

ADDENDUM

to the Joint Submission for the Fourth Universal Periodic Review Cycle:

United States of America

Global Rights Advocacy, Seattle University School of Law – International Human Rights Clinic, and
Tsikini

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I. Purpose and Scope

1. This Addendum complements the Joint Submission filed in April 2025 for the Fourth UPR Cycle of the United States of America. It documents critical developments occurring between May 2025 and April 2026: the recent international documentation of ongoing violence in Mexico's, the United States' unfulfilled obligations as a home state for corporations implicated in those abuses, and the systematic dismantling of U.S. institutional mechanisms for defender protection.

II. The Violence Has Not Stopped: New Evidence from 2025

2. In September 2025, the UN WGEID published report A/HRC/60/35/Add.4, documenting the cases of Ricardo Lagunes Gasca and Antonio Díaz Valencia as emblematic of collusion between State actors, business enterprises, and criminal groups in Mexico, including the mining corridors.¹ In October 2025, Global Rights Advocacy submitted a report to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) under Article 34 of the International Convention, documenting enforced disappearance as a crime against humanity, exemplifying the mining corridor.² Following its urgent review, the CED transmitted the matter to the UN Secretary-General pursuant to Article 34, requesting it be brought before the General Assembly as a widespread and systematic practice, one of the most serious procedural steps available to the Committee,³ which places direct obligations on all UN Member States, including the United States.
3. The crisis facing land, environmental, and Indigenous human rights defenders in the Americas has continued. According to Front Line Defenders' Global Analysis 2024/25, at least 324 human rights defenders were killed worldwide in 2024, with Mexico recording 32 killings, placing it among the countries with the highest number of murders of defenders globally.⁴ These attacks target individuals defending land, territory, Indigenous rights, and the environment. At the national level, Mexican civil society organizations such as CEMDA continue to document systematic violence and structural impunity affecting environmental defenders across the country.⁵
4. This violence occurs within a broader human rights crisis: as of 2026, Mexico faces over **133,000 registered disappearances**, highlighting persistent patterns of violence, impunity, and institutional

¹ UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, A/HRC/60/35/Add.4, *Enforced disappearance in the context of the defence of land, natural resources and environment*, 2025, September 3, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/60/35/Add.4>.

² Global Rights Advocacy, Informe presentado al Comité de Naciones Unidas Contra las Desapariciones conforme al Artículo 34 de la Convención Internacional: México y la desaparición forzada como crimen de lesa humanidad, 13 October 2025.

³ UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Transmission to the United Nations Secretary-General pursuant to Article 34 of the International Convention, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/04/mexico-un-committee-requests-general-assembly-consideration-enforced>.

⁴ Front line Defender, Global Analysis 2024/2025, https://frontlinedefenders.shorthandstories.com/frontline-defenders-global-analysis-2025/index.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁵ CEMDA, Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, Informe sobre la situación de las personas y comunidades defensoras de los derechos humano ambientales en México 2024, https://cemda.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/INFORMEDEFENSORES_2024_WEB.pdf.

failure affecting communities engaged in territorial defense.⁶ Investigative reporting has continued to expose how these dynamics intersect with extractive industries and organized crime in regions such as Ayotitlán, Jalisco, where the Peña Colorada mining project, operated by Ternium and ArcelorMittal, has long generated conflict over land, security, and community rights. Meanwhile, Ternium's most recent filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission confirm that the company remains listed on the New York Stock Exchange through its American Depositary Shares (NYSE: TX).⁷ Moreover, in its report, the company highlighted that a **new electric-arc-furnace-based steel shop, scheduled to begin operations by the end of 2026**, is expected to deepen integration with downstream operations and consolidate Ternium as a leading steel supplier in the region. According to the filing, the project is intended to advance the company's decarbonization objectives while expanding production of finished products melted and poured within the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) region.⁸ While at the same time, the company's disclosures frame security risks in Mexico primarily as stemming from organized criminal activity and general security conditions, rather than acknowledging broader structural conditions affecting communities and human rights defenders.⁹

5. Furthermore, recent reporting in the United States underscores the political and economic proximity between major steel corporations and U.S. government institutions. In April 2026, The New York Times reported that ArcelorMittal, Luxembourg-based steel giant and co-owner of the Peña Colorada mine, provided approximately \$37 million worth of steel produced in Europe for the construction of a new White House ballroom project.¹⁰ The disclosure has raised questions among observers regarding the intersection of corporate influence, trade policy, and the U.S. government's engagement with multinational steel producers.

III. The USMCA and U.S. Home State Responsibility

6. In November 2025, Global Rights Advocacy, Tsikini, and the Environmental Defender Law Center submitted comments to the USTR for the 2026 USMCA Joint Review, proposing a binding due diligence annex under Chapter 24 and expanded access to the CEC's Submissions on Enforcement Matters mechanism. The Review has instead been dominated by tariff disputes and immigration enforcement, with human rights absent from the public agenda.¹¹ The United States' obligations extend beyond trade policy. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), endorsed by the United States, require home states to set clear expectations that corporations domiciled or listed in their jurisdiction respect human rights globally.¹² Ternium and ArcelorMittal maintain substantial U.S. presence and benefit from U.S. capital markets, trade preferences, and regulatory frameworks.¹³ While the EU (CS3D), France, and Germany have enacted mandatory human rights due diligence legislation, the United States has not, and the current administration is rolling back existing ESG disclosure

⁶ El país, *La crisis de los desaparecidos escala el pulso de México contra la ONU*, 7 April 2026, https://elpais.com/mexico/2026-04-08/la-crisis-de-los-desaparecidos-escala-el-pulso-de-mexico-contra-la-onu.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁷ Ternium S.A., *Form 20-F, for the year ended December 31, 2025, with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)*, 31 March 2026, https://www.accessnewswire.com/newsroom/en/industrial-and-manufacturing/ternium-files-2025-form-20-f-1154074?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

⁸ *Idem*.

⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁰ The New York Times, *White House Secures Foreign Steel for Ballroom Project*, 8 April 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/08/us/politics/white-house-foreign-steel-ballroom.html?unlocked_article_code=1.ZIA.5mT5.IO-Bb_-Z0jdi&smid=nytcore-android-share

¹¹ Global Rights Advocacy, Tsikini, & Environmental Defender Law Center, *Combined comments in response to the request for public input on the operation of the USMCA*, Submitted to the United States Trade Representative, 3 November 2025.

¹² UN Human Rights Council. (2011). Guiding principles on business and human rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" framework (A/HRC/17/31, annex). United Nations. https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/GuidingprinciplesBusinesshr_eN.pdf; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises on responsible business conduct. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/81f92357-en>.

¹³ Ternium S.A., *Form 20-F, for the year ended December 31, 2025, with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)*, 31 March 2026, https://www.accessnewswire.com/newsroom/en/industrial-and-manufacturing/ternium-files-2025-form-20-f-1154074?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

standards at the SEC.¹⁴

IV. Dismantling of U.S. Institutional Mechanisms

7. The original submission documented the concrete role played by the Interagency Working Group of the U.S. Department of State to Reduce Violence against Environmental Defenders (IAWG) in pressuring Mexican authorities regarding the enforced disappearances of Ricardo Arturo Lagunes Gasca and Antonio Díaz Valencia. On 15 January 2025, the second anniversary of their disappearances, the IAWG Chair, in the presence of OHCHR, IACHR, and State Department officials, declared: “*Working together, we have power. We can support and accelerate efforts to find them.*”¹⁵ That commitment was the product of two years of coordinated advocacy that had galvanized over 40 organizations, diplomatic missions, and the European and Luxembourg Parliaments.¹⁶ Within weeks, the U.S. government had effectively closed financial support for such programs, separated career staff, and suspended all programmatic activity.¹⁷
8. The dismantling extended across all relevant U.S. mechanisms. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) sustained severe cuts and personnel losses¹⁸; the 2025 Country Report on Mexico was not published on schedule and its independence has been questioned by former officials and civil society.¹⁹ USAID’s protection programs were terminated without transition arrangements. Humanitarian immigration pathways for at-risk defenders were simultaneously closed.²⁰ Environmental protection capacity was also weakened, as key offices within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including the Office of Research and Development (ORD) and the Office of Environmental Justice among others, faced closure or major restructuring.²¹

V. Updated Recommendations

The submitting organizations urge the UPR Working Group to recommend that the United States:

A. Reinstate Diplomatic Engagement on Specific Cases

1. Resume direct diplomatic engagement with Mexican authorities regarding Ricardo Arturo Lagunes Gasca, Antonio Díaz Valencia, José Gabriel Pelayo Zalgado, and other documented defenders, including technical and forensic assistance.

¹⁴ Harvard Business School, Institute for Business in Global Society, *The SEC eliminated climate rules. Other Governments are doing the opposite*, <https://www.hbs.edu/bigs/federal-climate-rules>.

¹⁵ Global Rights Advocacy, *Two Years Without Ricardo and Antonio As the Global Month Against Impunity comes to an end, we ask: Where are they?*, 22 Feb 2025, <https://www.globalrightsadvocacy.org/post/two-years-without-ricardo-and-antonio-as-the-global-month-against-impunity-comes-to-an-end-we-ask-w>.

¹⁶ *Idem*.

¹⁷ Federal register, *Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” workforce optimization initiative (Executive Order No. 14,210)*, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/14/2025-02762/implementing-the-presidents-department-of-government-efficiency-workforce-optimization-initiative>.

¹⁸ WOLA, *State Department’s Restructuring and Proposed Budget Cuts Roll Back U.S. Role in Promoting Democracy and Human Rights Globally; Congress Has a Chance to Fix This*, <https://www.wola.org/analysis/state-department-budget-cuts-us-democracy-human-rights/>.

¹⁹ NPR, *The State Department is changing its mind about what it calls human rights*, 18 April 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/18/nx-s1-5357511/state-department-human-rights-report-cuts#:~:text=According%20to%20an%20editing%20memo,sources%20close%20to%20the%20process>.

²⁰ BBC, *USAID officially closes, attracting condemnation from Obama and Bush*, 2 July 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c307zq8ppj6o>; *Trump administration orders freeze on most U.S. foreign aid*. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com>

²¹ Los Angeles Times, *Government shutdown means 90% of EPA staff won’t be working*, 1 October 2025, [https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-terminates-bidens-environmental-justice-dei-arms-agency#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%E2%80%93%20Today%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Environmental,theory%20and%20receives%20bipartisan%20support](https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2025-10-01/government-shutdown-will-furlough-nearly-all-epa-staff#:~:text=The%20first%20shutdown%20in%20six.partially%20essential%20under%20federal%20rules.&text=Nearly%2090%25%20of%20EPA%20staff,taken%20a%20buyout%20this%20year.&text=%E2%80%9CThe%20shutdown%20has%20already%20been,employees%20based%20in%20Washington%2C%20D.C; EPA, <i>EPA Terminates Biden’s Environmental Justice, DEI Arms of Agency</i>, 12 March 2025, <a href=).

2. Provide technical support to address Mexico's forensic crisis and advocate for restoration of the National Center for Human Identification and adequate resourcing of the National Search Commission; engage with the CED's Article 34 transmission as a matter requiring urgent intergovernmental response, including by raising the matter before the UN General Assembly in accordance with the Committee's recommendation to the Secretary-General.

B. Use Trade and Corporate Accountability Mechanisms

1. Integrate human rights conditionality into the USMCA framework by requiring corporations operating in Mexico, specifically in the Michoacán–Jalisco–Colima corridor, to make measurable commitments to enhanced human rights due diligence and shared responsibility.
2. Enact mandatory human rights due diligence legislation applicable to corporations with significant U.S. ties, consistent with the UNGPs and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

C. Restore Defender Protection Mechanisms

1. Restore the IAWG; reinstate DRL's full independence and staffing; Restore USAID and its civil society protection programming, especially in Mexico, including transition arrangements for organizations whose funding was terminated in 2025; support the reintroduction of the Human Rights Defenders Protection Act of 2024, which would establish statutory safeguards and humanitarian visa pathways for defenders facing imminent threats; and restore the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) capacity to address environmental harm and protect vulnerable communities, including environmental defenders.
2. Restore the full independence and timely publication of the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

D. Re-engage Multilateral Human Rights Mechanisms

1. Reverse the withdrawal from the UN Human Rights Council; restore full engagement with Special Procedures mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and the WGEID; restore U.S. financial contributions to UN human rights bodies and the IACHR; and re-engage with the Inter-American human rights system as a constructive partner in addressing systematic violence against defenders in the hemisphere.