



CYRUS R. **VANCE CENTER**
FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vance Center and Fundacion Barra Mexicana Announce Joint Committee to Protect the Rule of Law

New York, June 14, 2022 - The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice (“Vance Center”) and Fundación Barra Mexicana (“FBM”) this morning signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a joint committee to examine the challenges to the institutions of democracy and the rule of law, and design and implement projects to confront these challenges in Mexico and the United States within the context of the close social, political and commercial relations between the two nations, including the U.S. - Mexico - Canada Agreement.

The FBM is a nonprofit organization established under the auspices of the Barra Mexicana de Abogados, A.C. initially to assume the legal representation of the neediest throughout Mexico and to develop a comprehensive pro-bono hub with the participation of numerous members of the legal profession. Since 2021, the FBM has worked to advance the rule of law in Mexico.

The Vance Center, of the New York City Bar Association, advances global justice by engaging lawyers across borders to support civil society and an ethically active legal profession. The Vance Center is a unique collaboration of international lawyers catalyzing public-interest innovation that brings together leading law firms and other partners worldwide to pioneer international justice initiatives and provide pro bono legal representation to social justice NGOs.

The Joint Committee seeks principally to develop strategies to address threats to the rule of law in Mexico. It will recruit pro bono support from law firms and seek the perspective and other contributions of civil society organizations to conduct research and analysis, and present policy briefs on the topics of interest, organize in-person and virtual events, design and implement specific initiatives and projects, and present findings and recommendations to the Barra Mexicana and the New York City Bar Association in a joint effort to strengthen the rule of law in both nations.

Through the Joint Committee, FBM and the Vance Center will focus on topics relevant to the rule of law, but with particular attention to those relevant to the preservation of democracy, including judicial and prosecutorial independence; media freedom; immigration enforcement; corruption; independence and

capacity of governmental institutions; election integrity; public safety and crime; and civic space, among others.

Dolores Aguinaco, President of the FBM, who has led the modernization of the institution, said, “An alliance of this nature with the Vance Center is a historical opportunity for us at the Foundation.” Enrique Gonzalez Calvillo, who chairs the FBM Board of Trustees, added, “The rule of law is suffering today in Mexico,” further indicating that there is no precedent in the country’s modern history for the current attacks on key institutions and the constitutional order. “The Vance Center’s support and experience will be absolutely key to us at the FBM,” he added.

Todd Crider, partner at Simpson Thacher & Barlett and member of the Vance Center Executive Sub-Committee, said, “Weakened rule of law in Mexico will also affect the United States, as an erosion of our institutions would affect Mexico. Discussing and finding ways to address these issues of shared concern with our colleagues of the Fundación Barra Mexicana is an important opportunity.” Antonia Stolper, Of Counsel at Shearman & Sterling and Vice Chair for Latin America of the Vance Center, said, “At the Vance Center, one of our core missions is supporting efforts to strengthen the rule of law around the world. We are paying close attention to Mexico, where the erosion of traditionally solid institutions is worrying, and where we believe it is critically urgent for the legal community to organize itself in defense of core institutions.”

The inaugural members of the Joint Committee will be:

From FBM: Dolores Aguinaco Bravo, Victor Olea Peláez, Enrique González Calvillo, Jose Luis Nassar Daw, Jose Ramón Cossío, and Francisco González de Cossio

From the Vance Center: Todd Crider, Antonia Stolper, Patricia Menendez-Cambo, Werner Ahlers, Paola Lozano, and Jaime Chavez Alor.

About the Vance Center

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About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has over 23,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world. www.nycbar.org