



## Official Information Regarding Security

### Objective:

Verify if federal security institutions provide official backup to security statements made by the President and other high public servants during the daily morning press conferences.

### Context:

Each morning, the President and members of his Cabinet hold press conferences on various topics. They are meant to be an exercise of transparency and accountability. However, justified criticisms of these conferences have been made from the start. For example, early on, senators sent a request of access to public information to the Presidency, asking about a declaration made by the President in one of these press conferences. The answer to that request was that “the fact that the President communicates to society through press conferences, press statements or public messages, about public affairs, does not imply the obligation on behalf of the Presidency to possess the respective documental backup”.

For that reason, journalists, researchers and NGOs have embarked on different exercises to analyze and corroborate the statements made by the President and other high public officials during these press conferences. *Causa en Común* began its own exercise with the aim, precisely, of finding out whether federal intuitions could or were willing to backup the statements regarding security, made during these press conferences.

### Main Findings:

- Federal security institutions usually deny information linked directly with their responsibilities established by law. From December 3rd, 2018, to December 3rd, 2019, 77% of responses from these institutions did not backup statements made during the morning press conferences.
- The Secretary of Security and Citizen’s Protection is the federal security institution that answers with more evasive responses, such as “no competence”, “non-existence”, or “irrelevance”; and is the institution that relies more frequently on answers which simply state again what was said during the conferences which originated the questions in the first place.
- The study reveals that issues related to the National Guard are the most opaque, with institutions transferring to each other the responsibility of answering. Although the Secretary of Security and Citizens’ Protection is the federal institution in charge of that corporation, it usually responds that it has “no competence” regarding, for example, wages, training or deployment.



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- The Secretary of National Defense did not answer basic questions, such as the number of regional coordinations of the National Guard; or about actions to prevent arms trafficking, which had already been announced publicly.
- This kind of negatives are not only extreme, but also incomprehensible, since informing, for example, of general strategies, at least would show that there are some documents related to what the government does, or does not do, in relation to security. In another example, the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System did not answer a request about police development, even though it is its main responsibility.
- Some denials can be explained by the lack of information, but some are also incomprehensible, since, as was already mentioned, the information which is requested was provided during the daily morning press conferences. Therefore, one can speculate that some denials are simply a reflex from a government essentially inclined to hide information.
- In summary, regarding transparency, it is common for the Mexican Government to hide information, to ignore statements made during the daily morning press conferences, and to avoid responsibilities established by law.