

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

October 6, 2021

His Excellency Andrés Manuel López Obrador
President of México
Puerta 8 Palacio Nacional
Plaza de la Constitución S/N, Colonia Centro
Ciudad de México, C.P. 06066
México

Your Excellency:

We write as the three International Secretaries of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in the United States to express our concern regarding the situation of 31 Mexican scientists and scientific administrators who have been accused of serious financial crimes.

Mexico's Attorney General Alejandro Gertz Manero has alleged the involvement of these individuals in a number of offenses that carry the possibility of decades-long prison sentences, including organized crime and money laundering. He reportedly has sought warrants twice for their arrest, as well as their detention in a federal maximum-security prison. Reliable reports indicate that a federal judge has rejected both of the arrest warrants, citing lack of evidence, and has deemed efforts to seek their detention in a maximum-security facility inappropriate. We are dismayed to learn that, despite the judge's decisions, the Attorney General has expressed his intention to file warrants for their arrest yet again. Repeated attempts to arrest and detain these individuals without evidence appears inconsistent with Mexico's binding international obligation to uphold the right to due process. This right is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, to which Mexico is a party.

We share the concern of many members of the international scientific community that our Mexican scientific colleagues are being subjected to harassment and intimidation. In addition to the disturbing human rights aspects of their situation, we are worried that the actions against our colleagues may have a chilling effect on the broader Mexican scientific community, as well as potential negative implications for international scientific collaboration.

In light of the above, we respectfully urge you to use your good offices to ensure that any further investigatory actions in connection with the alleged activities of these individuals accord with Mexico's commitments under international human rights law.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Most respectfully,



Dr. Carlos del Rio
International Secretary
National Academy of Medicine



Dr. John Hildebrand
International Secretary
National Academy of Sciences



Dr. James M. Tien
International Secretary
National Academy of Engineering

cc: His Excellency Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Ambassador of Mexico to the United States of America

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Ambassador of the United States of America to Mexico