticize government non-responsiveness. This paper focuses on anti-violence organizing in the Cd. Juarez-El Paso region of two million people. The border is a violent place for men and women, but our focus is on the organizing efforts around the murders of girls and women over the last decade, numbering over 320 deaths, a third of which involve mutilation (Washington Valdez 2002; Gonzales 2002; Benitez et.al 1999; Staudt and Coronado 2002: Ch 6; Ortiz 2002).

We outline the civic work of non-government organizations (NGOs)/*Organizaciones No-Gubernamentales (ONGs)* active in pressing governments to be accountable. We also focus on other organized interests that are potential stakeholders in government accountability, including whether and how they have been active around the horrendous violence that has made Cd. Juarez a stain on the international map. We have interviewed, observed, and participated with anti-violence organizations, including the cross-border Coalition Against Violence toward Women and Families at the U.S.-Mexico Border involving activists and organizations from both Cd. Juarez and El Paso. Our book, *Fronteras No Mas*, (2002), analyzed conditions for successful cross-border organizations and the "institutional shrouds" that provide leverage and resources for successes. Alas, public safety, human rights, and civic organizing lack the sorts of policy leverage and public subsidies that strengthen binational and cross-border business and environmental actions.

## ***Borders Complicate Public Action***

The problem of violence against women is ancient and deep-seated, tolerated as a private matter for many centuries. But since the 1970s in both Mexico and the United States (and globally), activists from the grassroots to national and international levels have called attention to violence against women as a public problem, involving domestic assault/abuse, rape, and murder (see Rodriguez 2003 on national-level activism and response in Mexico: 170). At borderlines, problem-solving is compounded by national sovereignties, although many precedents have been set for cross-border, binational cooperation, from official organizations like the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)/Comision Internacional de Limites y Aguas (CILA) to non-government organizations, whether registered tax-exempt nonprofit organizations/*asociaciones civiles* or informal networks and coalitions (Staudt and Coronado 2002). Despite national sovereignty, both governments have cooperated over water, toxic waste, air quality, trade and commerce.

Local governments like El Paso and Cd. Juarez have long cooperated over auto theft, but not the murders of girls and women until an anti-violence coalition of cross-border activists gained some minor responsiveness in March 2003 with cooperation among local police authorities and an international tip line, with assistance from the U.S. FBI. Still, the killings continue and bizarre theories circulate over organ harvests and markets, leading to Mexican federal investigation intervention in May 2003 and prospects for national and/or binational cooperation that would locate killers, locally theorized as the sons of powerful families who buy protection or forestall investigation.

The cross-border Coalition Against Violence was born in late 2001 at a solidarity conference that brought together labor and anti-violence organizers in Cd. Juarez. It consists of students, labor organizers, teachers, and anti-violence service centers such as Casa Amiga in Cd. Juarez and the El Paso Center on Family Violence. Many of these activists are connected to victims' families, and some activists like the Amigos de las Mujeres de Cd. Juarez (based in Las Cruces, New Mexico) are involved in extensive fund-raising to support families in crisis. The Coalition consistently maintains the position that the murders are a binational issue. Why? First, although the vast majority of victims are Mexican, there are victims from the U.S., the Netherlands, and Honduras (the numbers of which are in dispute). Second, the serial killers may be border crossers, whether U.S., Mexican, or other. Third, Cd. Juarez is the *maquiladora* capital of Mexico, and most of these foreign-owned export-processing factories are U.S.-owned and act as magnets for migrant workers from other parts of Mexico. Scores of victims have been *maquila* workers. Fourth, copy-cat killings have been reported in other border areas, such as Nogales and Laredo.

### ***Borderline Accountability***

The border runs through the combined metropolitan area of Juarez-El Paso, complicating accountability relationships between people, victims and victims' families, and government. The border regional context involves two sets of political institutions that on the surface appear similar (presidential forms of government, with separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches; federalism), but operate quite differently.

How would accountable and transparent government respond seriously and professionally to hundreds of killings, whether public officials were elected or appointed? Our response is first ideal and abstract, followed later with concrete actions that illustrate serious accountability problems.

- Beginning with the executive branch, mayors/municipal presidents, governors, local and state judicial police, would acknowledge, document, and prioritize the problems, directing bureaucratic agencies in the criminal justice system to respond. (In Mexico, serious crimes like murders involve the state, not municipal police).
- An accountable legislative branch would exercise oversight to assure that existing laws are implemented effectively (or would sponsor additional legislation).

- An accountable judicial branch would operate independently of the “politics of” of branches, according to the rule of law. For intransigence and flagrant government abuse and inattention, citizens would utilize legal tools (lawsuits, *amparo*) to demand response, action, and damage with the object to professionalize government behavior.

Accountable governments offer no special privileges and protections to the politically powerful or economically wealthy. Of course, democracies have flaws, “money talks” loudly in the U.S. and Mexico, and legal tools are expensive and time-consuming, perhaps hardly worth the effort if too narrow and applicable to single cases only (*amparo*), rather than a “class” of similarly situated cases.

By and large, the responsibility for investigating and solving the murders in Mexico has rested with the Mexican government. Using the abstract notions of accountability expectations, response has been severely lacking.

When the murders first attracted public attention, elected officials dismissed them through blaming the victims. Publicly, they asked: why did victims go out late at night? Why did they dress in certain ways? To the bureaucracy and the public, these questions communicated low priority. Of course, victims disappeared in the day and night in various forms of dress. What we know about the victims from police files, shoddy and incomplete as those files are (Howard and Mendez 1998), is that the majority are young and fit a certain facial and hair profile and that patterns emerged on the number set on fire, with breasts cut off, and other grisly details. The first and only conviction was a “foreigner,” (Egyptian), who allegedly ran murder rings from jail. Assault and death occurred with others arrested, such as bus drivers or their lawyers. Mexico has a long tradition of forcing confessions (HRW 1999). Obviously, confessions obtained for public and symbolic solutions are meaningless if the serial killers continue.

In recent years, elected officials do not blame the victim, but express concern, from PAN President Fox to PRI Governor Martinez to PAN Municipal President Delgado. Partisanship complicates the issue, for official numbers of murders get revised after elections, and new bureaucratic appointments are made, reducing organizational memory. Elected officials occasionally receive visits from victims’ families, with pleas to do something, following the supplication style of clientelist politics. These executives have endorsed, with differing degrees of seriousness, the idea of intervention from other levels of government and/or binational cooperation in the form of FBI assistance. Mexico asked for assistance in the late 1990s, with inconclusive reports after data was run through the Quantico data base, and once again in 2002, although the request was for training rather than investigation or for sharing resources such as laboratories and DNA test facilities. In the latest turn, the Mexican federal government intervened when informants and confessors implied organ harvests as the motive, a federal crime.

Cd. Juarez has gone through several Police Chiefs. For one described journalistically as a flamboyant PRIista in early 2003, the appointment was brief, even though public hopes were raised about “cleaning house” amid the routine corruption that the confluence of

low pay and rich drug traffickers produces in border cities like Cd. Juarez. He described to reporters that he received death threats on his cell phone. When he told reporters that some people like to see young girls die in front of cameras, he revived one of the floating theories about a snuff film industry behind the killings.

At the state level, victims' families have been treated with disdain and disrespect. Most families earn poverty wages (the minimum wage amounts to about US\$5 per day). The police are careless about retaining the victims' clothing and remains. Several teams, including students, went to the desert to locate pieces of evidence, and they found underwear and other objects that the police left behind. Evidence is fabricated; bones are misidentified, causing victims' families to re-live the murder over and over. Police do not provide straight and consistent stories to victims' families, undermining any trust that an already skeptical population has of their police (see Giugale et.al 2001 for reviews of studies in Mexico). A threatening message was left on the phone of a victim's family about dropping the issue: the caller identification showed that the state judicial police number was the source.

Chihuahua's legislature has passed a variety of laws on domestic assault, rape, and murder. The language is often vague, and the data of (underreported) crimes is not disaggregated by gender (unlike other states with seemingly better governance for women, like Sonora). The lack of disaggregated data allows Governor Martinez to say casually that murder rates in Juarez are not so bad compared to other big cities like New York. The female homicide rate per 100,000 population is glaringly high, however, compared to other big cities in Mexico and elsewhere (Monarrez Fragoso 2002). Thirty people sit in the legislature, and two years ago, activists fought an effort to reduce the penalty for rape to a penalty that was less than hurting a cow (as headlines testified) (Martinez Marquez 2002). Committees do not appear to exercise significant oversight on particular bureaucratic agencies, such as judicial investigation agencies. In the current session, three women sit from the three major parties, though they prioritize solutions for violence against women, despite partisan differences. However, it should not be women's responsibility alone to respond to public safety problems like the murders in Juarez.

At the national level, Mexico created the Comision Nacional de los Derechos Humanos in 1990s, but it lacks enforcement powers. Numerous reports about the violence against women have made to the National Human Rights Commission. As for its judicial branch, in 1994, Mexico reformed the Supreme Court to increase its autonomy from executive branch (and political) domination. But national reforms have not spilled over to the state levels. According to UNAM professor Jose Luis Soberanes, the "delivery of justice in Mexico depends on a structure that is complicated, slippery, and often corrupt" (HRW 1999:46). In a damning indictment, judicial experts conclude that Mexico does not extend rights and protections based on "rule of law" (Domingo 1999; 2000; Taylor 1997). The *amparo* does not appear to be utilizable in ways that would require judicial investigators to act with professionalism and competence.

How can accountability be increased? Below, we examine the civic actions of cross-border activists and the gains they have made. Although public awareness of the crimes has increased, the responses have thus far been meager and modest. The Coalition brings together disparate groups that share the common goal of ending the violence and locating the killers. However, other organized interests, such as the chambers of commerce, the downtown merchants, and the maquila industries, have not pressed government even though the image of Juarez is likely to deter economic investments in the region.

### ***Cross-Border Civic Actions***

At its birth, the Coalition emerged in solidarity with independent unions in Mexico. Many of these unions take a critical stance toward globalization, NAFTA, and neoliberalism generally, yet activists work “within” capitalist economies and pursue reformist strategies. The Coalition organized events associated with International Women’s Day, connecting with organizations as far south as Chihuahua City, the capital city of the state in which Cd. Juarez is located. In 2002, hundreds of people on each side of the international border rallied together and then met at the border, delaying bridge traffic, near the large wooden crucifix-like cross in downtown Cd. Juarez onto which nails for each victim have been hammered. Some protestors dressed with dramatic and symbolic colors, and the quasi-religious symbolic signs of the deaths were found everywhere: black crosses on pink backgrounds.

The Coalition called for a binational task force to foster cooperation over investigating the crimes, including greater FBI involvement. Local police on both sides of the border have long cooperated over auto theft, rampant at borders. Moreover, both governments cooperate over a variety of other issues, from water and air quality to business and commerce. For “radicals” in the Coalition, however, it was unusual, even uncomfortable, to look to police or investigative agencies for solutions to problems. The Coalition also approached Crimestoppers, a non-profit organization that receives and pays tips for solving crimes, to no avail. Its board of directors expressed hesitation about actions that would imply criticism of counterparts and police in Mexico.

Another activity involved efforts to revise a document that frames and legitimizes health interventions over the next decade. The official U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission, of mostly M.D. political appointees from both countries, issued a report, HEALTHY BORDERS 2010, that contained no language on violence against women as a health issue, or on other issues of concern, such as voluntary motherhood or gender-disaggregated data. Members of the Transborder Consortium on Gender and Health at the U.S.-Mexico Border supplied expertise and utilized contacts to draft a gentle critique that proposed new language and got it on the Commission agenda, a feat in bureaucratic organizations. This is working its way through commission agenda setting and consideration over what approaches a year (and still unresolved at this writing).

The Coalition met with Texas State Senator Eliot Shapleigh, key supporter of anti-violence actions, who has been willing to use his name and letterhead to push for binational cooperation. He is one of few politicians who are proactive on this issue and willing to work for social justice. We examined numerous copies of letters sent to U.S.

officials, from President Bush to the Departments of Justice and State and the FBI. Months pass before responses are received, and most of the responses define the issue as a narrow judicial matter that Mexico must resolve on its own, unless it asks for U.S. assistance. Through the good graces of the Senator's office, Coalition members met with FBI officials (and the FBI in turn gathered intelligence on activists' perceptions). The FBI responded affirmatively to a Mexico re-invitation in 2002 (the first was in 1998) for involvement (later learned to be merely relegated to training rather than investigation). A university faculty member's request, under the Freedom of Information Act, for the first FBI report experienced delays, about whether this was 'really' academic research, plus the usual months of waiting before response.

Coalition members dressed in mourning at luncheons hosted by the Twin Plant Wives Association and the Republican Women's Club. Twin-plant wives, who reside in El Paso, are married to the managers and corporate executives of the largely U.S.-owned assembly plants in Cd. Juarez. The murders are discussed, and the wage inequalities, critiqued. The First Lady of Texas, Anita Perry, was willing to be "pinned" with the symbolic black cross on pink, share names of staff, and brainstorm over strategies, once even asking for a meeting (during the campaign) with Coalition members in her trip to El Paso, complete with body guards. In results or problem-solving terms, little comes of these activities, save wider consciousness of the problem and invitations to write grant proposals for the still-planned First Star Foundation (an historic symbol of once-independent republic, Lone Star Texas) or more invitations to be luncheon speakers.

Public educational events are striking and dramatic, filled with symbols. In April 2002, students in the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance of the University of Texas at El Paso sponsored a silent mourning, holding large black-cross on pink placards, in a well-traversed part of campus. Many newspapers snapped photos of the 150 mourners, including one dressed in full costume as the "grim reaper." In Cd. Juarez, short, shocking guerrilla theatre performances spark awareness on streets, in solidarity at the international bridge, and in cross-border actions. In early November, Day of the Dead celebrations are held in both Cd. Juarez and El Paso, displaying alters with candles, artifacts and memories of the deceased. At universities on both sides of the border, students prepared elaborate alters for the murdered girls and women.

Political films and theatre performances offer extended public education opportunities with memorable visuals. Fund-raising complements some of these activities. Eve Ensler's play, Vagina Monologues, has been performed several times in El Paso and in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Plain language, like vagina, is anathema to establishment leaders, and performers sometimes have trouble getting publicity, or the word vagina on marquees. Organizing against violence, known as VDay, has offered a national and international link between the border region and the world. In 2003, Esther Chavez Cano, an anti-violence activist who runs Casa Amiga for violence victims in Cd. Juarez, was named as one of "21 Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century—2003" in VDay preparations. Eve Ensler visited Cd. Juarez for a full day of cultural events, including guerrilla theatre and marches, but also including meetings with state judiciary officials. At the final event of



the day in front of the attorney general's office for the state of Chihuahua, Eve Ensler spoke in English and her words were then translated.

Lourdes Portillo's film, Senorita Extraviada, focuses on the murders and especially their families. The film is grim, but respectful of the victims. Portillo is from Cd. Juarez, not just a video/photographer/journalist/academic tourist. The film has been shown many times in the region, both for public education and for fund-raising for anti-violence services. Portillo's film is available in both English and Spanish. The English version was shown on national public television in the United States. Portillo was recognized in Mexico City in academy-award like honors in 2003. The film has dramatically increased public awareness. In interviews with City Councilmen, they cite specific horrific details from the film, empathizing and worrying about sisters, mothers, and daughters.

At the November 22, 2002, labor-antiviolence conference in Cd. Juarez, sequel to the meeting that birthed the Coalition, much time and energy was invested into inviting speakers and building audiences. The mayor of El Paso was invited, but neither attended nor sent a representative. (Ongoing negotiations about other matters deterred interest in the potentially awkward and embarrassing violence issue.) The Municipal President of Cd. Juarez was invited and he came, but he left immediately after his short speech and did not leave staff behind to hear and learn about other ideas and strategies that could have been useful for follow up. But solidarity was reinforced, with union leaders such as the *telefonistas* offering to support anti-violence actions with strikes.

February 2003 was the month when four more victims were found within a week, including several teenaged girls and a six-year old child, all raped and mutilated before death. The death tally keeps rising, although absolute numbers are contentious and not totally certain. Mexican authorities regularly revise numbers, and numbers change after elections. Activists sometimes make assertions that all bodies are mutilated, but informed estimates count a third mutilations. Furthermore, some activists assert that all victims are *maquiladora* workers, although we as researchers can document 23 such cases. Coalition members reacted to the February girls' deaths with a press conference to which Mexican and U.S. media were invited. Coverage was widespread in the border region and hemisphere (though Univision).

In early 2003, the Coalition spoke with city and county political representatives in order to get both a resolution passed on the violence and a proclamation for International Women's Day. The resolution has a narrow focus, calling for a binational task force, cross-border police resources and information, and other specifics. The proclamation is broad and general, but offers the ever-present opportunity to "educate" still widening ripples of people about systemic gender inequalities and everyday life with official documentation and media coverage. Both the City Council and the County Commissioners Court passed the resolution and proclamation. Political representatives are concerned both about human rights and about the bad image of the border and deterred economic investments. Cd. Juarez's *cabildo* (municipal council) has a controlled agenda, and its meetings are not open for public comment, thus inhibiting counterpart documents for the official record. One must be careful not to jump to the

conclusion that U.S. city and county governments are responsive, for if pluralism characterizes U.S. politics, it is an ‘elite pluralism.’ The strategic positions and visibility of those who propose items for political agendas have consequences.

In March 2003, Mayor Caballero of El Paso announced, with the Police Chief, that joint cooperation would take place between judicial authorities on both sides of the border. Mexican officials were present as well, somewhat discomfited with a press conference format wherein journalists and NGOs asked challenging questions.

Once again in 2003, rallies and marches were held on International Women’s Day. Considerable time goes into gaining permits, paying fees, and seeking to waive official fees that would cost hundreds of dollars of El Paso police “protection” in case marchers interrupt street traffic. Notarized applications are necessary, with promises that the Coalition will pay for trash that may need to be picked up. At least one month of lead time is necessary for bureaucratic approval and council approval in El Paso (in contrast to the opportunity to make more spontaneous rallies in Cd. Juarez in a country wherein street protest is tolerated and expected). Distant observers might wonder about supposed “free speech” guarantees and protections. Again, hundreds turned out on both sides of the border, with many reporters and television crews. An AP wire reporter and photographer were also present, writing the story.

Senator Shapleigh introduced a joint resolution for the Texas legislature on investigations. In early April, both the House and Senate committees held hearings, audio-taped and video-taped and available on line, for Texas utilizes electronic open access. The Coalition was invited to testify, and written remarks were prepared to enter the public record. Representatives and Senators listened to and read testimony, placing Coalition-supplied black-crossed pink pins on their lapels.

In March, the United Nations 47<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women invited Coalition participants to New York City. A university professor (co-chair of the Coalition) and student participated. This provided another event to put pressure on Mexican authorities, and develop weak but committed network ties in distant locales. However, human rights commissions generally report abuses rather than exercise authority to enforce solutions. An NGO in Cd. Juarez works extensively to communicate with international NGOs like Amnesty International and with international organizations, like the Organization of American States and its InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights, to get the Juarez murders on agendas (Ortiz 2002).

Indeed, the Coalition is networked with not only the international and inter-American connections as noted above, but also with the Mexico Solidarity Network and anti-violence coalitions in other cities in both the U.S. and Mexico. As such, it demonstrates the “strength of weak ties,” ie the collective strength of personal, grounded relationships that are connection with regional, national and international groups analyzed in Fronteras No Mas (Staudt & Coronado 2002). Representative Hilda Solis, responding to the many Juarenses in her Los Angeles constituency, has been active in organizing the Hispanic Caucus to communicate with President Fox to push for federal involvement in the

murders: the 1996 Federal Law Against Organized Crime provides authority to transfer jurisdiction from the State of Chihuahua to the Federal Attorney General's office. The El Paso-based Coalition met with Congressman Reyes' staff in June, 2002, to encourage his signature on this letter and his support for hearings at the border.

As this chronology outlines, the Coalition has pursued strategies over nearly two years to increase public awareness and education, to support fund-raising, and to submit written material to be adopted in public documents and policies. A version of the binational task force it sought has been adopted. The Coalition is now moving into other strategic considerations: locating 'model' legislation in other states, like Sonora, for potential adoption in Chihuahua; congressional hearings; national and bi-national coalition strategy development; economic pressures on Mexico. Yet the murders continue, as the wheels of justice turn slowly.

### ***Other Organizations: Screaming Silences***

Public safety would appear to be an issue of interest to others, including organized others such as lawyers, businesses, maquiladoras, and merchants. Victims are mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts and friends; surely this involves more than "women's interests" and/or "human rights interests." Although faith-based activists on the El Paso side of the border have expressed concern, this is absent in Juarez and involves the first of the screaming silences we identify.

We have been surprised that economic interests have not been involved in civic actions to increase safety and reduce murders, including murders of girls and women in Juarez. The downtown merchants are upset about the crucifix, saying it may deter tourists, rather than willing to express concern or hire private security. Several girls have disappeared in the downtown "zona de miedo" including restaurants, bars, computer schools, and music shops.

At an April luncheon involved in economists and business executives from both sides of the border, the owner of several maquiladoras spoke about the "fiscal terrorism" the industry experienced from Hacienda and the rising costs of labor (however minuscule proportions of those costs reach workers' hands, given the industry's concern to 'protect' them from higher tax rates). Given this interest in policy, it would seem appropriate for the industry to also share stakes in public safety, particularly because some maquila workers have been victims. We asked questions publicly and privately, and the response was that the AMAC (maquila association) was approached several years ago about taking a stand, with no response. And the industry sees itself as "invited guests" in a foreign country, thus unable to have an impact. As for reasons why the chambers of commerce and of industry (CANACO; CANACINTRA) are uninvolved, the response is that Mexico City exerts all the influence, and they are relatively powerless. We find these explanations little short of ludicrous.

Lawyers share an interest in human rights and the rule of law. Several have been willing to speak out and criticize the government's lack of attention to the murders. In December 2002, one lawyer activist in the Coalition was beaten badly by police and/or their hired

thugs. They told him that he should keep quiet about his advocacy work. To those who criticize police incompetence, we often marvel at their efficiency in intimidation and threats on this and other examples.

We have also been curious about the absence of academic attention to sexual crimes and female murders in literature about the criminal justice system in Mexico and/or at the border (though see Piccato, 2001; also one sentence in the 473-page book, Bailey and Chabat 2002: 45).

## ***Conclusions***

Cross-border organizing is alive and well in Cd. Juarez and El Paso, but activists face significant challenges in efforts to press governments in the complicated border zones. These complications include multiple governments, lack of professionalism, and low priorities for problems that women and poor people face. Although institutional shrouds provide policy leverage and resources/subsidies for activists and officials to address common north American problems at borders, such shrouds do not exist for human rights and public safety. Binational cooperation has begun with several tentative steps, but much remains to be done if rule of law will prevail and all people secure access to justice in the region.

## ***Policy Recommendations***

Our recommendations are organized into several categories. They include short- and long-term actions for Mexico, the U.S., and the North American region generally.

### ***Mexico Actions***

\*Demand federal involvement in decade-old unsolved murders of girls and women. Such involvement is authorized under the 1996 Federal Law Against Organized Crime.

\*Use federal revenue-sharing incentives to encourage reform at state and local levels, (a long-standing tradition in Mexico [Rodriguez 1997]), such as

- the 2003 freedom of information laws of 2003, now operating solely at the federal level; professionalism in state and local police operations;

- domestic violence training for police;

- gender-disaggregated data on all sexual assaults and domestic violence for better reporting and oversight capabilities.

\*Fund battered women's shelters.

\*Provide a stronger role for state legislators to play in exercising oversight on state agencies.

\*Extend the ability of the *amparo* to provide collective justice in a class-action format that requires systemic policy and institutional change in cases of serious intransigence, such as hundreds of poorly investigated deaths.

\*Allow civil lawsuits to be filed against intransigent police departments, for monetary damage.

\*Provide reparations and/or damages to victims and their families.

### Bi-national Actions

\*Maintain civic pressure in both Mexico and the U.S. on the justice system and its seriously flawed lack of professionalism over the murders of girls and women in Cd. Juarez through high-visibility events, media attention, and symbols.

\*Connect violence against women with public safety and public health policy actions and academic research.

\*Broaden civic coalitions to include not only human rights activists, but also those interested in economic development, for the chaos and violence of the border region deters stable investments.

\*Encourage cooperation among police departments and federal investigation agencies in training, laboratory and DNA testing facilities, and tip lines.

\*Develop guidelines not only on the rights of the accused, but also the rights of victims and their families.

\*Mobilize *maquiladora* managers to provide self-defense classes for employees.

\*Mobilize *maquiladora* managers to do background checks and routine drug tests for drivers of company buses on which potential female victims ride.

\*Demand that *maquiladoras* commit social accountability taxes to local municipalities for street lighting, paved roads, public transportation, and other services that increase safety in the streets.

\*Infuse public school curriculum with anti-domestic violence and anti-sexual violence themes for male and female students.

\*Create a strong, not merely symbolic, Human Rights Treaty for the North American region, to which victims can appeal, and from which reports have resources and authority to make change.

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