

The need for in-depth dialogue

# Together for Mexico

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*Mexico today faces what is probably the worst situation of violence in its modern history. The crisis transcends spheres of politics, public health, education, economics and the environment. This reality has forced the country to reflect on its cultural dimension and its impact on the country's Mexican identity.<sup>1</sup>*

In Mexico, we asked ourselves: What kind of country is this, in which we have become accustomed to daily death, corruption, impunity and institutional failure? Who are we in this society, when we tolerate and resign ourselves to fear?

The Mexican Bishops Conference, the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious of Mexico and the Mexican Province of the Society of Jesus decided to undertake a process called the *National Dialogue for Peace* after the June 2022 assassinations of Jesuits Javier Campos and Joaquín Mora and tour guide Pedro Palma in the Sierra Tarahumara and the young Paul Berrelleza Rábago. The aim of the process, focused on local problems and working together with a variety of players, was to identify the means necessary to enable things to begin moving forward towards peacebuilding.

In June 2022, more than thirty church and civic organizations also met at the headquarters of the Commission for Social Pastoral Care and Caritas of the Mexican Bishops' Conference. Convened by the Episcopal Commission on Faith and Social Engagement, they met to reflect together on how to build peace. This was not the *Pax Romana* based on a coercive presence of law enforcement, but the *Jewish Shalom* built on a basis of mutual love and awareness that we are all brothers and sisters, children of one Father. The *Synergy for Peace* movement was born from two initiatives which were created several years before through a collaboration between different movements - *Together for Mexico* and the *Political Movement for Unity*. These played key roles in defining the peace to be built, starting from a synergy based on synodality.

## **Converging paths in a shared agenda**

The obligatory questions included: How did we get to this point? Is peace possible and how can it be built? Where does one begin to build this peace?

This is how *Synergy for Peace* - without losing its own identity - has lent its full support to the *National Dialogue for Peace* process with its local organizations and communities. The latter fueled the process with new questions, approaches and specific themes for reflection, as well as a positive summary document entitled the *National Agenda for Peace* that was a fruit of the September 2023 National Meeting for Peace.

The *National Agenda for Peace* collected the outcomes from over a thousand "conversationalists" and nearly one hundred 'forums' that took place throughout the country in order to better understand how the lack of peace is experienced and is being addressed by communities and various social structures.

This jointly drafted document calls on all of Mexico's inhabitants to work for peace and justice. Peacebuilding in our country involves, in fact, many simultaneous processes and efforts taking place in various sectors at the local and national level.

## **The *National Agenda for Peace* document**

The first part of the document presents identified problems from conversations and forums around two major themes: community and institutions. The second part speaks to the future we want for our country and the horizons before us.

A third and final part proposes a path forward in order to achieve this long-awaited peace. This third part, entitled *The Path We Must Follow*, presents recommendations and principles understood to be indispensable skills and conditions in order to work for peace in Mexico. It highlights the need to build a broad agenda which all people can agree to, including those who are guilty (of fostering violence), and likewise an agenda that looks far back in time, reflecting on who we have been - and more importantly - what can help us to answer the question: *who do we want to be?*

This section concludes with recommendations, also around how to overcome despair and social division, and how to better serve the most vulnerable groups. It also looks at how best to restore the capacity of people and institutions dedicated to the care and safeguarding of justice.

It is a broad and ambitious document. A second phase has begun, in which lines of action developed to foster *Conversations for Actions for Peace*, has been handed back to the communities. In this way, each community can design and implement necessary actions locally. These actions will be evaluated by the communities themselves and then be continued, modified or replaced over time.

## Action tracks

Many activities have been taken since 2023. Communities connected through the *National Network for Peace*, reflected on proposals to present to candidates for elections to the presidency of the Republic (held on June 2, 2024). Forums were also organized at individual state and municipality levels, in order to present public policy proposals to current authorities, as well as electoral candidates at the levels of governors and mayors.

Now that the *Forums of public actions and policies for peace* phase concluded, a third phase has begun. This phase starts from developing 'public policy' proposals. Civil society and organized citizenship are invited to take these issues as common and cross-cutting axes of action, in building peace and reconstructing the social fabric. The Bishops' Conference also created a Council of Laity in Public Life, a space for lay persons involved in economics, politics and various sectors of civil society, with a focus on both social and academic needs.

Now, in dialogue with various organizations, there is a coordinated effort also taking place called, *Peace Unites Us*, which is spearheading a signature-gathering campaign in hopes of gathering at least one million signatures for peace. This is the minimum needed in order to present a legal initiative for the promotion of policies for national reconciliation, reconstruction of social fabrics and the active promotion of peace.

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<sup>1</sup> *Together for Humanity* Conference, Castelgandolfo, 16-19 May 2024.