



## Fact Sheet

### Corrections Reform

“We also resolve to continue confronting the urgent threat to our common security from the drug cartels that are causing so much violence and death in our countries. As I have said on many occasions, I heartily commend President Calderón and his government for their determination and courage in taking on these cartels.”

*Barack Obama*  
*President of the*  
*United States*

In 2008, the Mexican government embarked on a comprehensive reform of its penitentiary system. Merida Initiative funds are supporting this effort, through programs focusing on training, specialized equipment, and technical assistance. These programs are enhancing the professionalism and effectiveness of Mexican prison officials and staff and provide them with tools and methodologies needed to monitor and interdict criminal activities operating within Mexican prisons. The programs will also enhance protection for the rights of offenders, improve conditions for the Mexican penitentiary system and broaden coordination with corrections systems in the United States.

#### **Achievements:**

- With Merida Initiative support, the Mexican Government opened the Mexican National Academy for Penitentiary Administration in Xalapa, Veracruz in May, 2009. The Academy has already trained 3,479 newly recruited officials. SSP is offering this training at the State level, which in the future will include the Latin American countries.
- Merida Initiative funding is also providing training and certification for corrections instructors at the New Mexico Corrections Academy. Since 2009, more than 270 new corrections instructors were trained and certified.
- Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) has trained a total of 73 correctional staff on an objective inmate classification system. The system places inmates based on scored risk levels and allocates rehabilitation program resources. This training provided the basis for the newly developed classification and diagnostic systems.
- Eighteen individuals were trained on parole and re-entry Programs at Colorado Department of Corrections and 41 more at Maryland Police and Corrections Training Academy. This group is now working on the strategic plan for reforms in the Mexican Parole and Re-Entry Department.
- A group of 110 staff of the Transportation Unit have received training at the Colorado Department of Corrections. They are part of the newly created Prisoner Transportation Unit. Additionally, ten prisoner transport vans were delivered to the Prisoner Transportation Unit in 2010.
- A total of 100 mid- and senior-level corrections staff have received training from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons in the corresponding leadership techniques.
- Ten corrections officers received K9 training at the New Mexico Corrections Academy. The program included 10 dogs, all associated equipment.
- With Merida Initiative support, the GOM is developing a Crisis Management Program, 25 individuals were trained at California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Part of the equipment for this new unit has been delivered.
- Four federal correctional facilities and the Mexican National Academy for Penitentiary Administration were accredited based on newly developed International Standards by American Correctional Association (ACA).
- Training equipment has been delivered to the Xalapa Penitentiary Academy. More will be provided as the Academy expands in 2012.
- Technical assistance has been provided to SSP on their 12 new federal corrections facilities, four of which were opened by the end of 2011 and the remainder should be completed by 2012.
- Part of the biometric equipment has been delivered. This equipment will be placed in Federal and State facilities for positive inmate identification and registration in the National Database.

- The International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) formalized the Latin American Chapter of this organization (ICPA-LA). The Under Secretary of Mexican Federal Penitentiary System is the first president of ICPA-LA chapter.

### **Future Directions:**

- The GOM requested Merida funds to assist in the accreditation of four more federal correctional facilities, based on newly developed International Standards by American Correctional Association (ACA).
- The Merida Initiative will support GOM in the developing of a program for female offenders. Training is scheduled with Colorado Department of Corrections.
- The GOM is creating a Gang Unit for their Federal prison System. Merida funds will be used to provide training in Maryland and purchase equipment to support the new unit.
- Mexico will host 2012 ICPA conference.
- The Merida Initiative will fund a training program with state penitentiary authorities.
- Two mobile training units will be purchased with Merida funds to support the GOM in providing training on location to State and Federal correctional facilities.
- The U.S. Marshalls and Department of Justice are working with the GOM to develop a witness protection program.