

I'm shocked and saddened to learn that religious minority children, including Protestant Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses, are unfairly missing out on an education because of their faith.

Children are sometimes blocked from attending public school because of their faith and that of their parents. In extreme situations, families and whole churches are violently expelled from their villages and often children can't enrol in school in their new neighbourhood. Sometimes they never resume their education.

Chiapas has arguably one of the worst records of any state in Mexico for children who have been forcibly displaced and are not in school because of their religion. Examples include Kevin, from the community in San Miguel Chiptic, who was driven from his home along with his family and now can't enrol in a new school as it's too dangerous to return and get the documents he needs.

Constitutional guarantees for religious freedom and the right to an education are not being upheld by your offices. Fear of reprisals by members of the majority religion is not a reason to ignore this or to pretend it is motivated by other factors, rather than a violation of Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Moreover, despite Mexico being a secular state, some children are forced to participate in religious activities, including celebrating religious festivals. In some cases if they refuse on account of their religious beliefs, they may be discriminated against by receiving lower grades.

Please do all you can to ensure that children have equal access to education and to ensure that Constitutional protections for religious freedom for all, including children, are upheld across your state.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this email. I look forward to your reply.