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MONTHLY SUMMARY

Cartel-related killings have risen in the last few weeks, and the number of cartel related killings in 2009 will likely exceed 2008 by over eight percent. Included in these numbers are September attacks on drug rehabilitation centers in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, which killed 28. Mexico's Supreme Court has implicitly supported the move to decriminalize small amounts of illicit drugs, a decision which received support from the U.S. drug czar, who called the new law a "useful tool" in the fight against drugs. Richard Cramer, a former high ranking official with the Department of Homeland Security was arrested for alleged collaboration with drug traffickers. A Texas sheriff and thirty-one Mexican police officers in the state of Hidalgo are being held on similar charges in separate cases. In Mexico City, a subway shooting and an airline hijacking drew attention to security measures in public transit. An indigenous woman from the state of Querétaro was released after being held for three years on kidnapping charges when a district judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence to convict her. The decision followed the resignation this month of Attorney General Medina Mora, and came weeks after the Supreme Court ordered the release of 22 prisoners held for ten years for the 1997 Acteal massacre. Members in the PAN party in the Chamber of Deputies agreed upon a pay cut this month, reducing their salaries and other expenditures such as unnecessary travel costs as part of an austerity plan intended to save millions over the next year.

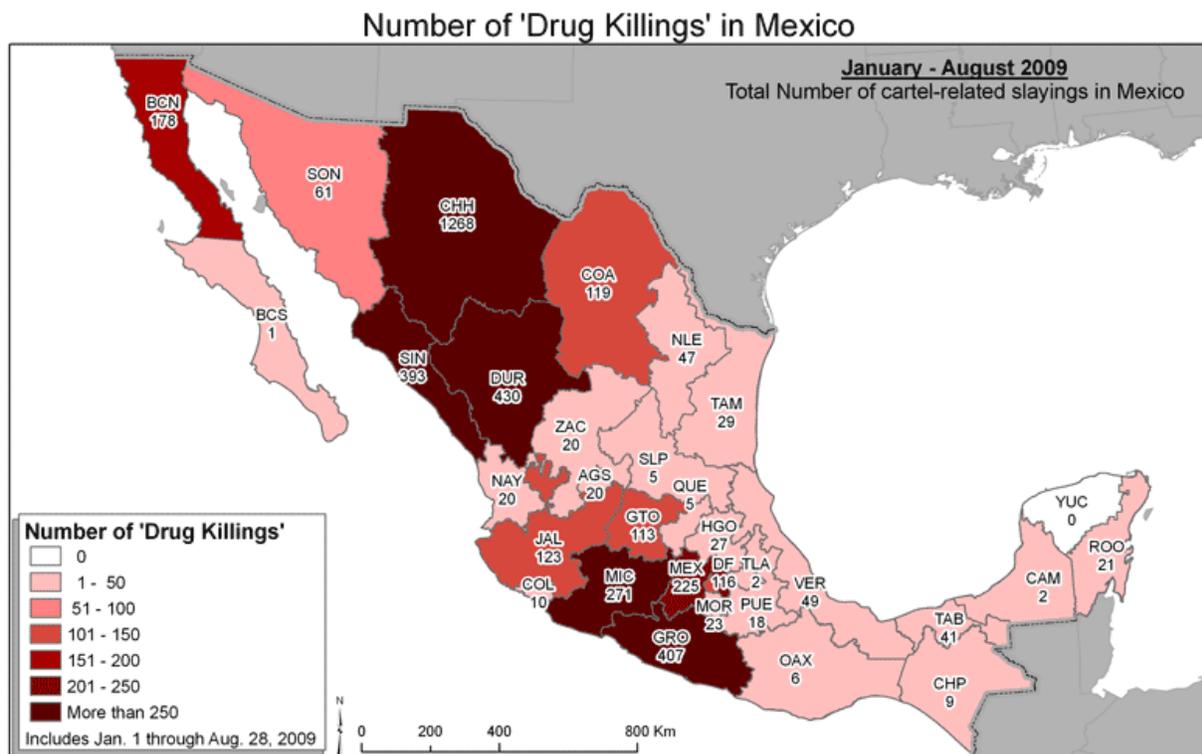
LAW AND ORDER

CARTEL VIOLENCE

Ejecuciones up in 3rd quarter of 2009 over first two quarters; set to surpass 2008

According to *Reforma*, a Mexico City daily newspaper, the 2009 tally of cartel-related killings, or *ejecuciones*, are on track to surpass the 2008 total by more than eight percent. Nearing the end of the

third quarter of 2009, *ejecuciones* stood at 4,463 for 2009, as compared to 5,153 for all of 2008. Moreover, *ejecuciones* have been significantly higher in the third quarter than in the first half of 2009. The third quarter of 2009 has seen 1,533 killings, compared to an average of 1,465 for the first two quarters. With a week remaining in the quarter, the projected total is 1,651, a 12.7% increase over quarters 1 and 2.



Source: State and national totals of cartel-related slayings in Mexico ("ejecuciones" and "narcoejecuciones") obtained from data provided by *Reforma* newspaper.

Maximum and Minimum values:

Maximum value: 1,268 in Chihuahua

Minimum value: No 'ejecuciones' were recorded in the state of Yucatán according to the source for these maps, *Reforma* newspaper.

National average: The national total number of 'ejecuciones' (cartel-related slayings) Jan. 1 - Aug. 28, 2009 was 4,059.



Maps produced by Theresa Firestone
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The state of Chihuahua remains the center of cartel-related violence with 1,413 *ejecuciones* in 2009 as of Sep. 18. The state is projected to surpass its 2008 total by seven percent. Durango and Guerrero, with 598 and 560 *ejecuciones* respectively, are on track to surpass their 2008 totals by 123% and 95%. Sinaloa, while seeing an increased rate of cartel killings over the past two quarters, is likely to see its overall total lower in 2009 than last year. In Baja California, the drastically reduced total of *ejecuciones* in 2009 (188 as compared to 617 in 2008) belies the continued state of insecurity there. Ten people were found dead in Tijuana in less than 12 hours, including a 1-year-old baby and six men who were burned to death inside an abandoned car. According to a recent national security survey, Baja California residents are among the most concerned with their safety among Mexican states (see Public Security Survey summary later in this report).

Not included in the over 500 *ejecuciones* registered during the current reporting period was the killing of a local politician and his family in the state of Tabasco. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) candidate for fourth district local deputy in Tabasco, José Francisco Fuentes Esperón, was shot dead in his home on September 5. Also killed were his wife and two children. The assassination of the political candidate —unprecedented in Tabasco— led the PRI to suspend the campaigns of all of its local candidates for the upcoming October 18 elections. Opposing candidates suspended their campaigns in

solidarity. This was the third occurrence this year of gunmen targeting entire families in Tabasco. Four men, including two minors, have been arrested in connection with the killings.

In Guerrero, the government is pointing toward organized crime in investigations into the killing of local congressman Armando Chavarría on August 20, though a government spokesman said investigators are not ruling out political motivations, guerrilla groups, or a personal conflict.

SOURCES:

- “Ejecutómetro.” *Reforma* Accessed September 20, 2009.
Ocampo Arista, Sergio. “Guerrilla y crimen organizado, líneas en pesquisas sobre el caso Chavarría.” *La Jornada* September 3, 2009.
Barboza, Roberto. “Matan a candidato del PRI y a su familia en Tabasco.” *El Universal* September 5, 2009.
“Hallan a seis calcinados en un auto, en Tijuana.” *El Universal* September 16, 2009.

28 killed in two attacks on Juárez rehabilitation centers

Two separate attacks on drug rehabilitation centers in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, left a total of 28 dead, and local and state officials scrambling to find ways to stem such increasingly common large-scale massacres. The attacks have jarred a city already on edge amidst continued escalating violence despite the visible presence of thousands of soldiers and federal police. They were the fifth and sixth attacks carried out against rehabilitation centers in the city since August of last year.

The attacks were similar in their execution. In the attack on the Aliviane rehabilitation center on September 2, eighteen patients were killed when several gunmen entered the center, ordered residents to line up against a wall, and opened fire. Less than two weeks later on September 14 gunmen stormed into the Vida rehabilitation center and opened fire, killing eight patients and two therapists. Mexican soldiers detained a man suspected of involvement in the September 2 attack; there have been no suspects detained for the September 14 massacre to date. The man arrested, José Rodolfo Escajeda Escajeda, presumed member of the Carrillo-Fuentes Juárez cartel, is also being investigated for involvement in the killing earlier in the summer of Mormon community leader Benjamin LeBaron.

Authorities have characterized the shootings as part of a “war of extermination” between the Juarez and Sinaloa cartels targeting rivals, settling debts, and terrorizing the public in the process. After the September 2 attack, Juárez mayor José Reyes announced that municipal police would reinforce security around the city’s rehabilitation centers. After the attack on September 14, however, Chihuahua public security secretary Víctor Valencia de los Santos announced that 10 of the city’s 61 rehabilitation centers would be closed for not adhering to minimum security and/or hiring standards. Reyes said that state authorities are currently investigating rehab centers statewide suspected of involvement in the drug trade. Clinic closures in the city are not a new occurrence, though. During the year leading up to the recent closure of 10 centers, 20 had been closed citywide for economic, security, or sanitation reasons; however in all the cases new centers sprung up to fill the gap, keeping the total number of clinics at roughly 60.

Local authorities say that drug use in Ciudad Juárez has spiked in recent months, as transporting drugs across the border has become more difficult, resulting in a glut of relatively inexpensive product in the city. When the increasing number of addicts seeks treatment, their debts and associations follow them, to which authorities attribute the recent attacks on rehab centers. According to federal government sources, the nation’s addiction rate increased by over 50% between 2001 and 2008. The two most recent attacks have underscored the lack of regulation of such drug clinics, whose numbers have increased dramatically in recent years to answer to demand.

Municipal police characterize the recent spike in drug addiction as a major public security challenge, claiming that 85% of crimes committed citywide are perpetrated by addicts. The number of addicts in Ciudad Juárez has been estimated at more than 30,000. Raúl Ricardo Montoya Jara, who heads the office addressing issues of drug addiction for the state, reports that only about 6,000 patients seek treatment annually between the 61 drug clinics throughout the city, representing less than a fifth of the total estimated habitual drug users. Moreover, Juárez daily *El Diario* reports that the recent attacks have had a chilling effect on those actively seeking help, leading hundreds to quit treatment.

The day following the Vida massacre, gunmen attacked a Juárez nightclub, killing five. It was the 23rd nightclub in the city to be attacked this year, according to local news outlets. A total of 28 *ejecuciones* were registered in the city on the day of the Vida massacre.

SOURCES:

- Cano, Luis Carlos. "Suman 18 muertos en centro de rehabilitación en Juárez." *El Universal* September 3, 2009.
- Castillo García, Gustavo. "Presunto autor de la masacre de 18 jóvenes adictos en Juárez, detenido." *La Jornada* September 5, 2009.
- Carrasco Soto, Horacio. "Adictos cometen 85% de delitos." *El Diario* September 13, 2009.
- Castañón, Araly. "Esta semana inspeccionarán los centros de rehabilitación." *El Diario* September 13, 2009.
- "Por violencia, cerrarán 10 centros de rehabilitación en Ciudad Juárez." *Milenio* September 16, 2009.
- Wilkinson, Tracy. "Cartel rivalry blamed in latest Mexico drug clinic slayings." *Los Angeles Times* September 17, 2009.

Record number of money laundering investigations during Calderón administration have led to limited seizures

During President Calderón's tenure, the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR) has opened 638 investigations into suspected money laundering operations—a record number—though the amount of money seized is low compared to the scope of such operations in Mexico, according to international organizations.

According to the unit of the PGR charged with investigating illicit earnings and counterfeit currency, investigations into money laundering operations have led to the seizure of \$338,044,691 in U.S. dollars and 200,595,166 pesos (roughly \$15.5 million U.S. dollars) from individuals in possession of large sums of money who could not account for their origin, and in raids on buildings and businesses linked to organized crime. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) estimate that a total of between \$8 - 39 billion dollars are laundered annually in Mexico, principally by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs).

The PGR reports that DTOs have diversified their methods of laundering illicit proceeds, particularly with the help of currency exchange and credit centers. There are roughly 3,000 currency exchange centers currently registered with the Sistema de Administración Tributaria (SAT), Mexico's equivalent of the Internal Revenue Service. Germán Castro Hernández, president of the national association representing currency exchange centers, Ancec-TD, estimates that there are about 1,500 centers not registered with the SAT. Castro Hernández fears that this "black market" of currency exchange is helping to enable money laundering by Mexican drug cartels. He identified 10 regions in the country where such operations are concentrated, including the border cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, as well as major cities in Michoacán, Jalisco and Guerrero. Since 2004, currency exchange operations have been required to register with the SAT, but there are currently no sanctions for not complying.

In late August, the PGR arrested the owner of a Zapopán, Jalisco currency exchange center, charging him with involvement in a web of such centers and national banks. An employee was also arrested. The arrests came as a result of investigations into Luis Alonso Raygoza Flores, a Banamex executive in Guanajuato, accused of forming part of a money laundering network for the Sinaloa cartel.

SOURCES:

- de la Luz González, María. "Acentúan acciones contra el "lavado." *El Universal* September 14, 2009.
- Valdez Cárdenas, Javier. "Estarían vinculadas al crimen casi 1,500 casas de cambio en el país: Ancec-TD." *La Jornada* August 19, 2009.
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- Saavedra, Alma. "Piden mejor regulación." *El Economista* August 24, 2009.
- Blancas Madrigal, Daniel. "PGR descubre nexos entre casas de cambio y ejecutivos de bancos; realizan millonarias transacciones del narco." *La Crónica de Hoy* August 28, 2009.

DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Mexico's Supreme Court endorses new *narcomenudeo* law, U.S. cautiously optimistic

In a 6-5 decision, Mexico's Supreme Court has implicitly endorsed the law signed last month by President Calderón to decriminalize the possession of amounts of illicit drugs deemed for personal use. In the case in question, the Court ruled that the 2007 arrest of a man in possession of a small amount of cocaine was

unconstitutional, thus posthumously striking down article 199 of the federal penal code, in accord with the so-called *narcomenudeo* law. The move by the Court echoed a similar ruling by Argentina's Supreme Court last month, which ruled that it is unconstitutional to incarcerate an individual for marijuana possession.

Decriminalizing the possession of small quantities of drugs is a growing trend in Latin America as part of a movement to treat drug addiction as a public health rather than a public security issue. By means of the new *narcomenudeo* law, Mexico moved to revamp its minor possession laws (dating back to 1978) to establish new regulations for minor possession of a wide array of drugs, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and LSD. This trend toward decriminalization—eliminating jail time and reducing fines associated with personal consumption of illicit drugs—has also been prevalent in different U.S. states in recent years.

Decriminalization is deemed to have two main advantages. First, it theoretically allows beleaguered law enforcement agencies to concentrate their time and resources on larger dealers and trafficking operations (though opponents object that it also increases other illegal activities). Second, decriminalization eliminates opportunities for police to harass and extort drug users, and thereby may increase addicts' opportunities to receive treatment for their addiction without legal penalties. In this sense, proponents see the decriminalization of drugs as an important step toward treating drug abuse as more of a public health problem than a public security problem.

However, Mexico's recent legislation does not provide significantly greater support for the treatment of addicts. Moreover, as long as the production and distribution of drugs remains illegal, decriminalization may make law enforcement's job more difficult by expanding the market share of the criminal organizations that purvey and profit from illicit drugs. As a drug control strategy, decriminalization therefore faces critics on both sides: those who view decriminalization as inciting greater illicit drug use, and those who see it as an inadequate substitute for full-scale legalization.

On September 21-22, amidst recent scrutiny on Mexico's new law, the University of Texas-El Paso hosted a major conference adjacent to the troubled Mexican border city of Ciudad Juárez to build support for a re-evaluation of U.S. drug policies, with many participants advocating legalization. Conference participants included Ciudad Juárez Mayor José Reyes and El Paso Mayor John Cook and most of the El Paso city council, which earlier this year voted down a controversial resolution advocating a public debate on U.S. drug policy. Reyes noted the hypocrisy and negative consequences of U.S. drug policy for Mexico, stating: "The day that your police chief is killed, the U.S. government says it will not prosecute a drug user like Michael Phelps; this sends a message that drug consumption in the United States is OK, but drug flows from Mexico are not." Mayor Cook advocated a reconsideration of U.S. policy, but did not speak in favor of legalization.

Also participating was retired federal agent Terry Nelson, head of a group called Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, who spoke against current policy: "We've had 40 years of failure with our policies. Drug use does not cause crime. It is prohibition of drugs that causes crime." He estimated that U.S. anti-drug efforts stop less than 85% of the 2.1 million pounds of drugs flowing into the United States each year.

Conference organizers expressed disappointment that two top U.S. federal officials—border "czar" Alan Bersin and drug "czar" Gil Kerlikowske—backed out of earlier commitments to participate in the conference. However, Kerlikowske has viewed Mexico's new decriminalization law with cautious optimism, characterizing it as a "tool" in the struggle against drug cartels since it will free up law enforcement resources to address larger players in the drug trade. Before his appointment as the Director of the Office of Drug Control Policy Kerlikowske served as chief of police for Seattle, where he oversaw the de-prioritization of marijuana possession for personal use. Earlier this month, Bersin addressed the issue of drugs in a speech at the Trans-Border Institute in San Diego, praising President Calderón's efforts to get tough on organized crime and noting that a reversal of current U.S. drug policy would be a significant defeat.

Overall, the response by the Obama administration to Mexico's new law marks a drastic change of tone from the previous administration, which three years ago pressured then-president Vicente Fox to veto a similar bill passed by the Mexican congress.

SOURCES:

Emmott, Robin. "Entrevista – Ley narcomenudeo México, ayuda contra cárteles: EEUU." *Reuters* September 4, 2009.
Avilés Allende, Carlos. "Adictos son enfermos, no criminales: Corte." *El Universal* September 18, 2009.
David Crowder and Elizabeth Ruiz, "Two Obama czars opt out of drug war forum," *Newspapertree.com*, September 20, 2009.
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U.S.-MEXICO SECURITY COOPERATION

U.S. releases US\$214 million of Merida Initiative funds

The United States has released \$214 million of the 3-year \$1.4 billion anti-drug aid package for Mexico known as the Mérida Initiative, which will in part go toward the purchase of five Blackhawk helicopters.

The move came a month after Democratic senator Patrick Leahy blocked the release of the funds, disputing a State Department report that credited Mexico with making required advancements in the protection of human rights in the country, including undertaking massive justice system reforms. David Johnson, U.S. Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, said that money, which will also go toward border surveillance equipment and training for Mexican investigators, will be released by year's end. Johnson lauded the anti-narcotics efforts of President Calderón, who sent a report to Mexico's Congress in early September claiming that operations have seized 90 tons of cocaine, 5,000 tons of marijuana, and 50,000 illegal weapons.

In related news, the 27th annual border governors' meeting convened in Monterrey, Nuevo León, at which governors from Mexico's border states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Chihuahua and Coahuila pressed U.S. delegations to advocate for the diversion of some Mérida Initiative funds directly to state and local governments. Bill Richardson of New Mexico was the only U.S. governor present at the conference. Spokespeople for Texas Governor Rick Perry cited scheduling conflicts as the reason for his absence.

U.S. officials have acknowledged the governors' request for more localized funding of anti-narcotics operations, but have cited the limited resources and corruption as significant concerns. A U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity said that such decisions are at this point premature due to the amount of work left to be done at the national level and finite funds, though did not rule out the possibility of working with "some states" in the future. U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Tony Garza addressed the concern of local and state-level corruption, insisting that a concrete plan would be needed to vet and train local and state police forces and to ensure integrity among the ranks to avoid "putting hardware in the hands of poorly trained and vetted officers." Garza, also U.S. Ambassador to Mexico under the Bush administration, was integral in bringing the Mérida initiative to fruition.

SOURCES:

Olson, Alexandra. "US releases \$214 million to aid Mexico drug fight." *Associated Press* September 3, 2009.
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PUBLIC SECURITY SURVEY

National security survey reveals levels of crime victimization relatively flat, citizen perception of public security lower

In its sixth annual National Security Survey (ENSI-6), the Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios Sobre la Inseguridad (ICESI) found that the feelings of public security among Mexican citizens has declined while the rate of victimization has remained stagnant. ICESI is an organization studying public security in Mexico since 2002 and founded through the combined efforts of business organizations and universities including the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The survey was carried out in 71,370 homes in urban and rural areas of the country, and asked participants 18 and over to share their experiences as victims of crimes as well as their perceptions of their own security situation.

Of those questioned, 13.1% reported that someone in their household had been the victim of a crime in 2008, relatively flat compared to the year before. Of the crimes experienced by the reported victims, being robbed in transit held the largest share at nearly 30% of the total, though it was down from 42% in 2007. "Partial auto theft" was next at 27%, up from 20% the year before. Interestingly, extortion, which accounted for 10% of reported crimes, is included in the "other crimes" category, so there is no comparison to 2007. "Other crimes," though, were up nearly 10% from 2007 to 16.4%, suggesting a notable spike in extortions.

The Federal District (DF) was the entity with the highest percentage of respondents claiming to have been victimized somewhere in the country, though down 2% from last year to 19% of total respondents. Aguascalientes, Sonora, Mexico (Edomex), Coahuila, Baja California, and Chihuahua follow. The same order applies to respondents claiming to have been victimized in their own state. Of those states, Aguascalientes, Sonora, Coahuila, and Chihuahua are up substantially from 2007, with Coahuila up 10% to 15% of its respondents claiming to have been victimized in their own state.

The rate of weapon possession by alleged assailants has remained nearly flat, though respondents claim that as a whole gun possession by aggressors dropped since 2007. The survey found that 25% of respondents reported that their aggressors were carrying a weapon, of which 34% said they were assaulted with the weapon. While those numbers are up slightly from 2007, the percentage of respondents reporting the use of a gun dropped to 54% from 64% the year before. Conversely, there was a 7% rise in claims that assailants employed some form of knife. The state of Mexico (Edomex) had the highest percentage of respondents claiming to have been victimized by an armed assailant, at 44%, followed by the Federal District (37%) and Guerrero (33%).

The rate at which crimes are reported has remained nearly flat since 2004. ENSI-6 reports that only 22% of crimes were reported to the authorities in 2008, compared to 21% in 2007 and 23% in 2004. Of those crimes reported to authorities in 2008, ENSI-6 shows that only two-thirds resulted in a preliminary investigation, a figure relatively flat from 2007, but down substantially from 2004, when over 85% were reported to have resulted in a preliminary investigation. When asked why they did not report the crime to which they were victims, nearly 40% of respondents replied that it would be a "waste of time" to do so.

While the rate of victimization remained nearly flat in 2008 as compared to 2007 according to the ENSI-6, the perception of public safety declined notably. Nationwide, 65% of respondents consider their respective states to be unsafe, as compared to 59% in 2007 and 54% in 2004. Respondents in the Federal District remain the most concerned with safety, although Chihuahua, Guanajuato, and Durango saw sizeable jumps, from 64 to 83%, 43 to 75%, and 34 to 62%, respectively. A similar trend followed when respondents were asked about security in their own municipalities. The marked increased perception of public security threats suggests that the narcoterrorism tactics of the nation's drug cartels may be having their desired effect.

This increased sense of public insecurity, along with respondents' continued high rates of distrust of their municipal and state police forces, likely explain why 86% of respondents agree with federal anti-drug operations being carried out by the military, although fewer than 60% feel that the operations have improved public security.

SOURCE:

"Sexta encuesta nacional sobre inseguridad." *Instituto ciudadano de estudios sobre la inseguridad* August, 2009. Accessed September 14, 2009 at http://www.icesi.org.mx/estadisticas/estadisticas_encuestasNacionales_ensi6.asp.

DISASTER RESPONSE

Mexican armed forces respond to hurricane damage in Baja California Sur, Mexico, and Sonora

The Mexican armed forces responded to intense rain brought by Hurricane Jimena early September that brought rain to the pacific state of Baja California Sur (BCS), and the interior states of Mexico (Edomex) and Sonora that some say had not been seen in a generation. In southern Sonora, Mexican Army and

Navy personnel rescued more than 80 people from rooftops of flooded homes. Floods there left two dead, one disappeared, and 8,000 displaced. Many residents of southern Sonora have voiced their discontent with the outgoing government of Governor Eduardo Bours for not warning residents of possible flooding. Army personnel also responded to flood victims in Valle Dorado, Arboledas and Atizapán de Zaragoza, Edomex, assisting hundreds of families affected by the flooding.

SOURCES:

“Jimena deja 2 muertos y más de 200 mil damnificados en Sonora.” *La Jornada* September 5, 2009.
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MASS TRANSIT SECURITY

Cancún airplane hijacking brings national scrutiny to airport security

A Bolivian religious zealot living in Mexico has been indicted on terrorism charges after holding an Aeroméxico plane carrying over 100 passengers hostage on the Mexico City International Airport tarmac September 9. While the man used only a can of juice embellished with wires and mud to resemble a bomb to coerce the crew into submission, the incident has led to calls, including from Public Security Secretary Genario García Luna, to beef up security at the nation’s airports. The man, 65 year-old José Mar Flores Pereira, has a criminal record in Bolivia for armed robbery among other crimes. Federal police responded to the incident, storming the plane and apprehending Flores Pereira and two others. No shots were fired and nobody was injured.

The incident was unprecedented in Mexico and invoked memories of the 1973 grenade attack on a plane leaving Panama for Beirut and the 1976 bombing of a Cubana airplane by Luis Posada Carriles that left 70 dead. Flores Pereira, however, was not in possession of grenades or a bomb, but a juice can, which he used to hold the plane hostage, demanding to speak with President Calderón about impending disasters for Mexico linked to premonitions he had about the date 9/9/09. The Federal Police responded to the incident by reinforcing inspections of passengers and luggage destined for the United States, Central and South America and the Caribbean. For his part, García Luna has promised a detailed investigation into the security failings at the Cancún airport that allowed Flores Pereira to board the plane with the materials he used to fool the flight crew.

A Mexico City district judge has indicted Flores Pereira on charges of hijacking a plane by use of threats, a crime which under Mexican law carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

SOURCES:

de la Luz González, María. “Rigorizan inspección en el aeropuerto capitalino.” *El Universal* September 11, 2009.
Castillo, Gustavo. “García Luna critica la seguridad en el aeropuerto de Cancún.” *La Jornada* September 11, 2009.
Mosso, Rubén. “Formal prisión a pastor boliviano tras secuestro de avión.” *Milenio* September 14, 2009.

Mexico City subway shooting leaves two dead

Luis Felipe Hernández Castillo, the man accused of killing two when he opened fire in the Balderas del Metro subway station in Mexico City, has been detained in the Reclusorio Preventivo Oriente prison in the Federal District (DF). The DF Attorney General’s Office announced that for the pending charges of carrying a firearm without a license, Hernández’s case will be shared by the Federal Attorney General’s Office (PGR). In addition to the two killed, which included a bank security officer credited with suppressing Hernández and thus avoiding more casualties, there were eight reported wounded – five shot and five sustaining injuries from the aftermath of the attack.

In response to the September 18 attack, the DF Public Security Secretariat (SSPDF) has stepped up security in the 175 DF metro stations with 1,050 additional officers working in three shifts. A spokesman for the SSPDF also said that metro users will be subjected to random searches with metal detectors. DF mayor Marcelo Ebrard credited the metro’s video surveillance system for allowing a coordinated response to the attack.

SOURCES:

“Reforzará SSPDF vigilancia en el metro.” *Notimex* September 19, 2009.
“Consignan al presunto homicida de la estación Balderas del Metro.” *La Jornada* September 20, 2009.

LABOR DISPUTES

Escalating conflict between two rival Oaxaca teachers' unions leaves two dead

Protests erupted in southern Oaxaca as members of the Section 22 teachers' union demanded justice for the shooting death of one of its members during a clash August 27 with the pro-government Section 59 teachers' union in San Pedro Jicayan, Oaxaca. Section 22 leader Azael Santiago Chepi said that his group was attempting to retake a school in San Pedro Jicayan – and thus its jobs – when supporters of Section 59 opened fire and killed two Section 22 teachers.

Oaxaca teacher unions have in the past shown their capacity to trigger large-scale public unrest and instability. Four years ago, a teacher strike led by Section 22 sparked weeks of rioting and a heavy-handed response from state and local law enforcement which led to several deaths including the still-controversial shooting death of freelance U.S. journalist Bradley Will. Section 59 was created amidst the unrest of 2006, and the two unions have competed for coveted teaching positions, sometimes among the few decently paid positions in rural areas.

SOURCES:

Altamirano, Genaro. "Enfrentamiento deja dos maestros muertos en Oaxaca." *El Universal* August 28, 2009.

"Protests in Mexico after Oaxaca teacher killed." *Associated Press* August 28, 2009.

López Morales, Alberto. "Maestros paran labores por asesinato de dos compañeros en Oaxaca."

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

SENATE CONFIRMATION

Nominee for Attorney General's office faces scrutiny over accountability

As Mexico's Senate prepares to consider the nomination of Arturo Chávez Chávez to be the country's next attorney general, many will be scrutinizing the process to make sure that it is conducted with transparency and proper accountability.

Chávez was a former attorney general for Chihuahua, a state where an investigation over the unusual number of deaths and missing reports of women, mostly during the 1990s, has received global attention. Chávez served as Chihuahua's Federal Attorney General from 1996 to 1998. Human rights groups, opposition parties and others have accused Chávez of failing to do his work properly in the case of the unsolved murders of women in Chihuahua. More than 400 women were strangled, abused and stabbed between 1993 and 2003, mostly in the city of Ciudad Juárez, but only a few cases have been prosecuted. In the late 1980s, the Mexico Human Rights National Commission asked for investigations into whether any administrative or judicial wrongdoing took place in regard to Chávez's role in the state, as well as the role of other law enforcement officials.

Several senators have already been weighing in on the nominee. Senator Jesús Murillo Karam of the National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional*, PAN) said that Chávez must meet high standards in terms of his responsibility, professionalism and capabilities, especially since he is facing such harsh criticisms from human rights groups. Meanwhile, Ricardo Monreal of the Workers' Party (*Partido Trabajo*), is asking for an explanation into why the former Attorney General, Eduardo Medina Mora, stepped down in early September.

One of Medina's top administrators was accused of corruption, raising questions of how deeply the Federal Attorney General's office had been infiltrated by drug groups. However, Medina Mora had also clashed with Genaro García Luna, the Secretary of Public Security, which has raised some speculation that the departure may have been the result of power battles. Medina Mora supervised a major overhaul of Mexico's federal police agencies, including the closure earlier this year of the Federal Agency of Investigations (AFI). AFI has since been replaced by the Federal Ministerial Police.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón of the PAN Party praised Medina's contributions to the administration, and the ex-Attorney General even received positive remarks from Manlio Fabio Beltrán, coordinator of the opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI). Fabio Beltrán, who praised Medina's honesty, called Medina, "a professional in all senses who had satisfactory results during a difficult moment for this country."

SOURCES:

- De Cordoba, Jose. "Mexico replaces Attorney General as drug violence soars." *The Wall Street Journal* September 8, 2009.
Minjares, Gabriela and Rodriguez, Ivan. "Juarez women murders. The facts behind the myth." *El Diario de El Paso* 2005.
Monroy, Jorge. "Divide a senadores ratificacion de Chavez." *El Economista* September 14, 2009.
Rama, Anahi. "Mexico's Calderon faces fight over attorney general." *Reuters* September 15, 2009.
Ramos, Jorge. "Lamentable, que Medina Mora no siga en PGR: Beltranes." *El Universal* September 8, 2009.

MEXICAN CORRUPTION

Consulate passport corruption investigated by Mexico

Mexican authorities are investigating their Dallas consulate office in connection with "irregularities" in the collection of passport fees. The fraud allegations have led to the removal of Mexican Consul General Enrique Hubbard.

The reaction by Mexican authorities was prompted by a report in *The Dallas Morning News* about alleged financial irregularities in which consulate staff "personally profited from selling passport photos and from skimming money from passport fees paid by customers." The investigation apparently centers on an employee at the consulate doling out cheaper short-term passports but recording them as more expensive long-term passports.

In at least one case, an employee reportedly collected the difference for personal use, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, which attributed the information to senior diplomats familiar with the case. An employee who was fired in June, 2008 allegedly robbed the government of "tens of thousands of dollars" over a seven year period. The Consul General is not accused of corruption, but was viewed as being "too tolerant" although Hubbard's defenders say he wanted to have sufficient proof to take action against the employee, according to *The Dallas Morning News*.

Mexico has 50 consulate offices in the United States, and their primary purpose is to issue passports and other documentation for Mexican clientele, as well as assist Mexican citizens with problems they encounter in the United States. The case has led to pressure from both Mexican legislators and members of the Mexican community in Dallas for Mexico's Minister of Foreign Affairs to enact reforms and punish responsible employees at the consulate.

SOURCES:

- Campoy, Ana. "Mexico investigates passport corruption." *The Wall Street Journal* August 29, 2009.
Corchado, Alfredo. "Mexico vows to weed out consulate corruption after passport-scam inquiry." *The Dallas Morning News* August 16, 2009.
Corchado, Alfredo. "Investigation focuses on fired consulate worker." *The Dallas Morning News* August 17, 2009.

PEMEX director steps down following corruption probe

Jesús Reyes Heróles, who served as director of PEMEX for three years, has stepped down from his post following a corruption probe into the state petroleum agency. Mexican President Felipe Calderón replaced Reyes with Juan José Suárez Coppel. The change comes as the federal government investigates the possible involvement of PEMEX officials in the stealing of petroleum products through clandestine pipelines and the illicit sale of the petroleum-derived products. The areas with the largest concentration of petroleum thefts are the states of Veracruz, Mexico, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas, according to *Tabasco Hoy*. Between \$700 million-\$900 million worth of petroleum or petroleum products have been stolen annually in recent years from PEMEX according to various press reports.

SOURCE:

- No author. "Anuncia el Presidente Felipe Calderon cambio en su gabinete con la salida del director de Pemex." *Tabasco Hoy* September 8, 2009.

Mexico City airport postal workers suspected of stealing packages

The Mexican Federal Attorney General's office is investigating the disappearance of more than 4,000 letters and packages of mail that were sent to Mexico from abroad over the past six months, a total that adds up to about 24 missing pieces per month. The investigation is centering on the offices of the Mexican postal service in the Mexico City airport. The majority of the missing packages included portable computers and other hand-held communication devices such as iPods. Mexican authorities suspect that the pieces are being stolen by employees of the Mexican postal services. The investigation has led to the firing of approximately 70 inspectors and employees of the office in recent months. Five administrators have also been interviewed regarding the case. A total of 4,330 pieces of mail have been reported missing, including several that were intended to reach Mexican President Felipe Calderón.

SOURCE:

Source is *Agencia Reforma*. "Descruben mafia dentro de Correos de Mexico." *Diario la Estrella* September 7, 2009.

Thirty-one police in Hidalgo detained for alleged connections to drug traffickers

Mexican federal authorities detained 31 law enforcement officials in the state of Hidalgo during a massive operation. Nearly 400 Mexican federal agents were involved in the sweep on September 14. Of those detained, 23 were municipal police, six worked for state forces, and two were part of a recently created metropolitan force that operates in the capital of Hidalgo and outlying areas, according to *La Jornada*. The latest detentions come on the heels of a similar sweep in June that rounded up 92 Hidalgo law enforcement officials. According to news reports, they are all suspected of collaborating with the criminal group known as Los Zetas, which has operated as an enforcement arm for the Gulf Cartel.

SOURCE:

Mendez, Alfredo. "A prison, 124 policas de Hidalgo por presuntos vinculos con Los Zetas." *La Jornada* September 15, 2009.

Another Michoacan public official arrested on suspicion of ties to traffickers

Mexican federal police officers detained Armando Medina Torres, the mayor of the municipality of Mujica, Michoacan, on suspicion of ties to drug traffickers. The Sept. 4 arrest was made possible through an arrest warrant granted by a judge. Medina Torres was detained in his office at the municipality's city hall and was immediately flown to a Jalisco prison to face charges there.

Medina Torres is suspected of collaborating with the drug trafficking group known as "La Familia Michoacana." His was the latest arrest that appears to be linked to the investigation that resulted in the detainment of 11 Michoacan mayors in May. Of that group, eight were formally charged with drug-related crimes.

Most of the detainees have been members of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has lead to some accusations of partisanship on behalf of the ruling National Action Party (PAN). Five of the mayors detained since May are members of the PRI, including Medina Torres. The PRI state party office has started a fund to assist the ex-mayors.

Meanwhile, a Mexican congressman-elect from Michoacan, who faces similar charges in relation to the investigation, remains missing. Julio Cesar Godoy, the brother of the state's governor, would have been able to hold immunity if he had registered for Congress and been sworn in on Sept. 1. However, Godoy never turned up to claim his post. Congressional leaders ruled that Godoy may not register for office until his judicial situation is resolved. Godoy and his brother are members of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, PRD).

SOURCES:

Carvalho, Manuel. "Cae en Michoacan otro alcalde ligado al narcotrafico." *El Sol de San Juan del Rio* September 5, 2009.
Ferrer, Eduardo. "Preocupaoan al PRI las redadas de la federacion contra alcaldes." *La Jornada Michoacan* September 18, 2009.
Torres, Alberto. "PRIlistas haran vaquita, en apoyo a alcaldes detenidos en Nayarit." *MiMorelia* September 17, 2009.
Wilkinson, Tracy. "Mexico bars fugitive lawmaker-elect Julio Cesar Godoy." *Los Angeles Times* August 20, 2009.

U.S. CORRUPTION

High-ranking former U.S. agent accused of colluding with Mexican drug groups

Richard Cramer, a former high-ranking U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent, was arrested on suspicion of assisting a drug group in smuggling cocaine into the United States. Cramer, who formerly led the Nogales ICE office, faces charges of corruption and cocaine trafficking.

Cramer was arrested at his Arizona home on September 4. He had retired from ICE in January, 2007 after spending the last few years of his professional career as the ICE attaché in Guadalajara. During his time in Mexico, Cramer allegedly provided assistance to drug traffickers, according to federal investigators. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said Cramer had DEA agents run background checks on confidential informants for the drug traffickers he worked with, according to *The Arizona Republic*. *The New York Times* reported that Cramer and the drug group were connected to a 660-pound shipment of cocaine that was traced from Panama through the United States on its way to Spain. The cocaine was confiscated in Spain in June 2007. The *Associated Press (AP)* reported that a member of the drug group suggested Cramer retire from the agency and work directly with their drug smuggling and money laundering operations. Cramer is to be extradited to Florida to face charges in connection with the investigation there.

A recent report by the *AP* documented a higher number of U.S. law enforcement officials who work along the border being charged with criminal corruption compared to previous years. The news agency also found more than 80 corruption-related convictions against U.S. law enforcement officials who work on the local, state and federal level.

SOURCES:

Anglen, Robert and Gonzalez, Daniel. "Ex-ICE agent accused of cocaine trafficking." *The Arizona Republic* September 4, 2009.
Associated Press. "Former agent faces charges in drug case." Published in *The New York Times* September 5, 2009.
Mendoza, Martha and Sherman, Christopher. "Border corruption rising on US side." *The Associated Press* in *The Arizona Daily Star* August 10, 2009.
Rotella, Sebastian. "Former U.S. anti-drug official's arrest 'a complete shock'." *Los Angeles Times*. September 17, 2009.

Texas sheriff sentenced for helping Mexican drug traffickers

A former Texas sheriff was sentenced to prison for helping Mexican drug smugglers in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribes. Starr County Sheriff Reymundo Guerra will spend 64 months in federal prison and four years of supervised release after Guerra admitted his role in the endeavor.

Guerra was arrested last October and was classified as a "minor participant" in a drug trafficking case that has resulted in indictments against 28 people, according to the *Associated Press*. The drug group was allegedly headed by Jose Carlos Hinojosa, a former member of the Zetas enforcement arm of the Gulf Cartel. Prosecutors said that Guerra allowed the drug trafficking group to bring drugs through his county, in a manner similar to how some high-ranking officials in Mexico have struck agreements with dominant drug groups south of the border. It is not clear exactly how much Guerra earned in bribes, though it started with an initial payment of \$3,000. Guerra's role was sharing information with the drug group and providing false information to U.S. law enforcement to protect the interests of the drug group, according to prosecutors.

SOURCE:

Sherman, Christopher. "Texas sheriff among those sentenced in drug ring." *Associated Press* August 27, 2009.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

PAN elected officials reduce their salaries, vow greater fiscal accountability

Congressional PAN members in the Chamber of Deputies approved an austerity plan to save 18.8 million dollars over the next year. The members are reducing their monthly salaries from 150,000 pesos (\$11,295) to 136,000 pesos (\$10,240). Other reductions include limiting the amount of cellular telephone bills, office equipment, transportation and other travel-related costs over the next three years by 50%.

PAN congresswoman Josefina Vázquez Mota said the moves are meant to demonstrate the party's commitment to reducing spending and becoming more accountable. In addition, the group expects to present an initiative to reduce the number of Chamber of Deputies members from 500 to 400, and the number of senators from 128 to 96.

SOURCES:

Estella Botello. "Diputados del PAN se bajan el sueldo y reducen sus prestaciones." *La Cronica de Hoy* August 29, 2009.
No name. "Diputados del PAN se bajan el sueldo, de 151 mil a 136 mil." *Milenio* September 12, 2009.

Mexico's tax agency announces they will go after tax evaders abroad

Mexico's tax agency, the Tributary Administration Service (*Servicio de Administración Tributaria*), is looking more closely for tax evaders who stash their secret funds abroad.

Alfredo Gutiérrez Ortiz Mena, who oversees the agency, said Mexico is negotiating with 11 entities that are believed to be havens for offshore accounts, including the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas and Aruba, to establish agreements over exchange of information. Ortiz Mena told *El Universal* that Mexico has already renegotiated agreements with countries such as Switzerland, Singapore and Colombia to bolster their access to information related to offshore accounts.

Governments around the world, including the United States, have stepped up their efforts to track down tax evaders who set up such funds to avoid having to pay taxes in their own countries. The current economic crisis appears to be a factor in the additional scrutiny over tax revenue as governments struggle to meet budget shortfalls and pay for other social service needs.

In Mexico, residents have indicated they are willing to pay additional taxes as long as there is greater transparency that the government is properly using the funds. Findings by the National Survey of the Cabinet of Strategic Communication has found that as many as 32.5% of Mexicans would accept higher sales taxes if there was better access to how the money was being spent. If this group is added to the number of people who support higher taxes in general – 23% – the survey findings reveal that 55.5% of Mexicans would go along with taxes, compared to 40% who reject more taxes. The survey results came from 16,000 interviews throughout the country.

SOURCES:

Staff. "Dicen si a impuestos, pero con rendicion de cuentas." *El Universal* August 27, 2009.
Arteaga, Jose Manuel. "El SAT va por evasores con cuentas en paraisos fiscales." *El Universal* August 28, 2009.

Critics say Secretary of Public Function risks conflict of interest

The administration of Mexican President Felipe Calderón is considering transforming the Secretary of Public Function into a branch that is directly under the control of the Office of the Presidency. Critics say that this will be a step backwards in controlling corruption by creating a conflict of interest and reducing transparency.

Gustavo López Montiel of the *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey*, said that the move fails to follow a general global tendency to create autonomous government organisms to oversee the proper use of public funds.

The Secretary of Public Function was created in 1982 under a slightly different name: the *Secretaría de Contraloría General de la Federación*. It has undergone other name changes over the years, but its basic mission has been to provide a means of ensuring that public funds are being used properly in the administration.

SOURCE:

Brito, Omar. "'Restroceso', la creacion de la controlaria." *El Economista* September 13, 2009.

Mexico City's judicial police may face financial investigations

An advisory group is proposing a financial investigation of the judicial police in Mexico City (DF) to

determine whether they have enriched themselves through illicit means. The project would be carried out by academics in order to provide transparency, according to Isabel Miranda de Wallace, president of an organization called "Stop the Kidnapping." De Wallace is also a member of the Advisory Group for the Application of the New Model of Investigative Police. The idea is to provide a form for agents to fill out describing their economic situation and including information on where they live and where they spend most of their time. The information would then be corroborated by surprise visits.

SOURCES:

No name. "Propondran investigacion financiera de la Policia Judicial." *El Financiero* September 15, 2009.
No name. "Detienen a otro alcalde de Michoacan." *El Universal in Tijuana Hoy* September 4, 2009.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

IFAI president wants to reform freedom of information laws

Jacqueline Peschard, the president of the Federal Institute for Access to Public Information (IFAI) urged Mexico's Congress to consider ways to make government agencies and elected officials more accountable for their actions by requiring them to keep better track of their records. Peschard said that attempts to collect information from federal agencies and officials have resulted in 5,589 cases in which the requests have been rejected on the grounds that the documents do not exist.

The agencies that are most likely to say they have no documentation include the Mexican Attorney General's office and the Secretary of Public Function. Peschard told *El Universal* that the only way to avoid these kinds of responses is to construct norms for preserving documents and to expand the definition of documents to include audio, video, plans and photos.

SOURCE:

Velasco, Elizabeth. "El IFAI solicita a nuevos diputados reformar ley de acceso a la informacion." *La Jornada* August 31, 2009.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

Querétaro woman released from prison three years after being imprisoned on kidnapping charges

Jacinta Francisco, an Otomí indigenous woman from the state of Querétaro, was released from prison September 16 when a district judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence to convict her – three years after her arrest and imprisonment. Her co-defendants Alberta Alcántara and Teresa González remain in prison, according to Mexican news outlets. The decision came at a difficult juncture for the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR), following the resignation this month of Attorney General Medina Mora and a month after the Supreme Court ordered the release of 22 prisoners held for ten years for the 1997 Acteal massacre in Oaxaca.

Jacinta Francisco was arrested in 2006, accused of kidnapping six agents of the now-defunct Federal Agency of Investigations (AFI) when they raided the marketplace where she worked in search of pirated media. The agents claimed that Francisco convinced others at the market to kidnap the agents and demand a ransom. Francisco was quickly arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to 20 years in prison, alongside Alcántara and González. Earlier this month the PGR recanted the kidnapping charges against Francisco only, admitting that there was reasonable doubt of her guilt in the crimes. Only two weeks earlier the agency had characterized the evidence against her as "solid." The Mexican justice system has come under increasing pressure from the United Nations and domestic non-government organizations to release the three defendants.

Several irregularities were documented during the case against Fernando, such as the refusal to admit testimonies from her fellow townspeople, the failure to provide Fernando with a translator, and contradictions in the testimonies of the six AFI agents. In this month's hearing brought forth by the human rights groups Fray Jacobo Daciano and Agustín Pro Juárez to challenge Fernando's imprisonment, one of the agents failed to appear in court.

While the aforementioned human rights groups were instrumental in bringing the irregularities of the case to light, other organizations have been criticized for not doing more sooner. It was not until August of this year that the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) declared that the conviction of the three women was based on false witnesses and testimonies of hearsay. In the waning days of Commission President José Luis Soberanes, the CNDH has come under increasing fire from domestic and international human rights organizations for not fulfilling its mandate.

SOURCES:

- "ONU pide pronta liberación de Jacinta y dos indígenas más." *El Universal* September 10, 2009.
Arreola, Juan José. "Sin Jacinta, inician último juicio en Querétaro." *El Universal* September 14, 2009.
Madrid, Lemic. "Coacusadas de Jacinta continúan presas." *Excelsior* September 16, 2009.
Gil Olmos, José. "Jacinta, una mujer incómoda para la justicia." *Proceso* September 16, 2009.
Norandi, Mariana. "Se congratula Inmujeres por liberación de Jacinta Francisco." *La Jornada* September 16, 2009.

SECURITY OF LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

"Narco-attorney" killed in Mexico State

Américo Delgado, former defense attorney for the Arellano Félix brothers Osiel Cárdenas Guillén and Alfredo Beltrán Leyva, was stabbed to death in his Mexico State office by three assailants late August, according to the State Security Agency (ASE). Delgado's death marks the second slaying of a "narco-attorney" this summer. In August, Silvia Raquenel Villanueva Fraustro, also formerly a defense attorney for alleged Gulf cartel leaders, was gunned down in a crowded Nuevo León shopping mall. Raquenel had previously survived at least three prior assassination attempts.

Delgado reportedly succeeded in preventing the extradition of various members of the Arellano Félix cartel to the United States. He achieved the same outcome for former Quintana Roo governor Mario Villanueva, who has been linked to the Juárez cartel.

The Mexico State Attorney General's Office is handling the investigation into Delgado's murder. Representing 21 attorney associations and colleges of Monterrey, Nuevo León, Adolfo J. Treviño Garza demanded that the unsolved deaths of Delgado, Raquenel, and other attorneys killed in reprisal for their work be given due attention by the proper authorities. He lamented the prejudices that the profession endures, emphasizing that attorneys advocating for the rights of their clients, even if they are accused drug traffickers, does not make them criminals.

SOURCES:

- Castillo, G. and S. Chávez. "Asesinan a ex abogado de narcos." *La Jornada* August 29, 2009.
"Ejecutan al abogado de los Arellano Félix." *El Diario de Yucatán* August 29, 2009.
Zúñiga Esquivel, Francisco. "Exigen se esclarezcan asesinatos de abogados." *Milenio* September 2, 2009.

SOCIAL ACTIVISM

Agricultural debtor activist and son critically wounded in attack

Maximiano Barbosa, founder of El Barzón, an agricultural debtors advocacy organization, was critically injured in an attack in the state of Jalisco in late August. Barbosa's son was also injured in the attack, which occurred at a family party in the town of Casimiro Castillo. The two attackers, described as dressed in black, escaped in a car with Mexico (Edomex) plates.

El Barzón was founded in 1993 in Jalisco in response to farmers' protests over the lack of regulatory support in repaying bank debts. The protests culminated in a movement that challenged agricultural corporations, which were at the time allied with the then-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). El Barzón created the first national organization for debtors, which garnered increased national attention to the plight of agricultural workers.

Jalisco Attorney General Tomás Coronado Olmos said shortly after the shooting that initial lines of investigation were pointing to Barbosa's role as a social activist as a likely motive in the attacks. Barbosa has since told investigators that he did not recognize the men who shot him and his son.

In March 2008, another rural protest leader, Armando Villareal Martha, was shot and killed outside his home in Nuevo Casas Grandes, Chihuahua. His murder sparked nationwide protests and demands for justice in the killing. To date, Villareal's murder remains unsolved.

SOURCES:

López Aranda, Mae. "Fundador de El Barzón sufre atentado en Jalisco." *La Jornada* August 27, 2009.
"Ven móvil social en ataque a Barbosa." *El Universal* August 28, 2009.

AROUND THE STATES

24-year veteran of DF Judicial Police to head restructuring of the agency

Chief Commander María del Carmen Núñez Vélez has been tapped to undertake the "cleansing" of the Mexico City's (DF's) Judicial Police. The promotion marks the first time a woman will occupy a directive role in the agency. Núñez Vélez, a 24-year veteran of the agency, vowed that no misconduct will be covered up, and that corrupt agents will be dealt with "to the ultimate consequences," lamenting that the lack of such measures has hurt the agency.

Since joining the force at age 22, she has climbed the agency hierarchy, occupying the positions of unit chief, section chief, group chief, commander, chief commander and coordinator. She is also the mother of three children. In an interview with *Milenio*, Núñez shared some of the challenges she faced as a female in the mostly male police force in which she felt forced to prove herself multiple times in order to win the respect of her colleagues.

Despite cultural factors that can create barriers for females entering predominantly male fields in Mexico, there is also a general belief in Mexico that women are less likely to become as corrupt as men in the police forces. Núñez vows to transform the force, but did not provide specific plans in the interview with *Milenio*. Regardless of recent setbacks for the agency that she blames on a few disreputable officers, she insists that the Judicial Police has continued to fulfill its mandated role and will continue to do so during its transformation into the new Investigative Police Force.

According to the new Organic Law of the Federal District, the Judicial Police will be transformed into an investigative force. Núñez Vélez will oversee the vetting of agents for the new force, while a counsel will be formed to oversee the larger process, comprising representatives from the DF Human Rights Commission, the National Institute of Penal Sciences, and civil organizations as well as local and federal legislators. DF Attorney General Miguel Ángel Mancera Espinosa predicts that the transformation will be completed before the term of the current administration is up in 2012.

SOURCES:

"A cargo de una mujer transformación de Policía Judicial del DF." *Notimex* September 13, 2009.
"Instalarán consejo verificador de PJ capitalina." *Notimex* September 15, 2009.
"A cargo de una mujer transformacion de Policía Judicial de DF." *Milenio* September 15, 2009.

Tabasco legislators plan new public security law for 2010

Tabasco's state government has announced that a bill will move through congress by the end of the year that will revamp the state's public security law in accordance with the new national general public security law. Miguel Alberto Romero Pérez, the governor's legal advisor, told the *Heraldo de Tabasco* that the law will strengthen the application of justice in the state by establishing standardized communication systems between police forces of all levels, and implementing a universal training program for police recruits in adhering to the national mandate for a unified police model nationwide.

Romero added that the new public security law will work in concert with efforts to reform the criminal justice system as mandated by constitutional reforms passed by Mexico's congress in the spring of 2008

that seek to professionalize national, state, and local police forces and implement an accusatory justice system.

In announcing the imminent reforms, Tabasco plans to be one of the first states to conform to the national police reform mandate announced by President Calderón earlier this summer, much like Chihuahua, Nuevo León, and Oaxaca which are also frontrunners in the arena of criminal justice reform.

SOURCE:

Gómez, Azarias. "Tendrá Tabasco nueva Ley Estatal de Seguridad Pública." *El Heraldo de Tabasco* August 31, 2009.

Nearing the end of his term, Mexico City human rights ombudsman reports on his tenure

In his last address to representatives of the congress of Mexico City (DF) as president of the DF Human Rights Commission (CDHDF), Emilio Álvarez Icaza applauded the progress his organization has achieved during his tenure in transcending its previous role as simply an office with which to register complaints. He lauded the Commission's success in engaging the three branches of local government to effect lasting changes in the interest of protecting victims of human rights abuses. He reported that during his tenure 80% of claims made to his office involved the administration of justice, the prison system, public security, cases of torture and forced disappearances, and that 9 of 10 claims were made by people with monthly incomes of less than 1000 pesos.

Álvarez Icaza also highlighted two high-profile cases: the News Divine nightclub incident in which 12 were killed during a police sting operation, and Casitas del Sur, a youth home from which 11 children have been reported missing. Referring to News Divine, Álvarez Icaza lamented the continued impunity, pointing out that the only person in detention 14 months after the incident is the nightclub manager, imprisoned for supplying alcohol to minors. Regarding the Casitas case, he maintained that there are many more children unaccounted for than have been reported. To date, criminal proceedings have been initiated against Casitas' director and an English teacher for the center.

Since his address, Álvarez Icaza has opened a formal complaint against police officers in a case reminiscent of News Divine in which DF judicial police officers are being accused of failing to fulfill their duties during a botched July 3 rescue mission in which the kidnapping victim, Yolanda Ceballos Coppel; one of her assailants; and two officers were killed. At issue is a video recording allegedly made by one of the officers involved in the operation. The DF Attorney General's Office (PGJDF) has refused to hand over the video to the CDHDF, citing as its reason that it is not an official video, though it acknowledges that it was shot by one of its agents. Álvarez Icaza criticized that PGJDF agents are police and not freelance journalists and insists that questions remain regarding the officers' behavior during the operation that must be answered. A video was also shot by an officer during the News Divine operation that was turned over to the CDHDF and was key in raising public attention to possible abuses by DF judicial police and resulting investigations.

SOURCES:

Torres Ruiz, Gladis. "Al conseguir protección para víctimas, la CDHDF dejó de ser sólo un lugar para levantar quejas." *CIMAC Noticias* August 28, 2009.

Bolaños, Claudia. "Caso Coppel: integrante de PGJ tomó video, reconoce procurador." *El Universal* September 7, 2009.

Aguascalientes prisons filling up, according to Supreme Court president

Aguascalientes Supreme Court President Juan Arturo Muñiz Candelas is expressing concern over the overcrowding in the state's prison system. He reports that the prisons are currently 50% over capacity, underscoring the need for justice reform to expedite criminal proceedings. Nevertheless, he urged caution in implementing oral trials and the investigative procedures that accompany them, especially in the case of more serious crimes. Muñiz Candelas estimates that it will be at least three years before oral trials can be a reality in the state, citing the need for legislative approval, infrastructure development, and budgeting and training of personnel.

SOURCE:

González, Jennifer. "Se están llenando los CERESOS de la entidad: Juan Arturo Muñiz Candelas." *La Jornada Aguascalientes* September 7, 2009.

The Justice in Mexico Project researches justice sector and rule of law developments in Mexico at the national and sub-national levels. Through its host institution, the Trans-Border Institute (TBI) at the University of San Diego, the Project disseminates research organized under three broad categories related to the rule of law: law and order, transparency and accountability, and access to justice.

As a research output, the Project produces monthly reports based on news monitoring of federal- and state-level developments in Mexico. An archive of these reports is available at <http://www.justiceinmexico.org>. Click on the news tab and then the news archive selection to access the archive. To provide financial support for our organization, please visit: <http://www.sandiego.edu/tbi/support>. Finally, please report any questions, corrections, or concerns to transborder@sandiego.edu.

Summaries for this report were compiled by TBI Research Associates Cory Molzahn and Anna Cearley, with editing and assistance from Heidi Knuff, Theresa Firestine and Nicole Ramos. Any opinions expressed in attributions for this summary are those expressed in the media reports and op-ed pieces cited, and not those of the Trans-Border Institute or the University of San Diego.

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