There Is Money to Reduce Violence, So What Does the State Invest It In?

An analysis of military resources from a feminist perspective
There is money to reduce violence, so what does the state invest it in?
Introduction

At Intersecta, we have devoted part of our efforts to identifying the violence women in Mexico experience due to the militarization of public security and bringing it to light. There is much to look into, including the violence that the Armed Forces exercise directly against them—encompassing arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances, and executions—and the violence that the militarized security strategy unleashes in their communities—as is the case of homicides and femicides. The fact that an average of ten women are killed daily in the country is partly the result of these military stakes. Stakes have not paid off as expected and have had various detrimental effects.

Despite mounting evidence that the militarized security strategy poses more risk than the success it attains, particularly for historically marginalized groups, military power continues to grow in Mexico. The power of military institutions does not only expand to public security but also the public administration as a whole, meaning the military has increasingly more resources, both human and financial. Contrasting with military growth, support for other public policies and institutions dwindles, including those intended initially to tackle discrimination and violence that disproportionately affect women.

At Intersecta we are interested in talking about the problem of violence and its possible solutions, as well as analyzing the government’s stakes, what it has invested in, and what it has not. We want to put military power in figures and contrast them with the resources allocated to other institutions. How much money is the military receiving in Mexico? How many personnel are assigned to the Armed Forces? How does it compare to what others receive, for example, the Secretariat of Public Education or the Secretariat of Health? Furthermore, how does it compare with the amount spent on the National Institute for Women (Inmujeres, for its Spanish acronym) or the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women (Conavim, for its Spanish acronym)?

We want to advance a discussion on the strategy to reduce violence currently prioritized and funded by our resources. In so doing, we hope to support the demand for accountability and, above all, to unleash the redistributive imagination: one capable of answering where resources should go and how to redistribute them.

There is money. What other policies and institutions could we place our stakes on? Where else could we invest if we want to reduce violence against women? Could the money be invested in shelters? In medical care for domestic violence situations? In reproductive and sexual health services? Universal health? Schools or nurseries? A national system of care? Quality housing? Accessible public transportation? Tree-covered streets with benches to spend the day that is well-illuminated by night? Programs for disarmament? Justice systems that do, indeed, respond to our needs?

What would our communities look like if they were conceived and designed to guarantee our security, to let us walk in peace, study, work, play, fall in love, and raise children peacefully? What do we need to make that dream come true? There is money. The question is, how do we redistribute it for our well-being?
The Data

Two databases allow us to find which institutions and programs receive State resources from the Federal Government. The first is the Presupuesto de Egresos de la Federación (Federal Spending Budget) database—which includes both the approved and the spent budget—and the second is the database for positions assigned in the Federal Public Administration. Together they present the money and personnel allocated to the institutions of the Federal Public Administration. What do these databases tell us about the resources received by military institutions? Considering the most recent year for which we have information, we will focus on the expenditure exercised in 2021 and the positions assigned for 2022.

Increasing Resources

Using military institutions in public security functions in Mexico is not a novel phenomenon. However, evidence indicates that during the administration of Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), resources allocated to this strategy experienced an increment. Specifically, there was an increase in the number of soldiers deployed to patrol the streets with the mandate to “frontally combat” organized crime. As illustrated in the following graph, the budget executed by the Armed Forces also witnessed growth during this period, particularly when compared to the administrations of Vicente Fox (2000-2006) or Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000). Thus, the recent militarization of public security entailed a shift in deployment and strategy and the resources allocated to the Armed Forces.

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1 Both sources are published by the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP, for its Spanish initials) in an open-data format. It is important to clarify that the information contained in both databases refers only to the federal level. There is no public database that is equivalent to that of PEF that may help to account for spending by states and municipalities. Therefore, the budget of municipalities and states is left out. The second pertinent clarification is that, while the budget database is used to analyze the budget of the entire Federal Government—including the three branches and the autonomous constitutional bodies—the database for positions only allows us to examine information related to the Federal Public Administration. For example, the budget database contains information on the federal legislative and judicial branches; the database for positions does not. Similarly, the budget database contains information on the National Electoral Institute (INE, for its Spanish initials), while the other database does not. Although information on these other federal bodies is available, it is separated from the database on Federal Public Administration positions and lacks an open data format.


3 In Intersecta, in addition to the budget, which demonstrates a significant increase in resources allocated to the armed forces starting from Calderón, we have observed a shift in the trend regarding detentions. Specifically regarding detentions, we have data available from 2001 to 2022. Between 2001 and 2006, the annual average of detentions carried out by the Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA) was 2,182. During Calderón's administration, the average increased to 7,012, more than triple the previous figure. (SEDENA responses to requests for access to public information with file numbers 0000700008921 and 0000700203820).

4 In Objective 8 of the National Development Plan 2007-2012 of the Federal Government, it was explicitly stated that it was necessary to “reclaim the strength of the State and security in social coexistence through frontal and effective combat against drug trafficking and other expressions of organized crime.” For an analysis of the discourses regarding the militarization of public security by Fox, Calderón, Peña Nieto, and López Obrador, refer to Rebeca Caizada Olvera, Making Enemies: A Discourse Analysis of the Militarization of Public Security in Mexico, Master's Thesis in Politics and Society, Maastricht University, 2019.

5 The Ministry of Finance and Public Credit publishes, within its Timely Statistics, the “Programmable Expenditure of the Budgetary Public Sector” presented as “Percentages of GDP.” This indicates how much the expenditure represents in relation to the Gross Domestic Product. In the latest series published, covering data from 1990 to 2021, it can be observed that the expenditure of the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA) increased as a proportion of GDP starting from 2009. It went from representing 0.3% to 0.4%. The next significant increase for Sedena occurred in 2020, where it reached 0.5%. As for the Mexican Navy (SEMAR), the significant increase occurred in 2014, when it went from 0.1% to 0.2%. In 2021, the expenditure on the armed forces represented 0.6% of the GDP.
Although the militarization of public security intensified during the administration of Felipe Calderón, the strategy was sustained by Presidents Enrique Peña Nieto (2013-2018) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2019-2024). However, under the current administration, the military’s power has extended beyond public security. There has been a significant increase in the civilian functions delegated to the Armed Forces, specifically in the projects they manage. Once again, this can be observed in the budgetary allocation. In 2019, the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena, for its Spanish acronym) executed a budget that was 32.5% higher than in 2018, representing the most considerable annual leap in budget execution since 1994. This growth continued in 2020 and 2021, the latest years for which data is available.

Regarding personnel positions, as shown in the graph on the following page, there has been a small but sustained growth since 2005, the first year for which data is available. Similar to the total budget executed, there was also a significant leap in personnel positions during the administration of López Obrador. In 2018, the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena) was authorized to have 215,000 positions. By 2022, this number had risen to nearly 260,000, representing an increase of 45,000 positions in just three years. The Mexican Navy (Semar, for its Spanish acronym) experienced an increase of 12,000 positions during the same period.

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[Graph showing budget allocation by year for Sedena and Semar.]  
*Source: Estadísticas Oportunas de Finanzas Públicas y Transparencia Presupuestaria. The data was processed by Carlos Brown & Intersecta (Intersecta.org).*

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These data reveal the growth of the financial and human resources of the Armed Forces during the recent administrations. To put them into perspective, we will now compare these figures with those of other institutions.

**Armed Forces Money**

In an analysis of the 2021 Federal Budget exercised by the 30 state branches, secretariats, autonomous bodies, entities, and production companies mentioned in the database, the Secretariat of National Defense (Sedena) held ninth place with the most resources exercised, while the Secretariat of the Navy (Semar) was in fifteenth. Such is the measure of their budgetary power: **In 2021, the Armed Forces exercised more resources than the judicial and legislative branches combined.**

The graph on the next page shows that Sedena spent more funds than 14 out of 19 secretariats. Only the secretariats of public education, energy, welfare, and health surpass it. Meanwhile, Semar expended more funding than ten secretariats.

There is a significant difference between the Armed Forces and the secretariats using more resources than them. Aside from the Secretariat of Energy, most of the money spent on education, welfare, and health is redistributed to the population through resource distribution or direct services. In the case of the Armed Forces, they invest almost their entire budget in themselves.

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7 The following categories were excluded from the analysis: contributions to social security; salary and economic provisions; public debt; participation to states and municipalities; federal contributions to states and municipalities; debt from previous fiscal years; and expenditures for savers and debtors support programs. All the fields included are shown in the figure titled “How Much Money Did Federal Institutions Spend in 2021?”
For instance, the Secretariat of Welfare spent more funds than Sedena. Yet, out of every ten pesos spent on welfare, nine went to social programs such as pensions for the well-being of older adults, assistance for the well-being of people with disabilities, and the “Sembrando Vida” program, which supports small farmers and communities. As for the Secretariat of Health, eight of every ten pesos were spent on public healthcare. The disparity? Out of every ten pesos spent by Sedena, seven went to staff compensations and public trusts controlled and enjoyed by Sedena only. In fact, except for the Secretariat of the Civil Service, Sedena and Semar have a higher proportion of expenditure allocated to remunerations.

How much money did federal institutions spend in 2021?

In million MXN, constant 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
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Note: We refer to the institutions as they are known in Mexico.
The data was processed by Intersecta (intersecta.org).

Armed Forces Positions

The Armed Forces do not only wield plentiful resources. If we look at the public positions they are assigned, we can see they are among the federal government institutions (not to mention the Mexican State) with the most staff.

Specifically, Sedena is the second institution in the Federal Public Administration with the most positions assigned in 2022, totaling 259,689. It has even more job openings than the Secretariat of Public
Education (SEP, for its Spanish initials), which makes it the public institution with the most vacancies. The Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS, for its Spanish initials) is larger than Sedena. As for Semar, it is the government agency with the eighth-highest number of positions. With a total of 78,526, it topples 15 secretariats. Therefore, the Armed Forces as a whole can hire 338,215 people.

### Number of positions of the federal public administration institutions in 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Positions</th>
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<td>IMSS</td>
<td>461,133</td>
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<td>Sedena</td>
<td>259,689</td>
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<td>SEP</td>
<td>199,571</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribunales Agrarios</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJEF</td>
<td>195</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRE</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNH</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Análíticos de Plazas y Remuneraciones de la Administración Pública Federal.  
**Note:** We refer to the institutions as they are known in Mexico.  
**The data was processed by Intersecta (intersecta.org).**

During the last year of Felipe Calderón’s six-year presidential term, Sedena was the institution with the fourth-highest number of positions. During Enrique Peña Nieto’s administration, it climbed to second place. With Andrés Manuel López Obrador, that has not changed. What has changed in this administration is that the gap between IMSS and Sedena is closing. For instance, if we compare the positions assigned to existing institutions in 2019 with those authorized in 2022, the big winner in the federal public administration is Sedena, with almost 45,000 more positions. The institution to hire the second highest number of personnel was IMSS, with nearly 24,000 additional positions for this six-year presidential term. Although IMSS is still the institution with the most positions, Sedena follows closely behind.

Most positions open at Sedena and Semar are for “soldiers” and “sailors”—the lowest ranks in the institutions. Still, the size of both is so large that, currently, Sedena has 45 positions for generals who
receive a “total income” (i.e., salary, for practical purposes) that amounts to 200,000 pesos per month. Sedena is the Federal Public Administration institution with the most jobs earning that monthly amount. The secretariat with the following highest number of employment making that sum of money is the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP, for its Spanish initials), with 18. SEP comes next, with just five jobs making that amount.

How many positions have earnings of $200 thousand pesos per month?
In each institution of the federal public administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedena -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHCP -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidency -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semar -</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNH -</td>
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<td>CFE -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18

Source: Analíticos de Plazas y Remuneraciones de la Administración Pública Federal.
Note: We refer to the institutions as they are known in Mexico.
The data was processed by Intersecta (intersecta.org).

Placing Stakes on Equality

As we can see, the Armed Forces are one of the federal institutions with the most resources and personnel. This privileged status should urge scrutiny among whoever is interested in distributing State resources. It is possible to compare, for instance, the resources of the military institutions with those received by policies and institutions created under the human rights paradigm, in general, and for equality and non-discrimination, in particular, with a special interest in those conceived “for women.”

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8 We believe it is important to acknowledge the existence of the annex “Erogaciones para la Igualdad entre Hombres y Mujeres” [“Expenditures for Equality between Men and Women”], popularly known as Annex 13. This annex does not contain money that is in addition to that in the Federal Spending Budget database (which we analyze here); rather, it is a way to “earmark” this money. In this case, it is “earmarked” money for gender equality. In recent years, the way this money is
We know a policy or institution doesn't need to state that it was explicitly conceived “for women” in its name or objectives for it to benefit women. The same can be said for any other group. It is, therefore, important to analyze every institution and public program. However, in recent decades, many demands set out by social movements have resulted in specific institutions and policies whose names reflect the population for which they were created, hence our interest in examining how their resources contrast with those allocated to the military.

Women’s Shelters

One of the problems that feminisms have insisted upon for decades is domestic violence, particularly intimate partner violence. This is a phenomenon that, according to the National Survey on Urban Public Security (ENSU, its Spanish initials) of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Inegi, for its Spanish initials), disproportionately affects more women than men.9

The latest edition of the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relations (Endireh, for its Spanish initials), conducted in 2021 by Inegi, shows just how common intimate partner violence is. To put it in perspective, four out of ten women are estimated to have experienced at least one violent incident in their intimate relationships. We are talking about roughly 18.8 million women. According to the Endireh 2021, approximately nine million women experience the emotional consequences of this kind of abuse every day—including insomnia, loss of appetite, anxiety, and fear—while three million suffer physical injuries due to the abuse.

Shelters have been a critical factor in the response to domestic violence. As their name implies, they offer a space and a break from violence for women who do not always have the means to leave their partners safely.

Many things related to shelters in Mexico have changed during the current administration. In 2019, the president’s decision to cut all resource transferences to civil society organizations10 resulted in the loss of a great deal of support for shelters—managed mainly through private organizations with public money.11 However, thanks to several protests, governmental support for shelters was restored.

In 2021, the Secretariat of Welfare was in charge of managing the expenditure for the Programa de Apoyo para Refugios Especializados para Mujeres Víctimas de Violencia de Género, sus hijas e hijos (Support Program for Specialized Shelters for Women Victims of Gender Violence, their Daughters and Sons).12 The expenditure for these shelters was 415.9 million pesos. Meanwhile, in the same year, the Armed Forces spent 459.9 million pesos in travel expenses abroad.

The government of austerity spent more on military travel abroad than on shelters for women victims of violence.

 earmarked has been increasingly criticized because it has not been enough to ensure that the funds are effectively used in policies designed to close gender gaps. (See, for instance, Fundar, “Programas y acciones etiquetadas en Anexo 13 deben contar con perspectiva de género” [Annex 13 Earmarked Programs and Actions Must Have a Gender Perspective], October 22, 2021.) In any case, our focus is on specific policies and institutions that were originally conceived “for ‘women,’” equality, or victims.

9 The National Survey on Urban Public Security (ENSU, for its Spanish initials) is conducted quarterly by Inegi. In 2020, in the context of the pandemic, a section on measuring “violence in a family setting” was included. This section is applied only once a year, so three editions can be compared: September 2020, September 2021 and, finally, September 2022. The three editions show how violence in a family setting disproportionately affects women, particularly the violence perpetrated by their intimate partners.

10 See Circular Uno [Memo One], signed by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on February 14, 2019.

11 Inegi, Censo de Alojamientos de Asistencia Social. Presentación de resultados, 2015.

12 In 2022, Conavim was in charge of managing this program.
Daycare Centers

Over the last few years, feminisms have advocated the recognition of care as a fundamental action in sustaining life. They have also denounced that the current way of regulating and organizing care is profoundly unfair. Not only is it assumed to be the main task of families, but also, within families, it is distributed unequally and falls disproportionately on women. In Mexico, for example, for every hour spent on care tasks by men, women spend three hours.\(^\text{13}\)

In recent years, as a solution to the problem of unequal distribution of care in the country, various feminist organizations and collectives, as well as public institutions, have promoted the creation of a “National Care System”.\(^\text{14}\) The analyses justifying the promotion of this policy point out the deficiencies of the existing programs and support as well as the funds that the ideal system would require.\(^\text{15}\) For example, a 2018 study conducted by UN Women and Inmujeres noted that the expenditure on daycare centers was insufficient and needed more significant investment.\(^\text{16}\)

To put this in perspective, in 2021, the expenditure on childcare services run by IMSS was 11.19 billion pesos. The Armed Forces spent 16.8 billion pesos only on salary bonuses for its members (these bonuses are called “sobrehaberes” in Spanish, or over-earnings).\(^\text{17}\)

In Mexico, more money is spent on bonuses for the military than on childcare centers run by IMSS.

Another example: According to a study conducted by UN Women, “considering an implementation period of 5 years, the configuration of a universal, free, and quality childcare system has an average annual cost of 1.16 percent of the 2019 GDP”\(^\text{18}\) That same year (2019), the budget for the military was 0.57 percent of the GDP.\(^\text{19}\) For instance, half of the ideal childcare system could be funded with all the Armed Forces’ resources. The inevitable question here is, why favor arms over care?


\(^\text{14}\) In addition to the National Institute for Women (inmujeres, for its Spanish acronym), that made this agenda its own, the Chamber of Deputies passed a constitutional reform on care on November 18, 2020. Two years later, the initiative continues to be at a standstill in the Senate. See also the 2019 work of the Red de Cuidados (Care Network), “Sistema integral de cuidados. ¿Por qué, para quién y cómo?” [National system of care. Why, for whom and how?].

\(^\text{15}\) UN Women, Costos, retornos y efectos de la extensión del tiempo escolar en la educación primaria en México [Costs, returns, and effects of extending school time in primary education in Mexico], 2021; UN Women, El cuidado de las personas mayores en situación de dependencia en México: propuesta de servicios, estimación preliminar de costos e identificación de impactos económicos [Caring for dependent elders in Mexico: service proposal, preliminary estimated costs and identification of economic impacts], 2021; UN Women, Costos, retornos y efectos de un Sistema de cuidado infantil universal, gratuito y de calidad en México [Costs, returns, and effects of a free National Care System for children in Mexico], 2021.

\(^\text{16}\) UN Women & Inmujeres, Bases para una Estrategia Nacional de Cuidados [Foundations for a National Care Strategy], 2018.

\(^\text{17}\) In the 2021 budget, the concept of “sobrehaberes” only appears in reference to the Armed Forces budget. We could not find a similar concept for other institutions. The definition of “sobrehaberes” can be found in Sedena: “Percepciones de personal militar” [Income of military personnel], last updated October 15, 2022.

\(^\text{18}\) UN Women, Costos, retornos y efectos de un Sistema de cuidado infantil universal, gratuito y de calidad en México [Costs, returns, and effects of a free National Care System for children in Mexico], 2021.

\(^\text{19}\) As part of its Estadísticas Oportunas [Timely Statistics], the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit publishes the “Gasto programable del sector público presupuestario” [Programmable expenditure of the budgetary public sector] seen in “GDP percentages.”
Institutions for Women

As previously mentioned, numerous institutions have been created in recent decades; their mandate is directly related to causes fostered by historically marginalized groups, including women.\textsuperscript{20} We will now discuss their resources and compare them to those of the Armed Forces.

Let’s start with the **National Institute for Women (Inmujeres, for its Spanish initials).** According to Article 4 of the Inmujeres Law, this Institute has the mission of “providing and fostering conditions that enable non-discrimination, equality of opportunities and treatment among genders, [as well as] the full exercise of every right of women and their equal participation in the political, cultural, economic, and social life of the country.” Even though the mandate is broad on paper, it is essential to read it in the light of what we know about gender discrimination, i.e., that it is a daily reality in the country and that it affects every aspect of women’s and men’s lives.\textsuperscript{21}

Despite the broad mandate of Inmujeres, the budget spent by this institute in 2021 barely reached 727 million pesos. Meanwhile, Semar’s budget is 50 times higher, and Sedena’s is 183 times higher.

Regarding personnel, Inmujeres has scarcely 251 positions.

\textbf{With one Sedena, we could have a thousand Inmujeres.}

Moreover, the women in Sedena alone, who barely represent 12 percent of the institution (one of the lowest figures in the entire Federal Public Administration), are enough to create 125 Inmujeres.\textsuperscript{22}

Merely the budget that Sedena spent on its own “Program for Equality between Women and Men”—418 million pesos—amounts to more than half of the entire budget of Inmujeres. What are they spending so much money on? According to the budget database, half of it goes to “training services for civil servants.”\textsuperscript{23}

In 2020, three organizations undertook the task of documenting what the Armed Forces had done concerning training in human rights and gender.\textsuperscript{24} Our motivation was the tenth anniversary of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights rulings on the cases of Inés Fernández Ortega and Valentina Rosendo Cantú—two Me’Phaa women tortured by members of the Mexican Army. These rulings established a repairation measure to implement “a permanent and mandatory training and education program or course on human rights for members of the Armed Forces,” which must address, among

\textsuperscript{20} We refer here to the National Institute for Women (Inmujeres), the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women (Conavim), the National Center for Gender Equity and Reproductive Health (CNEGSR), the National Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination (Conapred), the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), the National Center for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS (Censida), the Executive Commission for Attention to Victims (CEAV), and the National Search Commission (Cnb). Except for INPI and Censida, whose origins date back to 1948 and 1988, respectively, the rest are 21st-century institutions, created under the paradigm of human rights, in general, and equality and non-discrimination, in particular. Although CEAV and CNB respond to the contemporary crisis of violence, considering that its effects are unequal, we believe it is relevant to include them in this analysis. Of these eight institutions, three are decentralized agencies of the Federal Public Administration—INPI, Inmujeres, and CEAV—, while the rest are decentralized agencies of different secretariats (Censida and CNEGSR belong to the Secretariat of Health, while Conavim, Conapred, and CNB are part of the Secretariat of the Interior [Segob]).

\textsuperscript{21} Each year, Inmujeres partners with Inegi to publish a summary of data showing the most significant “gender gaps” in the country. It is called Mujeres y hombres en México [Women and Men in Mexico] and the last edition was in 2021.

\textsuperscript{22} Request to access public information, response from Sedena, folio number 000070036419.

\textsuperscript{23} To be precise, 48.6% goes to “training services for civil servants.” In this item, other quite sizable amounts are 28.5% for “broadcasting messages about government programs and activities,” 12.4% for “linen and other textile products, except clothing,” 7.2% for “medical materials, accessories, and supplies,” and 3.1% for textile products, clothing, and uniforms.

other issues, “the limits in the interaction between military personnel and the civilian population, gender, and Indigenous rights.”

Through requests for access to public information, we asked the Armed Forces about these training. In their responses, they could not provide us with a syllabus, much less a list of their faculty or an evaluation of their efforts. In their scant responses, they reported, for instance, seven gender training sessions that Sedena allegedly carried out from 2014 to 2018. In every case, the “training” consisted of a two-hour videoconference. Concerning training on “indigenous rights”—as mandated by the Inter-American Court—Sedena reported only one two-hour videoconference in 2019.

Is this still where this money is going?

Let us now consider the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women (Conavim, for its Spanish acronym), attached to the Secretariat of the Interior (Segob). Conavim was established in 2009 in the wake of the General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence, promulgated in 2007. Among its multiple mandates, it must support and provide follow-up for the Gender Violence Alert against Women in Mexico. According to the government itself, since the creation of this mechanism, 22 states have declared 25 alerts, encompassing a total of 552 recommended measures. Out of the 22 states with active alerts, 18 have been evaluated. The results? Of all the recommendations, “9 percent [...] have been fully complied with; [...] 5 percent have not been observed, and [...] 86 percent are in the process of compliance or partially complied with.” Conavim has yet to follow up.

So, what was Conavim’s total budget in 2021? Barely 231 million pesos. Of these, 189.4 million—80 percent—are subsidies for states and municipalities. In other words, their meager budget is not money that stays in Conavim. Hence, it is unsurprising that Conavim had only 48 positions in 2022.

No matter what we compare them with, these are very few positions. But let’s put this in perspective vis-à-vis the Armed Forces. In 2022, Sedena’s General Directorate of Social Communication had 127 positions—more than double compared to Conavim. That’s to say, in Mexico, there are more jobs for those who create military propaganda than for those who administer the Alert for Gender Violence against Women.

One more example: According to the database of assigned positions, the smallest unit of Sedena is its General Directorate of Human Rights (indeed, they have their own human rights directorate). This unit had 123 jobs—also more than twice as many as all of Conavim.

With these spending priorities, how are mechanisms such as the gender violence alert expected to work?

Finally, there is the National Center for Gender Equity and Reproductive Health (CNEGSR, for its Spanish initials) attached to the Secretariat of Health. Its mandate is also broad and includes proposing national policies on reproductive health (which encompasses family planning; cervical, uterine, and breast cancer; maternal and perinatal health), promoting gender equality, and preventing domestic and sexual violence

25 Fernández Ortega and others v. Mexico, ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, August 30, 2010, par. 262 resolution 20; Rosendo Cantú and other v. Mexico, ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, August 31, 2010, par. 249 resolution 18.

26 Conavim was established with the decree called DECRETO por el que se crea como órgano administrativo desconcentrado de la Secretaría de Gobernación, la Comisión Nacional para Prevenir y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres [DECREET for the creation of the National Commission to Prevent and Eliminate Violence Against Women], published in the Diario Oficial de la Federación [Official Journal of the Federation] in 2009.

27 Inmujeres, “Alerta de violencia de género contra las mujeres” [Alert for gender violence against women], October 24, 2021.

28 Ibidem. Article 24 Quáter of the General Law on Women’s Access to a Life Free of Violence establishes that the recommendations must be made by an Interinstitutional and Multidisciplinary Group made up of different public institutions and civil society organizations.
and violence against women. This center is in charge of monitoring compliance with “NOM 046,” for example, a regulation focused on domestic and sexual violence and violence against women, which also guarantees access to abortion in cases of rape throughout the country.

In 2021, this center spent a total of 1.36 billion pesos. That same year, the institution spent the most resources among those designed initially “for women.” However, as with Conavim, a huge proportion—75.8 percent—are subsidies for states and municipalities. In other words, this is not money that stays in the institution; instead, it is redistributed at the local level.

Let’s put this into perspective: Sedena spent 1.43 billion pesos on its Programa de Becas para los Hijos del Personal de las Fuerzas Armadas (Scholarship Program for the Children of the Armed Forces Personnel).

In Mexico, more money is invested in scholarships for the children of soldiers than in the center, leading the way in reproductive health policies.

Institutions for Equality

In addition to the institutions specifically designed “for women,” there are others designed from their establishment to deal with discrimination in general terms and regarding effects on particular groups. How can the support they receive be compared with the Armed Forces’ resources?

Let’s start with the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI, for its Spanish initials). INPI’s powers are wide-ranging. Article 2 of its law states, “The Federal Executive Branch has authority in matters related to Indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples.” Its obligation to ensure the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican girls and women is present in every one of its tasks. The Indigenous rights program Las Casas de la Mujer Indígena y Afrormexicana (The Houses of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Women) falls under its umbrella.

Of all the institutions analyzed, INPI used the most resources in 2021. It spent a total of 4.08 billion pesos. It also had the most positions: 2,180. Part of its expenses—1.67 billion pesos—went to the Programa de Apoyo a la Educación Indígena (Indigenous Education Support Program), which helps Indigenous children and youth stay in school. Among other efforts, this program runs Casas de la Niñez Indígena (Indigenous Children’s Houses), which provides “food, lodging, and complementary activities” to their beneficiaries. It is worth contrasting: The Armed Forces spent 4.02 billion pesos on their “military and naval education.”

In Mexico, more is invested in military education than keeping Indigenous children and youth in school.

Let us now talk about the National Center for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS (Censida, for its Spanish acronym)—also attached to the Secretariat of Health. Censida proposes national policies and

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25 Article 40 of Reglamento Interior de la Secretaría de Salud [Internal Regulations of the Secretariat of Health].
strategies for preventing, caring for, and controlling sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. It is one of the key institutions that should promote the rights of women living with HIV.\textsuperscript{33} How big is Censida’s staff? There are 90 positions. How much did it spend in 2021? 351 million pesos. In 2021, the Armed Forces spent 523 million pesos on uniforms alone.

\textit{In Mexico, more is spent on military uniforms than strengthening the institution that directs HIV public policy.}

Finally, per the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination, the \textit{National Council to Prevent Discrimination (Conapred, for its Spanish acronym)} has nothing less than the power to coordinate the actions of all the agencies and entities of the Federal Executive Branch to prevent and eliminate discrimination. Moreover, it must directly promote various measures for this very purpose. Lastly, it is a body created to receive and resolve complaints that fall under its umbrella throughout the country. Hundreds of women turn to it each year to defend themselves from discrimination.\textsuperscript{34}

How many budgetary positions did Conapred obtain in 2022? 108. Let’s remember that Semar had 78,000. One Semar is equivalent to 727 Conapreds. One Sedena amounts to 2,404 Conapreds. \textit{With Sedena’s staff, we could ensure that almost every one of the 2,446 municipalities in the country had a Conapred office.}

The Armed Forces spent more on “broadcasting messages” about their programs—158.4 million pesos—than the entire Conapred budget—139 million pesos.

What Sedena invested in 2021 in the “strengthening of the military intelligence system” (which failed to prevent the massive theft of its e-mails in September 2022) was 150.3 million pesos. Again, more than the entire Conapred budget.\textsuperscript{35}

\textit{What Sedena spent just on animal food—75 million pesos in one year—is more than half of the entire budget spent by Conapred.}

\section*{Institutions for Victims}

We are also interested in reviewing the institutions devoted to the victims of the current violence crisis, which partly stemmed from the same militaristic commitment intensified by President Calderón, which has continued ever since.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{flushright}
\begin{itemize}
\item Andrea J. Arratibel, “\textit{Las mujeres mexicanas: una población invisibilizada en la lucha contra el VIH},” [Mexican women: an invisibilized population in the fight against HIV] Sinc, June 20, 2022.
\item Estefanía Vela Barba, \textit{La discriminación en el empleo en México} [Workplace discrimination in Mexico], Instituto Belisario Domínguez & Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación, 2017, p. 90.
\item Editorial Staff, “\textit{Vigilancia, abusos y nexos criminales: las revelaciones de Sedena leaks (hasta ahora)}” [Surveillance, abuse, and criminal ties: what the Sedena leaks have revealed (so far)], Animal Político, October 6, 2022.
\item In May 2019, the organization Data Cívica, together with the Sexual and Reproductive Rights Area of the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE, for its Spanish initials), published the report \textit{Claves para entender y prevenir los asesinatos de mujeres en México} [Keys for understanding and preventing the homicides of women in Mexico]. The report shows how, starting in 2007, there was an increase in the murders of women. It also indicates a change in patterns from houses being the most frequent scenario for these crimes to streets becoming the most common place of death; firearms as a cause of death went from representing 3 out of 10 murders to 6 out of 10. The report sets forth a hypothesis based on the information available at the time: Perhaps the increase was due to the militarization of public security. Intersexta tried to demonstrate this hypothesis. We allied with Professor Laura Atuesta from the CID Drug Policy Program. Together, we published the report \textit{The Two Wars}, showing that, where there were clashes between the Armed Forces and alleged criminal groups, murders did not decrease but rather increased, affecting not only men but also women.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
The General Law on Victims was published in 2013. It contemplated the creation of the **Executive Commission for Attention to Victims (CEAV, for its Spanish initials)**. Under Article 84 of this law, CEAV has “the purpose of guaranteeing, promoting, and protecting the rights of victims of crime and human rights violations, especially the right to assistance, protection, attention, truth, justice, full reparation, and due diligence.” CEAV is one of the agencies to which victims in this country—who amount to millions each year—can turn for reparation.

How numerous was the staff at CEAV? It was assigned 388 positions in 2022. What did the resources it used in 2021 amount to? Barely 1.19 billion pesos.

What Semar spent on “fuels, lubricants, and additives” for its vehicles in 2021 alone—1.07 billion pesos—nears the total cost of CEAV.

Finally, in 2017, in the wake of the promulgation of the General Law on Forced Disappearance of Persons, Disappearance Committed by Individuals, and the National System for the Search for Persons (General Law on Disappearance), the **National Search Commission (CNB, for its Spanish initials)**, was created. This commission is part of the governmental response to the problem of disappearances. According to the latest CNB estimates, there are almost 95,000 missing persons in the country, of which one in four are women.37

Article 50 of the General Law on Disappearance explains that the CNB “determines, executes, and follows up on the search actions for missing and unlocated persons throughout the national territory.” Its mission is, essentially, to find those 95,000 people.

How large was the CNB’s budget in 2021? 616 million pesos.38 It is the same amount that Sedena spent only on purchasing raw materials, such as “leather, fur, plastic, and rubber products.”

The exact amount is invested in purchasing raw materials for the military as in the institution in charge of the search for missing persons in the country.

**Summary**

As we have seen throughout this section, no matter what we compare them to, policies and institutions for women, equality, and victims receive few resources. There is a problem of scarcity regarding the mechanisms set up for these purposes. Broadly, this is due to State priorities—not because the State lacks resources, but rather because of where it decides to place its stakes. That is why the contrast with the Armed Forces is so relevant: It shows the microscopic nature of the specific support for mechanisms for equality and the enormous privilege conferred to military institutions.

And if the resource discrepancy is large, the gap in personnel is even more significant. **It is David against Goliath.**

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37 CNB, Registro Nacional de Personas Desaparecidas y No Localizadas (RNPDNO) [National Registry of Disappeared and Unlocated Persons]. According to a report by Pie de Página, among other publications, the figure is already 100,000 missing persons. Violeta Santiago, “Los no identificados en el país de los 100 mil desaparecidos,” [The unidentified in the country of the 100 thousand disappeared] Pie de Página, June 1, 2022.

38 The CNB does not appear in the assigned positions database; therefore, we have omitted it. According to the CNB website, however, in 2021, the staff amounted to 89 people.
How much money did federal institutions spend in 2021?

Comparison of military spending with the spending of institutions non-sectored for rights and equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Amount (in million MXN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedena</td>
<td>$147,029</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semar</td>
<td>$45,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INPI</td>
<td>$4,083</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNEGSR</td>
<td>$1,364</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEAV</td>
<td>$1,191</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inmujeres</td>
<td>$727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNBP</td>
<td>$616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censida</td>
<td>$351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conapred</td>
<td>$231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conavim</td>
<td>$139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transparencia Presupuestaria, Observatorio del gasto. The data was processed by Intersecta (intersecta.org).

Number of positions of the federal public administration institutions in 2022

Comparison of military spending with the spending of institutions non-sectored for rights and equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedena</td>
<td>259,689</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semar</td>
<td>78,526</td>
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<tr>
<td>INPI</td>
<td>2,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEAV</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmujeres</td>
<td>251</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNEGSR</td>
<td>203</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conapred</td>
<td>108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Censida</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conavim</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Analíticos de Plazas y Remuneraciones de la Administración Pública Federal. The data was processed by Intersecta (intersecta.org).

Final Remarks

November 25th is an occasion to shed light on the violence that primarily affects women and the solutions that could contribute to solving this problem.

In this spirit, our work intends to provide figures that allow us to measure the investment made in what is presented as a response to many of the significant national problems, including gender violence against women: the militaristic commitment, which translates into a massive investment in the Armed Forces.

As we can see, the resources used by the military are substantial when compared to those used by other branches and secretariats of the Federal Government. The Armed Forces are very well-staffed as well. Sedena is, indeed, the secretariat with the largest workforce. This financial and human power has continued to grow in recent years.
We also compared the investment in the Armed Forces and the resources allocated to policies and institutions designed, from their origin, to attend to women, inequality, and victims in this country. Even before comparison, it is clear that budgetary support for these institutions has been scant. For years, insufficient spending on these agencies has been a reason for outcry. However, when contrasting the support these policies and institutions received with that granted to the Armed Forces, it becomes transparent that the problem is not a lack of resources. The problem is what the State invests in, to whom it allocates resources, and where it places its stakes.

With the figures presented, we hope to motivate two types of actions. The first is the audit of the Armed Forces. They have a staff numbering in the hundreds of thousands and receive billions of pesos yearly. The big question is: What good has it done to give them so much money? At Intersecta, we have not found solid evidence proving that all this investment has helped reduce violence—as promised. Far from that, mounting evidence shows that militarization has had detrimental effects. This strategy has unleashed even more violence, disproportionately impacting groups that were already historically marginalized. Yet again, how can we justify the investment made in the Armed Forces?

We are also interested in unleashing a redistributive imagination. After seeing all the existing resources, where could they be redirected? For example, if we built nurseries instead of building headquarters for Sedena, or if instead of soldiers, we had people devoted to caring for older adults, how much closer would we be to the ideal of a more egalitarian and less violent society? How much closer would we be to a society where the State assumes responsibility for the care work that has historically been delegated to women?

These are the questions we want to ask.
Additional References


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Credits

Regina I. Medina and Estefanía Vela Barba conducted research for this document. Estefanía Vela Barba wrote the document.

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November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. This day seeks to raise awareness about the types of violence that primarily affect women and the solutions required to tackle this problem.