

# Mexicans join bid for Covid compensation from China, WHO

December 30 2021

---

Devastated by the loss of his daughter to COVID-19, Jaime Michaus joined hundreds of Mexicans seeking compensation from China and the World Health Organization, despite reservations and uncertain prospects of success.

"I'm still not sure if I did the right thing," Michaus said.

"I have mixed feelings because it seems like I'm profiting from the death of my daughter," who died aged 25 in July, leaving behind a month-old baby, he said.

"No amount of money is going to bring her back, but I'm doing it for the future of my granddaughter," the 63-year-old retiree told AFP, estimating that he has a 50 percent chance of winning.

Michaus recently signed an international legal claim against China and the WHO promoted by Buenos Aires-based Poplavsky International Law Offices.

The company woos potential clients on social media in Mexico with the slogan: "Did you suffer from COVID? Know your rights."

"These claims are being submitted due to the negligence of both China and the WHO in the management of COVID-19," Denisse Gonzalez, Poplavsky's representative in Mexico, told AFP.

The firm, which has branches in Latin America, the United States and Dubai, says it has also signed up claimants from other countries including Colombia and Argentina, though Gonzalez did not divulge how many.

The claims, amounting to millions of dollars, are presented to the United Nations in Geneva alleging violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

They seek [financial compensation](#) ranging from \$200,000 for falling ill with COVID-19 to \$800,000 in the case of death, Gonzalez said.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Wednesday defended the organization's early response to the initial coronavirus outbreak, saying that its health emergency system had "immediately swung into action."

## **Lingering health effects**

The coronavirus has left more than 5.4 million people dead worldwide since it was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019.

Mexico has reported nearly 300,000 COVID-19 deaths—one of the world's highest tolls—and more than 3.95 million confirmed cases.

"I had never suffered from high blood pressure and now it goes up and down, which is dangerous," said a 35-year-old gas station employee who is also seeking compensation after catching the virus.

"I was left with ringing in one ear. My vision was also blurry and I have to wear glasses," said the woman, who did not want to be named.

Poplavsky said that its fees will be covered by a percentage of any

compensation.

Michaus declined to reveal the percentage he had agreed to pay in the event of a win, but said that he considered it to be fair.

The law firm believes that the claims could take at least five years to resolve.

It hopes that at some point countries such as the United States, Britain or Italy will support similar claims from their citizens that would benefit others seeking compensation.

However, Lourdes Marleck Rios Nava, an expert in public international law at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, sees limited chances of a win.

"People know that they're not going to succeed, but suddenly they're filing lawsuits," she said.

A separate attempt to bring a collective claim against China before the Mexican courts has yet to meet the required minimum of 30 plaintiffs.

"I thought there was going to be a queue of people waiting to sue, but strangely it wasn't like that. I think there's a credibility problem," said lawyer Fernando Martinez de Velasco, who was behind the action.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: Mexicans join bid for Covid compensation from China, WHO (2021, December 30) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-12-mexicans-covid-compensation-china.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.