

# *Mexico releases 16 political prisoners, 368 cases under review*

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Mexico City, January 11 (RHC)-- Mexico's Interior Minister Olga Sanchez has announced that 16 political prisoners had been released so far and that the federal government is reviewing the 368 cases of people illegally detained.

In a press conference Tuesday, Sanchez said federal authorities confirmed that in some cases people detained had no sentence due to lack of evidence of any crime. "We have been reviewing 368 cases we have on the table and we have freed 16, many of them did not have a sentence after many years in detention due to lack of sufficient proof against them," she said.

Some of the people illegally detained were taken by authorities for protesting against fracking, protecting the environment, former president Enrique Peña Nieto's education reform, and others had been framed for kidnapping and extortion.

"We have detected many injustices. We cannot allow the criminalization of social protest," Sanchez stated.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), who was also at the news conference, explained the current review process seeks to guarantee that "no citizen becomes a victim of retaliation for his way of think or political opinion."

“We want the fourth transformation (as AMLO has referred to his government plan) to also mean justice, that opposition members and environmentalists are not accused ... Retaliation, never again! We are repairing damages,” he said.

AMLO's administration, which began on December 1st, has marked an important departure from previous security policies.

Prior to AMLO's inauguration, Sanchez outline a new plan to combat Mexico's systemic violence, including potential amnesties for members of organized crime within a strategy to stop violent crimes, the legalization of cannabis and poppy crops, and the establishment of truth commissions to ensure accountability of state security forces.

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