

# Platform Protest in Mexico

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# Platform Protest: Mexico

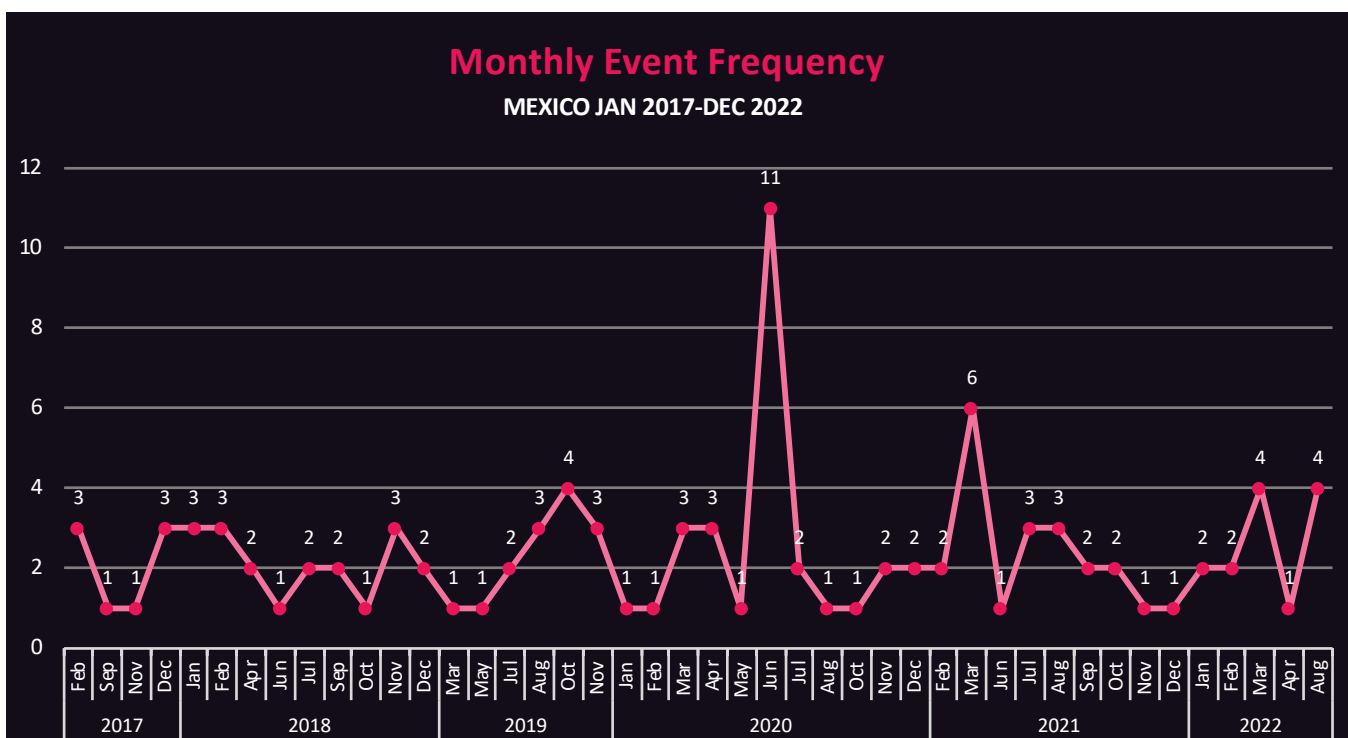
In the last five years, Mexican platform workers have faced an uphill battle in the search for dignified working conditions. Crime, a challenging labour market and a lack of recognition for their work in the middle of the pandemic, have pushed gig workers in Mexico to organise and demand their hard-earned rights.

The novelty and rapid growth of the gig economy has exposed Mexican workers to different forms of adverse conditions – from low pay, to harassment by authorities. When Uber first arrived in 2013, it found in Mexico a lax regulatory environment, which suited its operations – low taxation, poor labour protections, weak unionisation, and more than half of the working population involved in the informal economy. Other international platforms arrived in the years that followed and adopted the same pattern of work precarisation.

After the Covid crisis hit, the situation worsened, yet increasing numbers of people entered the gig economy due to the high levels of unemployment – often working on different apps at the same time to make ends meet. Platform workers did not stop during the pandemic, increasing personal risks for themselves, and users alike. This precarious situation pushed Mexican gig workers to organise and take collective action in demand for better working conditions, resulting in 103 protest events between February 2017 and August 2022.

# 103

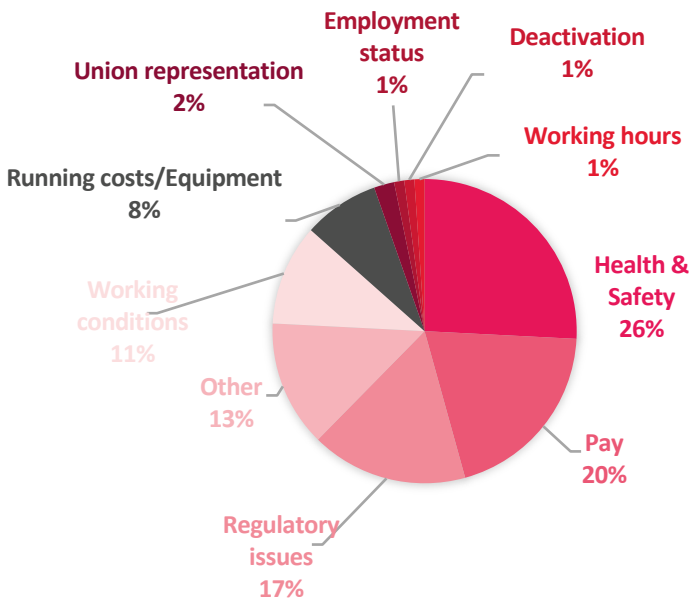
Protests recorded between 2017 and 2022



More than half of these protests happened in the form of demonstrations, which were mostly organised by workers' collectives or informal groups of workers via social media – mostly Facebook groups. According to the findings of the Leeds Index database, #NiUnRepartidorMenos collective has been one of the most active advocates of workers' complaints. Demands for better pay and improved health and safety make up almost half of Mexican gig workers claims during protests.

| Type of Action        | Relative Frequency |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Demonstration         | 64.08%             |
| Legal Action          | 1.94%              |
| Other                 | 10.68%             |
| Strike (and log offs) | 23.30%             |

### Causes of protest

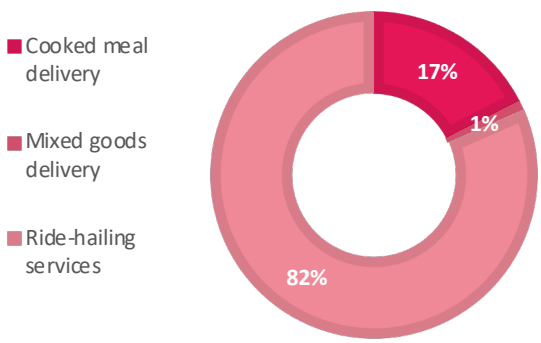


Protests by couriers from meal delivery platforms account for 17 percent of recorded events, in which Rappi and Uber Eats had most media coverage. On the other hand, more than 80 percent of coded events in Mexico have involved workers of ride-hailing platforms, with Uber, DiDi and Cabify the ones targeted the most.

Both couriers and app drivers protested in demand for better pay, due to platforms of both types increasing their fees. However, claims for improved health and safety surged not just because of the Coronavirus pandemic – Mexico is engulfed by a public security crisis and platform workers have been directly affected by crime.

In its most recent edition, the National Survey of Victimization and Public Security Perception (ENVIPE), found that almost a third of Mexican households experienced a form of crime. Similarly, the majority of platform workers' protests pertain issues related with assaults, stolen vehicles, or murders. What is more concerning is that several events from different states also point to the harassment of authorities towards workers. They are flanked both, by crime and the authorities that are supposed to protect them, and Mexican platform workers are seemingly helpless.

### Type of work



Moreover, the union movement in Mexico is weak – roughly 10 percent of Mexican workers were covered by a collective agreement in 2019. Only in two occasions between 2017 and 2022, established unions such as the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) stood in support of gig workers. However, there is a growing surge of independent unions in Mexico, which could revert this situation.

Regardless, Mexican platform workers have found in informal means of organisation the seeds for collective bargaining. In August 2022, 25 worker collectives presented an initiative to reform the Labour Law to advocate for their recognition and rights. Work flexibility and security - 'flexicurity' - constitute the main pillars for the proposed reform, and it has been noticed by other Latin American nations. Overall, **the lack of safety and harassment that Mexican gig workers face, remains an issue that cannot be decoupled from the context of insecurity that afflicts the country.** However, the development of the labour reform needs closer attention, to observe the practical effects on labour relations in the digital economy, as it could open a pathway for more effective regulations that could guarantee better living standards in the gig economy.