

vists and journalists. These social actors commence, by themselves or in alliances, an interaction with State bodies that sometimes leads to the approval of laws, the creation of institutions, and the approval of budgets.

D.1. THE VICTIMS

We spoke with some families of those murdered at San Fernando and with NGOs representing those who disappeared in Allende. Observing up close the consequences of violence on individuals and families is deeply unsettling due to the level of suffering they display, and because it reminds us of the vulnerability of everyone living in Mexico. For this reason it is so important to be able to rely on State institutions that have a judicial framework that is committed to those whose rights have been violated.

The mother of a Salvadorean migrant murdered at San Fernando summed up in four sentences the desires of those affected and their feeling of abandonment:

- a) I live in doubt, not knowing for sure who is buried in the cemetery in El Salvador.
- b) We have a right to truth, to justice, and to medicine, to education and many other things we need.
- c) The government promised us this, but to date nothing has happened.
- d) They play games with our dignity.

A Guatemalan mother expresses the pain and impotence felt by the families: “They left us moribund, with our pain [...] we were left with pain, anguish, desperation, because we feel useless, we can’t do anything.”

In short, the victims seek truth, justice and reparations. They also want to be treated with dignity. To date, the institutions of the Mexican State have been unable to fulfill these expectations.

D.2. CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS

Civil organizations have been key to supporting the victims of both San Fernando and Allende, as well as demanding a response from the government. For this investigation we worked above all with the Foundation for Justice and the Democratic Rule of Law, based in the capital, and with the Fray Juan de Larios Diocesan Center for Human Rights in Saltillo, Coahuila.

The Foundation is one of the civil society organizations that has most closely supported the families of the victims of San Fernando. Its role has been key to the case continuing to advance through the intricacies of the Mexican justice system. This persistent work has influenced the emergence of national and international awareness of

the issues faced by migrants crossing Mexican territory, which in turn has led to the establishment of a regional organization.²¹

The Fray Juan de Larios Diocesan Center for Human Rights in Saltillo, Coahuila was promoted by Bishop Raúl Vera López, a central figure in the promotion of human rights. The Center is a pioneer in the issue of disappearances in the State of Coahuila (it commenced its work in 2009). Its presence is one of the factors that explains why the government of Rubén Moreira made the issue one of its priorities.

In Coahuila there are other organizations that—although more recent—support the families of the disappeared. These include the collective Fuerzas Unidas por Nuestros Desaparecidos en Coahuila (FUUNDEC), which has reported more than 380 cases and is supported by the Fray Juan de Larios Diocesan Center. Others include Families United in the Search for Disappeared Persons, Piedras Negras, Alas de Esperanza and Grupo VIDA.

These short references in no way exhaust the involvement of civil society in the defense of human rights in Tamaulipas and Coahuila. Although we will examine this aspect in greater detail, we can anticipate a key hypothesis: the social fabric of a city, region, or state is strongly conditioned by the context. If the Allende tragedy has been taken up by civil organizations in Coahuila, it is largely due to the stronger social fabric in this state, compared to Tamaulipas. With fewer inhabitants, Coahuila is home to almost three times more civil organizations than Tamaulipas.

**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
in Tamaulipas and Coahuila, 2012-2016**

	Coahuila		Tamaulipas		National	
Population according to 2010 census	2,748,391		3,268,554		112,336,538	
-	Total	Rate*	Total	Rate *	Total	Rate *
2012	367	13.3	188	5.8	15,019	13.4
2013	414	15.06	203	6.2	16,255	14.5
2015	-	-	225	6.9	22,918	20.4
2016	414	15.1	234	7.2	21,122	18.8

* Rates calculated per 100,000 inhabitants. Only CSOs described as “active” were considered. The calculations were made in different months for each year.

Source: Joint responsibility of RFOSC, Indesol-SEDESOL and INEGI for population calculated according to 2010 census.

This analysis must be supplemented by a peculiarity arising from the conditions of Tamaulipas. As described by Lucía Calderón in a doctoral thesis of 2016, the intensity of the violence in Tamaulipas led to the appearance of clandestine and informal civil organizations that established networks of resistance in light of the absence of the State.²²

D.3. THE MEDIA

Journalists, media and social networks have played a central role in the evolution undergone by the tragedies of San Fernando and Allende. This is the case because the victims, Los Zetas and some governors do care about what is reported about them.

The following is a list of some of the newspapers and journalists that have played key roles in the cases described here. The media that provide regular information about the issues are *Proceso*, *Grupo Reforma*, *La Jornada*, *Sin embargo* and *Animal Político*, *Mañana* in Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo and Reynosa, *La Vanguardia* in Coahuila and *El Siglo de Torreón*.

On San Fernando, a significant figure is Marcela Turati of *Periodistas de a Pie*, an organization that created the investigative website “+de 72” to address the massacres of migrants in Mexico.²³ Alma Guillermprieto and Gary Moore have made efforts to report what happened in San Fernando to a global audience.²⁴ In the case of Allende, of particular note is the work of Juan Antonio Cedillo (*Proceso*), Diego Enrique Osorno (*Vice*), Jason Buch and Guillermo Contreras (*San Antonio Express News*) and Alfredo Corchado (*Dallas Morning News*).

Reporting on organized crime is more risky in Tamaulipas than in Coahuila, in part, we believe, due to the different densities of positive social capital. The organization Article 19 has documented these variations in the attacks on freedom of expression (confirmed by studies undertaken by Freedom House, among other organizations).

Journalists murdered (2000-2016): Tamaulipas 13; Coahuila 3.

Journalists disappeared (as of January 2015): Tamaulipas 17; Coahuila 4.

For the press to be effective, their counterparts in dialogue must be officials who care—for whatever reason—about what is said about them in the media. The governor of Tamaulipas didn't care; that of Coahuila did.

With regard to the media attention on San Fernando and Allende, the massacre of the migrants was a national and international scandal from the outset. This was not the case in Allende. The level of interest has grown over the years, as the case is understood to act as a gateway to the violence afflicting a whole region and state.

D.4. ACADEMIA

The violence that troubles Mexico has altered the attitudes of several different actors. There have always been scholars interested in organized crime and its impact on human rights. A verifiable change is that an increasing number of academic institutions, both public and private, Mexican and foreign, are creating research programs into the many aspects of war and of peace. Of note among these, indeed, is the Morelos State Autonomous University. If to this we add the appearance of specialized research centers, the increase in the quality of knowledge on these issues may be understood, together with the ever better-grounded demand for public policies that meet the seriousness of the situation.

E. LESSONS OF SAN FERNANDO AND ALLENDE

Review of the events of San Fernando and Allende allows us to present a number of conclusions, lines of research and working hypotheses that are founded on the following assumptions:

- a) The Mexican State's system for attending to victims requires a thorough restructuring that reflects the severity of the challenge arising from the exponential increase in victims.
- b) This requires, among other things, improving empathy and the channels of communication between State and society.
- c) This returns us to the guiding thread of this research. Seeking the truth is an effective way of generating agreements on public policies. When understanding of the phenomenon and of the "others" improves, it will become a relatively easier task to achieve consensus among victims, society and State over how to bring human rights into line with security.

This argument leads us to enumerate a number of gaps that must be covered if we are to fully understand the lessons of San Fernando and Allende.

E.1. LOS ZETAS AND SOCIETY

The writings of Primo Levi, Robert Antelme, Christopher Browning and Hanna Arendt are characterized by an effort to understand the logic of the perpetrators.²⁵ When we understand men of violence and the support they find among society, it will be possible to reduce the number of victims.

That is to say, individuals and groups contribute to the dominance of positive or negative social capital. In the municipalities studied, there were those who supported