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MONTHLY SUMMARY

Cartel violence continues to escalate in 2010 including several high-causality incidents • Cartel violence reaches into new territories • Calderón attempts to “re-brand” public security plan • Advances made in unified police proposal • Mexican officials look to undermine financial structures to target organized crime • DEA announces results of long-term bi-national operation against Mexican cartels in the US • U.N. report on national security implications of transnational organized crime issued • Fatal attacks in two Sinaloa prisons • More police officers let go in Monterrey • Mexican port captain arrested for suspected ties to drug smuggling • Mexican public not cooperating with cell phone registry database • Index examines states with most transparent budgets • Accountability of the Ministry of Public Function scrutinized • iPhone application to combat police corruption developed • Web page created to provide public information in “Paulette” case • Supreme Court determines human rights abuses in ABC daycare fire • CNDH find soldiers responsible for boys’ death in Tamaulipas • Governors express concerns about viability of justice reforms • Federal Police end three-year miner strike in Sonora • Parents of PAN mayoral candidate murdered in Veracruz • Baja California preparing for oral trials in August

LAW AND ORDER

CARTEL-RELATED VIOLENCE

Cartel violence continues to escalate nationwide, with numbers punctuated by several high-casualty attacks

Mexico saw its two bloodiest days in recent memory between June 11 and June 14. News outlets reported 85 deaths on June 11, including 38 in Chihuahua, 20 in Tamaulipas, and the rest distributed among nine other states. President Calderón, inconveniently, found himself in South Africa on that day to attend a soccer match. Three days later on June 14, *El Universal* reported 99 cartel-related homicides. June 11

included the massacre of 19 people in a drug rehab center in Chihuahua City, and June 14 included 29 deaths in a Sinaloa prison resulting from fighting between rival drug gangs. The same day, 12 federal agents were ambushed and killed in Michoacán, and three more in Chihuahua City.

As of June 18, Mexico had seen 5,229 cartel-related killings, or *ejecuciones*; just over 1,300 shy of the total for 2009, according to a weekly tally conducted by *Reforma*. Such killings have escalated over the past four weeks, averaging 261 weekly, as compared to 209 a week for the earlier part of the year, a nearly 25% climb. Chihuahua, with 1,355 *ejecuciones* for the year, averaged 68 per week over the past four weeks, as compared to 54 during the rest of the year. Sinaloa, where the rate of *ejecuciones* is down slightly during the current reporting period, has accumulated 1,014 for the year. Durango and Guerrero continue to be troubled, with 414 and 417 *ejecuciones*, respectively, while Nayarit, which has remained relatively calm over the past few years despite bordering Sinaloa and Durango to the south, has seen 105, as compared to 22 in 2009 and 5 in 2008.



Mexican federal police forces

Police officers, particularly the Federal Police, have in several cases been the targets of large scale and high profile attacks. At least 10 federal police officers were killed when gunmen ambushed their convoy in the Zitácuaro municipality of Michoacán on June 14. The assailants had reportedly robbed a bus, which they then used to block the highway where the ambush occurred. While official federal statements reported 10 deaths, state officials said that two more died in a hospital where they were receiving treatment for wounds suffered in the attack. It was the third large-scale attack on federal police in Michoacán during 2009 and 2010. In all, 30 federal police have been killed in such attacks. Just 24 weeks into 2010, *Reforma* reports that 325 police have been killed in cartel-related violence, as compared to 475 for all of 2009.

In a coordinated action, gunmen attacked Durango's Public Security Secretary Valentín Romano López at a sports club in Durango City on June 5. Four of his security guards were injured in the attack. López was uninjured. Upon responding to the scene, two state police were injured by grenades thrown by the gunmen. The assailants then attacked a state prison on the Durango-Gómez Palacio highway with grenades. The attack was the second perpetrated against a state public security secretary this year. In April, Michoacán Public Security Secretary Minerva Bautista survived an attack despite an onslaught of thousands of rounds of ammunition and a grenade that failed to detonate.

Violence in Ciudad Juárez continues to defy the thousands of soldiers and Federal Police, now in charge of operations in the city, since their deployments to the city began in March of 2008. On June 19, an armed commando executed the mayor of the Guadalupe Distrito Bravos municipality, adjacent to Ciudad Juárez, and considered to be a cartel stronghold. Mayor Jesús Manuel Lara Rodríguez (PRI), 48, was killed in his home in the Santa Teresa colonia of Ciudad Juárez in front of his family. He had moved there recently from Guadalupe after receiving several death threats. Guadalupe, with a population of fewer than 10,000, is across the border from Hudspeth, Texas, and has been reported as the zone in the region most affected by organized crime, which has taken control of several villages and forced out their inhabitants.

Elsewhere in the state of Chihuahua, roughly two-dozen gunmen stormed into a center in Chihuahua City, killing 19 in the latest in a string of drug-rehab center killings over the past two years. The victims were between 16 and 63 years old. The killings came on a day that resulted in the bloodiest 24-hour period since President Calderón took office.

On the evening of June 17, an armed commando attacked the Integral Clinic Against Addictions (Clínica Integral Contra Las Adicciones), a drug rehabilitation center in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, killing six individuals, including two women. The victims have been identified as: Adrián Rodríguez Camarillo (28), Erick Sánchez Cháirez (34), Sergio Arturo Soto (39), Rosa Isela Pineda Téllez (32), Adriana García Acevedo (35), and Luis Eduardo Medina Sosa (39). One of victims reportedly had with them a baby that remained unharmed.

The Juárez municipal police said that the attack occurred while the victims were entering the clinic. According to witnesses, at least six hooded individuals with long firearms were following the victims and fired their weapons at them once they began to enter. Two attacks in September of last year in Ciudad Juárez claimed a total of 27 lives, and prompted the closure of at least 10 drug rehab centers in Juárez.

Drug use has escalated in Mexico in recent years, particularly in border cities such as Ciudad Juárez. This is commonly attributed to the growing difficulty of moving drugs across the border to U.S. markets, and a resulting increase in the availability of drugs domestically. Juárez mayor José Reyes has said that the violence in his city, which has been widely attributed to a struggle over trafficking routes between the Juárez and Sinaloa cartels, has shifted to turf battles between drug gangs selling to local populations.

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Cartel turf battles stretching into new territories

Fallout continues from the December 2009 killing of Arturo Beltrán Leyva and the ensuing battle for control between Héctor Beltrán Leyva and Édgar Valdés Villarreal, "La Barbie," over the Beltrán Leyva cartel's operations. After a series of confrontations between authorities and cartel gunmen in Taxco, Guerrero and Tepic, Nayarit rumors first circulated that Valdés Villarreal had been killed, and later that he had been merely arrested. Such rumors were reminiscent of earlier claims about Teodoro García Simental, the notorious Sinaloa cartel affiliate who long eluded capture in Baja California for months before he was finally apprehended in January of this year. According to authorities, La Barbie himself is now allied with the Sinaloa cartel, which has been engaged in a fierce battle with the Beltrán Leyva cartel since they broke their alliance in 2008.

In the tourist town of Taxco in the state of Guerrero on June 15, Mexican soldiers killed 15 suspected drug traffickers after a nearly hour-long gun battle. Taxco police said that the men killed were suspected of having ties to Valdés Villarreal. Taxco had hit the news two weeks earlier with the discovery of 55 bodies in an abandoned silver mine. One of those found was the director of the local jail, who had gone missing days earlier.

Later in the month, Mexican police found 12 bodies showing signs of torture and in advanced stages of decomposition in cenotes, or freshwater pools, south of the popular tourist destination of Cancún. Investigators said they found the bodies after nine suspected cartel gunmen, detained in connection with a shootout the previous week in which a judicial police officer was killed, told them of the bodies' whereabouts. Quintana Roo Attorney General Francisco Alor said that the bodies showed signs of the Zetas, marked on the chest with a "z." It has been debated, however, whether such victims are being marked for crossing the Zetas, or for working for them.

In Nayarit, a state which had in the past seen virtually no cartel violence, a series of prolonged shootouts prompted Governor Ney González Sánchez to close schools three weeks before the scheduled summer vacation, defying the Interior Minister Fernando Gómez Mont who had announced just prior that classes would continue "without a doubt." State government officials characterized the public mood as a state of "psychosis" after cartel-related violence left 30 dead over the weekend of June 11-12, in part from a confrontation that broke out near a high school and two primary schools. A shootout between soldiers and an armed band left four gunmen and a soldier dead later in the week.

Nayarit Secretary General of the Government Roberto Mejía Pérez attributed the violence in the state to a "cockroach effect," with pressure from police and armed forces in neighboring states pushing rival drug

gangs to fight over new trafficking routes. The state had 37 cartel-related killings during the week of June 12-18 alone. Interior Minister Gómez Mont has since announced that federal police would be deployed to the state.

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"Violencia en Nayarit, por 'efecto cucaracha.'" *El Universal* June 18, 2010.
"México: hallada nueva 'narcofosa' con 12 cadáveres." *BBC Mundo* June 19, 2010.
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"Otro letal tiroteo en Nayarit." *El Diario de Yucatán* June 19, 2010.

Alberto Mendoza Contreras, Beltrán Leyva drug cartel leader, faces criminal proceedings

The Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) took levied charges against four members of the Beltrán Leyva drug cartel organization. Among those charged is Alberto Mendoza Contreras, alias "El Chico Malo", identified as the principal operator for the Beltrán Leyva criminal organization in San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León. Contreras is being held at a maximum-security prison in Altiplano (Almoloya), where he will face criminal proceedings for federal crimes.

Contreras was captured on March 19th by Mexico's Navy (Secretaría de Marina-Armada) after an individual fired at officers outside of a residence located on Avenue Fuentes del Valle, number 300, in Fuentes del Valle in the municipality of San Pedro Garza. After his capture, Contreras was sent to Puente Grande, while the other four detained with him were sent to the Federal Social Rehabilitation Center number 4 (Centro Federal de Readaptación Social número 4) located in El Rincón, in Tepic, Nayarit.

Contreras has been charged with having ties to organized crime, carrying out operations with illicit resources, crimes against health, and violating the Federal Law of Firearms and Explosives (Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos). Also charged were his accomplices Hugo López Reyes, Juan Gaytán Sánchez, and Joel Leonidez Gómez Morales.

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STATE-LEVEL ELECTIONS

PRI and PRD installations attacked with Molotov cocktails

Unknown individuals threw Molotov cocktails at the installations of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD) in Culiacán and at the offices of the mayor candidate for the coalition campaign committee of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI), the Ecological Green Party of Mexico (Partido Verde Ecologista de México, PVEM), and New Alliance Party (Nueva Alianza). This came days after a similar attack was registered against the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional—PAN) offices in Sinaloa.

According to the online news service *Correo*, the two buildings were attacked with the homemade bombs within ten minutes of each other. Although they occurred in two different cities, it is believed that the attacks were related. At approximately 3:15am on Friday, Ricardo Ruiz, the watchman at the PRI offices in the city of Mochis, detected the explosion of a beer bottle containing gasoline and a sugar mix. The bomb caused minimal damage to the building.

Ten minutes later in Culiacán, two males throwing the Molotov cocktails broke a window in the PRD installations on Ángel Flores Street. The fire destroyed some furniture and part of an archive. In response, both parties have called for an investigation, saying that they have been victims of several acts of intimidation.

SOURCES:

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PAN leader asks government to secure election in Oaxaca from corruption

The national leader of the Nation Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN), César Nava, solicited help from Secretary of the Interior Fernando Gómez Mont for the July 4th state electoral process in Oaxaca. Nava asked that a protocol of "police action" be agreed upon and that state and municipal authorities work jointly with federal authorities in finding ways to patrol the streets on the day of the election without using a single officer more than necessary. The petition was made because according to Nava, "experience suggests that state and municipal police are used as a political arm in the service of the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] and to suppress the votes of citizens."

Nava demanded that by next July 4th officers from the State Preventative Police force remain in their quarters when not on patrol in order to ensure that they are not used to influence voters for the PRI. He also requested that the governor of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, suspend police chief Manuel Moreno Rivas, who is accused of kidnapping and raping Aurora López, former-state secretary of transportation. López accuses Ulises Ruiz as the intellectual author of the crimes against her, while the police chief Manuel Moreno perpetrated the attack.

Offering his solidarity with López, Nava insisted that the attack suffered by López should not go unpunished. Meanwhile, Eviel Pérez Magaña, the Oaxacan candidate for governor for the PRI-PVEM alliance demanded that César Nava Vázquez stop exploiting the alleged kidnapping and violation suffered by Aurora López for political gain and focus instead on the state's pressing development needs.

SOURCES:

Avendaño, Olga Rosario. "Nava solicita a Gobernación que PF vigile comicios en Oaxaca." El Universal. 18 Junio, 2010.
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PUBLIC SECURITY STRATEGY

President Calderón attempts to re-brand his public security strategy

In his "letter to the nation," a 5,000 word defense of his campaign against organized crime, President Calderón attempted to re-brand his counter-drug efforts as a struggle of the people, meant to provide a better nation for its law-abiding citizens, steering away from talk of a drug "war." The public address came after the two deadliest days Mexico has seen since Calderón took office, and at a time when public support for the government's strategy seems to be waning. He was also more pointed in attributing blame to the United States for Mexico's cartel violence, saying that Mexico had the unfortunate fate of being the southern neighbor to the largest consumer of drugs in the world. He also leveled criticism at the United States for not doing enough to stem the southbound flow of weapons that are arming the cartels.



A *Reforma* quarterly public opinion poll of 1,515 adults conducted in late May found that 51% of respondents see crime as the foremost problem existing in the country, up from 46% in March, and 38% as an average for 2009. Calderón's overall approval rating is down to 58% from 64% in 2009, while 42% described the government's strategy in the war against drug traffickers as "adequate." The government has not acted correctly according to 48%. When asked who was winning the war, 58% chose organized crime, while only 20% signaled the government.

Media analysts were quick to criticize the letter. Lorenzo Meyer in *Reforma* accused the president of ignoring facts that undermine his campaign: that the U.S. government is not likely to legalize drugs or reduce addiction rates significantly anytime soon, and that U.S. DEA reports show that the capacity for marijuana and heroin production has increased since President Calderón took office. José Gil Olmos in *Proceso* criticized that beyond Calderón's semantic clarifications, he failed to address the social aspects within Mexico helping to drive the drug trade: marginalization, poverty, wealth gap, and political corruption. He also criticized the president's decision to hire an expensive public relations firm to clean up the country's image.

SOURCES:

Mancillas, María Antonia. "Ven estrategia errada." *Reforma* June 1, 2010.
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Gil Olmos, José. "Calderón y su carta." *Proceso* June 16, 2010.

Unified police proposal continues to move forward

Mexico's National Security Council approved the creation of 32 state unified police forces, which will each command their respective state's municipal police corporations. Calderón said that he will present the proposal to Congress at their next session. The measure would require an amendment to article 115 of the constitution, which mandates that municipalities coordinate their own public security. President Calderón has been pushing for a unified police model since he came to office in 2006, and it has since gained momentum with support from Public Security Secretary Genaro García Luna and governors from around the country. Proponents of the change argue that a lack of communication between levels of law enforcement and rampant corruption among municipal police could be repaired with increased oversight at the state level.

Nationwide there are 2,022 municipal police departments, which include around 371,000 officers. Of those, 61% earn less than 4,000 pesos per month, and 70% lack a basic education. An estimated one-half of municipalities have fewer than 20 officers, while 400 municipalities have no police force, according to statements made by García Luna at the National Security Council on June 4.

Several states have already reported advancements toward a unified police force. Durango was the first state to make advancements toward a unified model, its Congress working since early this month to determine the changes necessary to the state constitution to carry it forward. In May, the city council of the state's capitol, Durango, approved a proposal by the mayor to assign 50 officers in the city to a state-level command center as a first operational step, although the details of implementation remain unclear. Veracruz Governor Fidel Herrera Beltrán announced the creation of an inter-municipal police force in the northern zone of the state, comprising the Pánuco, Pueblo Viejo, Tampico Alto and Tantoyuca municipalities. He said that the move came in part due to a request from the Panuco city council to relinquish law enforcement operations to the state Public Security Secretariat, due to budget shortfalls. He also cited as a reason recent violence in the northern state of Tamaulipas. Governor Herrera Beltrán called this move the first in a process of statewide police unification.

Before such reforms can happen in earnest, however, the Mexican Congress must first amend article 115 of the constitution, and there are skeptics. Felipe González, president of the Public Security Commission in the Senate, expressed his doubts that a state-run police force would be capable or willing to undertake the more routine duties of the municipal police, such as issuing traffic tickets, or responding to neighbor disputes. He also expressed concern over the implications of corruption under the proposed system, where an entire state, not just isolated municipal police departments, would be affected by a compromised unified police force. Ramón Galindo, head of the Municipal Development Commission in the Senate, argued that the unified police proposal would weaken municipalities, while ignoring the social issues that are behind insecurity in the most troubled areas of the country. He also pointed out that Chihuahua has been operating for some time under a de-facto unified police, with no signs of success. Removing command structures from the populations they serve, he said, will result in a failure to recognize and address the majority of common crimes, particularly inter-familial violence.

Some point to the success of the case of Durango, where General Velentín Romano López was called in to unify the command structure in a state where troubled and isolated municipalities had in effect lost their

police due to their inability to respond to the violence. He sent new recruits to the Santa Gertrudis military base in Chihuahua for training, and has since reported significant advancements, bolstering advocates of further reform in the state. Some lawmakers, however, are reminded of 2003, when Romano was signaled by a drug trafficker as accepting bribes from the Gulf Cartel. Charges against him did not hold up in Mexican courts, but as a result of the accusations, the motives of an attempt on his life earlier this year have been questioned, exemplifying the concerns of opponents over the possible over-centralization of power in a unified police force.

SOURCES:

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Alvarado Álvarez, Ignacio. "La policía única, propuesta dudosa." *El Universal* June 14, 2010.

Mexican officials take measures to undermine financial structures of organized crime groups

In an attempt to make it more difficult for drug cartels to launder money brought back from the United States, the Calderón administration announced new restrictions on the amount of U.S. dollars individuals will be able to exchange for Mexican pesos and deposit into Mexican banks. Under the new rules, tourists and Mexicans without bank accounts will be limited to exchanging a maximum of \$1,500 (USD) for pesos each month. Citizens with bank accounts will be limited to exchanging \$4,000 (USD) per month. Only businesses in tourist areas or along the northern border where much business is legitimately conducted in dollars will be allowed to exchange dollars at financial institutions, limited to \$7,000 (USD) a month.

Luis Robles, vice president of the Mexican Association of Banks, said that recent years have seen a \$10 billion (USD) in excess deposits and transactions that cannot be explained by "normal" business activity. Mexican Finance Secretary Ernesto Cordero said that more restrictions are planned for the near future, specifically limiting the amount of cash that can be used in big-ticket purchases. Drug traffickers have long been known to launder narcotics proceeds through auto and real estate purchases.

The announcement came two weeks after a bi-national government study revealed that more than half of the money smuggled out of the United States every year is in the form of cash that never moves through a bank. In Mexico, 75% of business is conducted in cash transactions, making it virtually impossible to monitor. In the United States, only 20% of business is in cash. Cartels' proceeds from sales in the United States are estimated at between \$19 billion to \$29 billion (USD) annually. The study was not released to the public for security reasons, but certain details were revealed to the press.

The study tracked the flow of illicit funds from smaller dealers throughout the United States to points in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Charlotte, and Atlanta; on to secondary hubs in Phoenix, El Paso, Dallas, and Houston, and then broken into small shipments to be carted across the border. As with weapons smuggling, smaller and more numerous shipments combined with massive vehicle flow across the Southwest border make interception and arrests an unviable strategy. For that reason, says U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Assistant Secretary John Morton, it is necessary to undermine the financial structure of organizations and complicit businesses by identifying, seizing, and forfeiting their profits.

Mexico has recently made moves to challenge the financial security of organized criminal organizations. Last year, both the federal government and the government of the Federal District passed asset forfeiture laws, which give attorney generals with a judicial warrant the power to seize properties they suspect as belonging to organized criminals or individuals found to be aiding them. In late May, Federal District police seized a hotel in the Benito Juárez delegation for being linked to a human trafficking organization. It was the tenth business seized for this reason under the asset forfeiture law in the Federal District since it went into effect last year. In all, 38 forfeiture orders have been carried out, half of which for auto theft, six for kidnapping, and three for organized crime.

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"Mexican Government Imposes Currency Restrictions to Fight Drugs." *Latin American Herald Tribune* June 16, 2010.

U.S.-MEXICO COOPERATION

DEA announces results of bi-national operation against Mexican drug cartels in the U.S.

DEA acting administrator Michelle M. Leonhart and Attorney General Eric Holder announced on June 10 the results of a 22-month multi-agency operation known as "Project Deliverance." The operation, which targeted the U.S.-side infrastructure of Mexican drug trafficking organizations, has netted 2,266 narcotics-related arrests, and the seizure of more than 74.1 tons of illegal drugs. 429 of the arrests were made June 9 in 16 states, along with seizures of \$5.8 million (USD), 17 pounds of methamphetamines, 112 kilograms of cocaine, nearly 3,000 pounds of marijuana, 141 firearms, and 85 vehicles. In all, Project Deliverance has seized \$154 million. Annual proceeds of drug cartels from sales in the United States have been estimated at between \$10-45 billion (USD). Mr. Holder characterized the 22-month operation as "our most extensive, and most successful, law enforcement effort to date targeting these deadly cartels." DEA director Leonhart said that the operation dealt a "debilitating blow" to the network of U.S.-side cells controlled by Mexican drug cartels.

The DEA reported that Mexican law enforcement agencies played an important part in the operation, through arrests and information sharing. One significant arrest made by Mexican law enforcement was of Carlos Ramón Castro-Rocha, a designated Consolidated Priority Organization Target (CPOT), a title reserved for individuals believed to be leaders of drug-trafficking organizations responsible for importing large quantities of illegal drugs into the United States. Castro-Rocha had an arrest warrant in the United States and had been indicted in U.S. District Courts in North Carolina and Arizona.

Project Deliverance came as part of the larger Southwest Border Strategy, initiated in March 2009, which incorporates federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to arrest suspected traffickers and seize drugs flowing north into the United States and cash and weapons destined for Mexico. Less than two weeks after Mexican President Felipe Calderón asked the U.S. Congress to reinstate the assault weapons ban, police in Laredo Texas made one of their largest weapons seizures in years after pulling over a truck carrying 147 new and boxed assault rifles, 200 high-capacity magazines, 53 bayonets, and 10,000 rounds of ammunition. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said it would investigate the seizure, but local officials expressed confidence that the shipment was destined for Mexico. According to the Mexican government, roughly 80% of traceable weapons confiscated in Mexico can be traced back to U.S. sellers. U.S. officials have stepped up searches of southbound vehicles suspected of smuggling weapons, though they admit that the vast majority still make it through.

In response to officials in southern U.S. states who say that the federal government is not adequately securing the border, President Obama authorized the deployment of as many as 1,200 National Guard troops to the border to assist in drug interdiction operations and to help curb the southbound flow of weapons and money. According to national law, the troops' mandate does not include immigration enforcement, a concern voiced by Mexican President Felipe Calderón.

Mr. Holder rejected some reports that the shooting death of a 14-year-old boy by a Border Patrol agent has strained trans-border law enforcement relations, suggesting that U.S. officials interested in stemming the illicit flow of drugs, guns, and cash across the border and their Mexican counterparts operate on a basis of shared interest that transcends such matters.

SOURCES:

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U.N. releases report on national security implications of transnational organized crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a report on June 17 that posits that organized crime has globalized, and has become one of the world's most prominent economic and armed powers. *The Globalization of Crime: a Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment* explores trafficking flows of drugs, firearms, counterfeit products, stolen natural resources, as well as human

trafficking and migrant smuggling. UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa warned that “transnational crime has become a threat to peace and development, even to the sovereignty of nations.” Mr. Costa said that trans-nationalization of crime has occurred faster than that of law enforcement, and he encouraged countries who have not yet done so to sign on to the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, initiated in 2003, which seeks to bolster cooperation among participating nations in fighting international drug, weapons, and human trafficking. The United States and Mexico are both signatories to the treaty.

The U.N. report shows between 1998 and 2008 cocaine consumption in the United States has fallen from 267 to 165 metric tons, with the biggest drop beginning since 2006. Nevertheless, with trade routes through the Caribbean drastically shut down, the flow through Central America and Mexico has remained fairly stable, at roughly 140 metric tons per year. Meanwhile, cocaine consumption in Mexico nearly doubled, from 9 metric tons in 1998 to 17 in 2008. Reduced cocaine consumption in the United States has contributed to increased trafficking of the drug to Europe, and led to increased turf battles among Mexican drug cartels vying for a shrinking market.

The report also examines trafficking of firearms from the United States to Mexico, which it characterizes as more of a market than a criminal enterprise or enterprises, as it is not controlled by the Mexican drug cartels, but rather carried out by enterprising individuals-“straw buyers”- or small groups with contacts in the cartels, and often enabled by knowing and willing arms dealers along the border.

In its section “Regions Under Stress,” the report details countries where the authors see organized crime as a threat to state sovereignty. Acknowledging that organized criminals do not generally wish to topple the state, the report characterizes measures such as deploying the military to re-establish the authority of the state as a “clear sign” that organized crime has become a significant threat to national security. The authors address the concerns voiced by some, including some U.S. government officials, that organized criminal groups in Mexico threaten the state. While acknowledging that there are areas of the country where violence threatens public security and cartel-related corruption has impacted national institutions, Mexico’s southern neighbors, particularly Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, have much smaller and less-diversified economies, weaker governments, and social divisions that contribute to national murder rates that are much higher than Mexico’s. The authors pinpoint official corruption as the biggest obstacle to establishing public security in the nation.

In offering solutions to the proliferation of transnational organized crime, UNODC Director Costa called for better implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, better anti-money laundering measures, and stronger regulations against bank secrecy.

SOURCES:

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PRISON SECURITY

Fatal attacks in two Sinaloa prisons reminder of overcrowding, inadequate facilities

28 federal prisoners were killed in a confrontation between suspected rival gangs in a Mazatlán, Sinaloa prison June 14. The attackers, whose numbers were not immediately released, opened fire with three handguns and one automatic rifle, while others brandished hand weapons. Most of the victims were confined to an area of the prison reserved for prisoners destined for maximum-security federal prisons. Local media reported that the majority of the dead were presumed Zetas. The Zetas have been engaged in a battle in Sinaloa with the Sinaloa cartel. Cartel-related violence has claimed more than 1,014 lives in the state so far this year. Sinaloa governor Jesús Aguilar Padilla has blamed the federal government for the massacre, saying that he had asked the Public Security Secretariat numerous times to move the prisoners.

The Mazatlán prison massacre was one of a series of violent attacks in Sinaloa prisons this year, resulting in a total of 50 deaths so far this year. Less than a week before, presumed members of the Sinaloa cartel murdered and decapitated six suspected Zetas in a Culiacán prison. As with previous prison riots in Durango and Guerrero, among other states, this month's prison violence in Sinaloa is being attributed to the general overcrowding in the nation's correctional institutions, and the resulting mixing of dangerous criminals with lower-level offenders in facilities that were not designed to accommodate them. Public Security Secretary Genaro García Luna, in a presentation made to the National Public Security Council, said that the Mexican prison population has grown by 8%, rising from 210,140 inmates in 2006 when President Calderón initiated his counter-drug offensive to 226,966 inmates currently. Of those, between 55% and 60% have been sentenced, while the remaining prisoners are awaiting trial.

Mercedes Murillo de Esquer, President of the Sinaloan Civic Front (Frente Cívico Sinaloense), pointed out that prison authorities in 2008 acknowledged the risk of housing dangerous prisoners as was done in the Mazatlan prison, where only three guards were assigned to their confinement area to keep them from being attacked by rival gangs. Yet, Zacatecas is a rare case of state prison officials succeeding in convincing the federal government to transfer federal prisoners. In April of this year 168 prisoners, three of whom were deemed highly dangerous and the majority of which were jailed on federal drug charges, were transferred to the state prison in Nayarit, and the rest to a federal prison in Veracruz.

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TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

CORRUPTION

More police officers let go in Monterrey

A total of 178 officers have either resigned or been removed from their posts after failing to pass a series of tests designed to root out corrupt or untrustworthy law enforcement officials, according to the city's mayoral office. The evaluation period took place during the month of May when the army and state officers temporarily took control of the city's law enforcement for two days. The total represents 40 percent of the city's police force, and the crackdown leaves the city - at least temporarily - with a reduced operating force of about 400. About 150 cadets in training are expected to fill some of those vacancies in upcoming months.

The army targeted the Monterrey police force, with the cooperation of local officials, after determining that the agency had been infiltrated by organized crime groups. Investigators believe certain officers in this part of Mexico are working for or with the Zetas, a group that was originally formed by Mexican army officers who had deserted the force to work as mercenaries for the Gulf Cartel. In recent years, however, the Zetas have been operating more independently. In addition, several Monterrey officers have been arrested recently for involvement in kidnappings that were linked to drug groups.

A total of 118 officers resigned voluntarily and 60 more were fired during the recent operation. Many of the officers had already been identified by the city's internal affairs division, but the recent evaluation went even further in rooting out problematic officers. During the surprise "tests," about 18 percent of the officers were found to be operating outside of their assigned work area. Other officers were removed for spotty work records. About 20 percent of the officers had asked for between 10 and 54 sick days within a time frame of just six months. Additional officers were identified for failing to follow orders from their superiors and other inconsistencies in their work environment. Furthermore, 15 of the officers failed toxicological exams and 12 were found to be unfit after undergoing polygraph tests.

Of the 178 officers, 24 held administrative posts ranging from commander to group coordinators, according to *La Jornada*. The city's mayor, Fernando Larrazabal Breton, said that this leaves the city with a smaller but more trustworthy police force: "It is important to note that this municipal government will embark on a new era for the municipal police of Monterrey," Larrazabal was quoted as saying in *Milenio*. "It is a period in which we will have fewer police officers but with less possibilities that we have doubts about their character, and we prefer less police to more police who we doubt."

Meanwhile, a researcher with the University of Monterrey, Marcela Serna Salinas, is creating an initiative to develop a watchdog agency that would have the power to initiate judicial action against corrupt officials. Serna said that police are often fired or forced out of office after being accused of corruption but that has little impact when they can return to work for another community's police force. Through the initiative, the idea would be to make these officers and other public officials more accountable for their alleged activities.

SOURCES:

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Mexican port captain arrested for alleged ties to drug smuggling

The port captain for Manzanillo was arrested for allegedly working with drug traffickers to smuggle precursor chemicals used to create methamphetamine into the country. Captain Jorge Arturo Castaneda, who was detained as the result of a joint operation between the Mexican Navy and the Federal Attorney General's office, authorized the arrival and departure of ships at the port of Manzanillo. Manzanillo is located in the state of Colima. Castaneda was being held on suspicion of having ties with the so-called Pacific Cartel, according to a press release from the Mexican Attorney General's office. The Pacific Cartel, also known as the Sinaloa cartel, refers to the drug trafficking operations of suspected drug trafficker Joaquin Guzman Loera and his associates.

Few details were provided regarding his alleged activities, however media reports indicate that authorities have made a number of seizures of chemical precursors to methamphetamine in both Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas, which are ports located on the country's Pacific coast. In Manzanillo, four tons of ephedrine and 88 tons of ethyl phenyl acetate were found in shipping containers that had arrived from Mexico in recent months, according to the *Associated Press*. Tighter regulations in the United States in regards to controlling precursor methamphetamine chemicals have led to a shift to production in Mexico, according to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. Mexican authorities have responded with restrictions of their own meant to curtail the import of chemicals used to create methamphetamine. In response, some criminal groups are mislabeling the chemicals to avoid detection by Mexican Customs.

SOURCES:

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Itineriano, Jose. "Methamphetamine: Among Mexico's Most Dangerous Exports to the U.S." *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*. Jan. 16, 2008.
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Detention of Quintana Roo gubernatorial candidate focuses on corruption while serving as Cancún mayor

The detention of former Cancún Mayor Gregorio Sánchez, on charges that he was working with two drug trafficking groups in Mexico, has brought renewed attention to the infiltration of the country's political system by drug traffickers. It has also prompted accusations that the Mexican government is acting discriminately in regards to whom they target for such arrests. Sánchez had been campaigning for the position of governor of Quintana Roo when he was arrested May 25. Mexican authorities said he was suspected of providing protection to and sharing information with the Beltrán Leyva drug group and the



Zetas, a mercenary group that has been linked to the Gulf Cartel but that is now believed to be operating more independently. Sánchez is also accused of money laundering and making withdrawals of excessive amounts of cash that add up to \$2 million which were not accounted for in his income, according to Mexican authorities.

Sánchez, who was running under the alliance banner of the Democratic Revolutionary Party, the Workers Party and Convergence Party, has denied the accusations. He has claimed the arrest stems from political persecution. Officials with the Mexican Attorney General's office said that a formal investigation into Sánchez was opened in January as a result of an anonymous tip that led them to finding unusual transactions on his accounts. In addition, several former political collaborators who had been arrested for their own ties to the Zetas apparently became protected witnesses in the case. *The Christian Science Monitor* reported that at least five political candidates this electoral season have been accused – either by the media or by opponents - as having suspected links to drug groups. In one case cited by the newspaper, a gubernatorial candidate for the state of Sinaloa has come under fire for appearing in an old photo with suspected trafficker Ismael Zambada.

Following the arrest of Sánchez, Mexico's President Felipe Calderón said the arrest was not motivated by political reasons. Some political experts note that because strategic political arrests have taken place in the past, many Mexicans believe this practice continues. However, in the case of Sánchez, some political analysts said Calderón's party—the National Action Party— never had a chance in that election, and that Sánchez was not a big enough threat to motivate any kind of targeted action. The detention of Sánchez occurred at the same time that former Quintana Roo Governor Ernesto Villanueva Madrid is facing charges in the United States in connection with money laundering and working with drug traffickers to smuggle cocaine into the United States. Villanueva allegedly laundered about \$19 million from the scheme.

SOURCES:

Cattan, Nacha. "Cancun mayor Gregorio Sanchez's arrest: A case of biased law enforcement?" *The Christian Science Monitor*. May 28, 2010.

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TRANSPARENCY

Mexican public not cooperating with cell phone database

An effort by the Mexican government to persuade the owners of every cell phone in the country to register their personal information was meant to combat organized crime. Instead, the registry effort has been ignored by some Mexicans who are wary about the government and concerned about privacy implications. The future of the so-called "National Mobile-Phone User Registry" remains unclear. The program was enacted in April 2009 through reforms to the Federal Law of Telecommunications to collect registration information from the 40 million Mexicans who use mobile phones. The changes required new users to provide proof of residency and an official identification, and allowed for collecting fingerprint records. For current cell phone users, the changes required them to register their information into a database.

According to *El Universal*, as of April 2010 about 66 percent of the country's 83 million cell phone lines had been registered. However, the accuracy of the information is coming into question. Some estimate that more than 1 million names in the phone registry are fake and that thousands of Mexicans deliberately registered their phones using the names of celebrities and other famous people. *The Washington Post* reported that 5,200 mobile phones were registered under the name of Mexican President Felipe Calderón.

The backlash continues to grow. About 70 residents of Ciudad Juárez have started paperwork to file a court injunction against the federal government on the grounds that the Registry requirement violates their constitutional rights, according to *El Diario Juárez*. They are arguing that the law does not define precisely how the information will be used or that it will be used correctly. Mexican authorities have said the Registry was created in an attempt to protect citizens by ensuring that cell phones are properly registered. One of the main public safety concerns in this regard is the trend of "virtual kidnappings" that involve phony claims that a family member has been kidnapped in order to obtain an immediate transfer of money. *The*

Washington Post reported that 120,000 extortions were attempted through phones according to the Citizens Council for Public Security.

SOURCES:

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Gallegos, Rocio. "Piden amparo 70 fronterizos contra registro de celulares." *El Diario Juarez*. April 17, 2010.
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PEMEX executives refuse to share salary information

The Federal Institute for Access to Information has ordered PEMEX to make public the amount of money paid to the leadership ranks of the company's National Syndicate of Petrol Workers. The information that is being sought with regards to the amount of compensation paid from December 2008 through February 2009 to six committee members of the union, including that of union Director Carlos Romero Deschamps.

The union sought an injunction to fight the request, which would entail providing information of salaries and any other money compensations. Union officials argued that their salaries qualified as "personal information." The IFAI found the injunction to be without grounds since their salaries as public servants do not qualify as "personal information." Information on the workers' base salaries is available online. However, the Institute said that even though the Transparency Law does not force any public entities to post additional information on financial compensation, they are obligated to provide this information when it is asked of them. The Institute also noted that public information includes any compensation in addition to the salary.

SOURCES:

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"Debera PEMEX informar sobre nomina de lideres sindicales: IFAI." *El Financiero*. June 9, 2010.
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Index looks at states with most transparent budgets

Baja California Sur and Oaxaca are among the states in Mexico that operate their public spending in the least transparent way, according to the Mexican Institute of Competitiveness' 2010 Index of State Budget Information. The highest scoring states were Jalisco – with a score of 77 - and Durango and Aguascalientes, which both had a score of 75, according to the Institute's Index. The Institute is a non-profit research center that studies economic and social situations affecting Mexico's competitiveness in terms of the global economy.

Juan Pardinás, specialist in public finances with the Institute, noted that between 2008 and 2010, the average quality level for fiscal transparency among all of Mexico's states fell 2% to 52 on a scale of 0 to 100. A total of 18 states or entities - including Michoacán, Campeche, Guerrero and the Federal District - did worse in their ranking this time around, according to Pardinás. Among problems detected throughout the various states were failure to include information on government worker salaries, and failure to explain the basis for salary increases.

During this time period, states have increased their budgets by 16%, according to Pardinás, and yet they have not provided sufficient information on how that money is being used. In the case of Baja California Sur, which is governed by the Party of the Democratic Revolution, Pardinás said that their public budget does not provide sufficient information regarding how the money is distributed. Pardinás said that they did not detect any major differences between political parties. Oaxaca, which also scored near the bottom of the index, is governed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, and Guanajuato, governed by the National Action Party, also scored poorly.

SOURCES

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Questions raised about accountability of the Ministry of Public Function

A former administrator with the Ministry of Public Function is accusing the agency of failing to act in an unbiased manner and protecting businesses that are linked to high-ranking functionaries. The accusations come from Fernando Menendez Romero, the former subdirector of sanctions for the agency. In an interview with *La Jornada*, Menendez said that his superiors allegedly dismissed his recommendation in a case involving three companies linked to businessman Salomon Dondich. Menendez said he had found evidence of irregularities during a bidding process involving the businesses. The finding would have resulted in a fine as well as a ban on the companies involved from participating in other bids. However, according to Menendez, a congressman intervened on behalf of the enterprise in order to avoid sanctions against the companies. Menendez also accused the agency of allowing certain functionaries to exercise cronyism in job hiring and promotion decisions as opposed to relying upon impartial exams. Menendez stepped down from his position in March.

The Ministry of Public Function's role is to provide oversight to all other federal government branches, much like a comptroller. The Ministry recently highlighted its efforts to root out corruption and increase transparency. In just the first three months of 2010, the number of people accused of corruption by the Secretary of Public Function matched the same amount –160– as the entire year of 2009, according to Benjamin Hill, the Executive Secretary of the Agency's Unit for Policy on Transparency and International Cooperation (Unidad de Políticas de Transparencia y Cooperación Internacional). Hill brought up the figures during a June regional conference on the challenges and advances of combating corruption. According to Hill, prior to 2009 the Secretary of Public Function forwarded between 10 and 20 cases of corruption a year to the Federal Attorney General's office. Hill said many of the 160 cases are in the process of being evaluated and their outcomes have not been determined. The cases were pinpointed as a result of audits and professional evaluations that included following the movement of suspicious money transactions, according to Hill. He stated that the efforts are being conducted as part of the National Program of Accountability, Transparency and Combating Corruption, as well as part of international anti-corruption conventions.

SOURCES:

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"Incrementa Mexico denuncias por corrupcion de funcionarios: SFP." *Notimex* through *La Cornica de Hoy*. June 4, 2010.
Velasco, Elizabeth. "Destapan escandalo de trafico de influencias y corrupcion en la SFP." *La Jornada*. June 7, 2010.

iPhone application meant to use transparency to combat police corruption

An iPhone application has been created that will provide immediate information for Mexico City drivers as to how much or what kind of fine a traffic violation actually costs them. The program has been called the "anti-bribery" app and it has already sold 11,000 downloads for about \$1.50 each. The application is now also being made available to BlackBerry users. Created by the company Futuro Movil, the concept is to provide drivers with information at their fingertips so that they can quickly identify whether alleged fines for traffic violations are accurate. Fines are sometimes invented to cajole bribes from drivers. The application also provides useful information such as the days that cars with certain car plates can circulate through the city and a list of phone numbers for emergencies. In addition, the application includes information on how to locate parking lots where cars are impounded after a traffic infraction is committed.

The company's project administrator, Daniel Martinez Landeros, was quoted in local media as saying that, "We want to give tools to the user so that they do not feel so vulnerable in situations of abuse...many times drivers do not know their rights or obligation and they end up being surprised by the police." The US-based BRIBELINE organization, which provides an online site for people to anonymously report first-hand bribery experiences around the world, has found that 45 percent of bribe demands reported from Mexico were attributed to Mexican police agencies.

SOURCES:

"Las 'mordidas' tambien se combaten en Mexico desde iPhone y BlackBerry." *Agencia EFE*. May 21, 2010.
Soto, Antonio. "Mexico fights corruption using iPhones and BlackBerrys." *Latin American Herald Tribune*. June, 15, 2010.

Government creates web page to highlight accountability in the “Paulette” case

The government of the State of Mexico has created a web page called “Paulette Case Transparency” (www.transparenciapaulette.com) to provide a forum for the public to learn details about the investigation that resulted in the child’s body being found in her own bed. The four-year-old child, Paulette Gebara Farah, was initially reported as being missing and possibly kidnapped in March. Her parents and nannies came under suspicion, and then her decomposing body was found lodged in her bed nine days later. The site also includes a space for the public to send their questions about the case.

Initially deemed a homicide, the case was then classified as an accident by asphyxiation. The web page appears designed to dispel public skepticism that stems from the investigators’ failure to find the body earlier – as well as rumors of conspiracy and a cover-up. As a result of public pressure from the case, the state of Mexico’s top prosecutor – Alberto Bazbaz Sacal – resigned. Bazbaz had defended his office’s investigation even after recognizing earlier that errors had been committed by investigators, such as failing to inspect the child’s bedroom more thoroughly on the day of her reported disappearance, according to *BBC Mundo*. A message on the web page, created by the state government and the state attorney general’s office of the State of Mexico, introduces the elements that they used to determine the death was accidental: “With the investigation finished, it’s time to explain to the society the technical and judicial elements that allowed us to reach this conclusion.” The web page was publicized shortly after Bazbaz stepped down.

The page includes videos, photos, and other documents that are associated with the investigation and that provide a chronological timeline from the moment that the child disappeared until investigators found her body. The state of Mexico’s investigatory branch also created a channel on YouTube where people can watch videos related to the case. Some of the detailed sections of the page include questions such as why investigators did not find the child’s body, lodged between the mattress and the bed base, when a bed sheet was removed as part of the investigation.

Another question addressed is why no one heard the child scream for help if this was an accident. A response on the web site says that, “there was no sign that Paulette would have called for her life. Her position, with the fingers inside her mouth and no signs of a struggle or that she had been moved, suggest that she fell into the space while she was sleeping and eventually lost her consciousness - and then her life.” Among the many documents included in the site, is one from an FBI analysis that determined that the presence of alcohol in her body was the result of the decomposition of the body. The web site notes that the FBI report called the case a “homicide,” but the web page explains this was because at the time there was no reason to think it was an accident. The web site also addresses other rumors such as if the body was found inside a bag. Her body was not found in a bag, according to authorities.

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ACCESS TO JUSTICE

SUPREME COURT

Supreme Court finds Human Rights abuses in ABC daycare fire

Mexico’s Supreme Court ruled that there were “grave human rights violations” in the ABC Daycare fire that killed 49 children and injured 75 in June of last year, but refused to implicate any current or former public servants as responsible for the abuses. Advocates for families of the victims have demanded that then-governor Eduardo Bours and former and current officials in the Social Security Administration, which authorizes and oversees daycare centers in the country, should be held responsible. In a closer decision, the Court also ruled that the irregularities in administration and oversight attributed to the ABC fire could not be generalized to all of the nation’s 480 daycare centers, also casting doubt on the possibility of high-

level officials facing consequences for the fire. One of the judges in the majority for that ruling, Sergio Valis Hernández, was head of the legal department of the Social Security Administration (Instituto Mexicano de Seguridad Social, IMSS) under President Zedillo. The IMSS is one of the federal agencies facing scrutiny by advocates of the victims' families.

Former Supreme Court Justice Juventino Castro ridiculed the Court for its willingness to recognize the existence of abuses, while refusing to rule that any individuals were responsible for them. He said that these "technical problems" have kept justice from being served in the ABC case, now over a year old. Shortly following the ruling, Castro, now president the Constitutional Commission in the Chamber of Deputies, said that he would present a constitutional amendment that would require that Supreme Court investigations be turned over to the federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) for independent review. Castro argued that there are precedents for the Supreme Court holding public servants responsible for human rights abuses carried out under their watch. When he was a Supreme Court justice, Castro and a colleague investigated the Aguas Blancas massacre in Guerrero, and found the governor and most of his cabinet responsible.

Interior Minister Fernando Gómez Mont has faced scrutiny for reportedly meeting with each Supreme Court Justice days before the ABC ruling. Gómez Mont insisted that his visits were normal given his position as representative of the executive branch, and were intended to ensure that clear legal, moral and ethical frameworks were in place for the finding of guilty parties. Senators from the three major parties have also made statements which emphasized that the Supreme Court decision should not close the books on the ABC case. Alejandro González Alcocer (PAN), President of the Justice Committee in the Senate, argued that the Court's powers to sanction individuals in such cases are limited. Senate PRI leader Manlio Fabio Beltrones urged the PGR to investigate the case. Others urged families of the victims to take the case to the Inter-American Human Rights Court.

The ABC daycare case is starting to draw comparisons to the News Divine nightclub case, in which 17 youths were killed in a stampede following an underage drinking raid by Federal District police. Two years after the incident, no convictions have been made in that case.

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MILITARY JUSTICE

CNDH finds soldiers responsible for boys' deaths in Tamaulipas in April

The National Commission of Human Rights (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH) determined that the deaths of Martín and Bryan Almanza Salazar, nine and five years of age respectively, were a result of discretionary and direct fire by elements of the army and not by crossfire between army forces and organized crime as stated by the government of Felipe Calderón. The young boys were shot to death in their family's SUV on April 3 in Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas as they passed through a military checkpoint with their parents.

The boys' parents and CNDH investigators immediately disputed the Army Attorney General's Office's initial claims that the boys died as a result of a grenade thrown by cartel gunmen, arguing that the victims had clearly suffered bullet wounds. In a press conference CNDH President Raúl Plasencia said that results of the ensuing investigation revealed that the vehicle in which the two minors traveled, along with eleven others, was directly attacked by military forces between 116 and 117 kilometers off the highway to Nuevo Laredo in Reynosa, Tamaulipas. According to testimonials by the victims and inquires made by the CNDH through 326 proceedings, the National Defense Secretariat (Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, Sedena) lied by stating that the minors died in crossfire. Because of this and Sedena's refusal to provide information about the operation, the CNDH issued a recommendation, demanding that Sedena pay restitution for damages done to the victims and their families, and requiring soldiers who participated in the operation to undergo regular toxicological and psychological examinations. The CNDH also said it would

file a complaint with the federal Attorney General's Office seeking criminal proceedings against the soldiers it says were responsible for the boys' deaths.

SOURCES:

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Human rights groups decry police raids of women's shelters in Cancún and Juárez

There have been at least three instances of confrontations between local police officers and employees of women's shelters – two instances involving a Cancún shelter run by journalist and human rights activist Lydia Cacho, and one in a shelter in Ciudad Juárez. Human rights groups have denounced the incursions, while the operators of the shelters are demanding more protections from unwarranted police invasions.

In Cancún, a local police agent arrived at the door of the battered women's shelter Centro Integral de Atención para la Mujer Maltratada (CIAM), run by Ms. Cacho. He was accompanied by five motorcycle police demanding that they release his wife, who had checked herself into the center after her husband fractured her nose with an iron, choked her, and beat her in the back and arms. The officer, Cruz Antonio García Javier, was reportedly intoxicated. While García demanded the return of his wife, the five motorcycle police reportedly had their guns drawn, threatening anybody who approached. The victim, 29 years old, had previously checked into the center twice with her two children. Later that day, two men claiming to be agents of the Quintana Roo Attorney General's Office threatened to enter and search the center in accordance with a warrant issued against Ms. Cacho. García denies beating his wife, and said that he was worried upon not finding her at home, and thinking she had been kidnapped set out looking for her. Investigators have questioned how he managed to find her at the women's shelter, as he claims not to have known of its existence. Human rights group Article 19 has demanded that state authorities investigate the incident, and ensure that women's centers in the state are better protected from similar threats in the future.

The following day, Cancún police officers arrested two CIAM employees who were accompanying a woman attempting to recover her son from school. The woman had reportedly fled her home weeks earlier to escape mistreatment from her husband, who Lydia Cacho said is guilty of homicide in Sinaloa. The boy's teacher had orders from the father not to release the boy to anybody but him, and after the CIAM employees insisted that the boy be turned over to them, police arrived at the school and arrested the two women on breaking and entering and kidnapping charges. It is not clear whether the two incidents are related.

In the north of the country in Ciudad Juárez, a group of 14 armed men, including six municipal police officers, forced their way into the battered women's shelter Sin Violencia, claiming to be looking for a girl reported as kidnapped. The men reportedly threatened a number of employees before fruitlessly searching the building. Amnesty International (AI) has decried the invasion, stressing that the center houses women who are victims of spousal violence, some of whom are ex-partners of municipal police officers. AI said that the raid undermined the confidentiality of the center, and that municipal police officers had again eluded their obligation to protect the safety of women. The organization has also called for a timely and impartial investigation into the raid and assurance from authorities that such an incident will not be repeated.

SOURCES:

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JUSTICE REFORM

Governors express concerns about the viability of justice reforms

Echoing claims long made by state Supreme Court presidents, governors attending the Second Forum on Security and Justice expressed during the justice reform panel that political will and financial resources are lacking for an effective implementation of the justice reform bill passed by the Mexican Congress in the spring of 2008. For his part, Felipe Borrego, charged with managing the implementation of the judicial reforms, said that some states have delayed the process until after the upcoming elections.

The governors of the four states with justice reform measures currently underway all voiced concerns over their future viability. José Reyes Baeza, Chihuahua governor, said that the justice reform process has become a “victim” of the rampant criminality in various parts of the country. In his statements, Nuevo León Governor Rodrigo Medina focused on the economic aspect of the lagging reform process, urging Congress to allocate more funds in the 2011 budget. Marco Adame, governor of Morelos, said that there is not enough political will among federal officials to rally the states behind a unified reform process.



Fernando Gómez Mont

At the opening of the forum, President Calderón called on local authorities to accelerate the implementation of oral trials, saying that they are a cornerstone of a future judicial system that will ensure that criminals do not walk free due to judicial technicalities. Tensions arose last month between the federal government and Chihuahua officials when Interior Minister Fernando Gómez Mont accused the state’s justice system of contributing to instability by creating a “revolving door” for criminals who find loopholes in the system that result in their return to the streets.

At the bill’s passage, Congress gave the states eight years to make the necessary constitutional, bureaucratic, and personnel changes to be in compliance with the federal reforms. To date, all but four states have initiated the process toward oral trials, according to Felipe Borrego. Six states – Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Morelos, Mexico State, and Zacatecas – have made concrete advancements toward full implementation of the reforms, largely before the passage of the federal reforms, and with mixed reviews of success.

SOURCES:

Ramos Pérez, Jorge. “FCH llama a trabajar en nuevo sistema de justicia.” *El Universal* May 25, 2010.
Estela Botello, Blanca. “Concretar reforma de justicia requiere de recursos, dicen gobernadores.” *La Crónica de Hoy* May 26, 2010.

WORKERS’ RIGHTS

Federal Police end three-year miner strike in Sonora; abuse allegations follow

Sonora’s State Human Rights Commission (Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos, CEDH) said that there may have been human rights violations during the removal by Federal Police of miners protesting at the offices of the mining company Grupo México on June 6 in Cananea, Sonora. The CEDH is particularly concerned with the arrests of five protestors who say they were kept in isolation without food for nearly 16 hours. There have also been reports of Federal Police deploying tear gas against striking miners and their families taking refuge from the police operation in the local union hall. Additionally, the CEDH is handling a claim by a journalist who says he was arbitrarily subdued, and later his telephone was confiscated and his photography equipment destroyed. CEDH has referred the case to the National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, CNDH) for review. The workers began their strike in 2007 over safety conditions, and have faced a number of aggressions since, which have cost the lives of at least two mine workers.

On his behalf, Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) leader Jesús Ortega said that the Cananea confrontation is just one example of the Mexican government's criminalization of social struggles. He said that the government needs to learn to engage such social crises with negotiation instead of force. Senators from the Institutional Revolutionary Party and the Labor Party joined PRD senators to demand that the CNDH intervene in the ensuing investigations, and also the resignation of Secretary of Labor Javier Lozano. Conspicuously absent from Senate denunciations were members of President Calderón's National Action Party (PAN), which receives financial backing from Grupo México, owned by the Larrea family. As David Bacon reported in *The Nation* magazine this month, union supporters have accused Calderón of attempting to break left-wing labor unions in order to staunch political opposition to his party. Prior to Calderón's state dinner last month, leaders of the Steel Workers Union and the AFL-CIO demanded that the Obama administration make it clear to Calderón that it would not tolerate aggressions against the striking mine workers, though they were not heeded.

Secretary Lozano insisted that the federal government acted legally when it sent Federal Police to forcibly remove striking miners from the mine in Cananea. The mining town has been the site of years of conflict between workers and, "I am convinced that we acted with legality and patience...it is the suitable moment to reestablish work, new contracts, and new investments," said Lozano in a radio interview earlier this month. Miners in Cananea initiated a strike in 2007, which suspended the operations of the largest copper mine in the country and has crippled operations in the town that houses the mine workers and their families. Lozano has offered to re-contract the 1,200 workers at the Cananea mine on top of paying severance for the unfulfilled remainder of their collective contract if they agree to abandon their protests. Nevertheless, skeptics fear that the broken strike will result in a round of retaliatory firings, as happened following failed strikes in 1998 and 2006.

SOURCES:

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AROUND THE STATES

VERACRUZ

Parents of PAN mayoral candidate murdered in Veracruz



On June 5, gunmen assassinated the parents of Luis Herrera, National Action Party (PAN) mayoral candidate for Las Minas, Veracruz. Miguel Ángel, PAN gubernatorial candidate, blamed the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) for the assassinations, particularly the current Las Minas mayor Gregorio Caro Alarcón of the PAN but recently allied with the PRI, and governor Fidel Herrera Beltrán. Ángel called on the governor to address the "string of attacks" against opposition candidates in the state. Two days following the death of Luis Herrera's parents,

Veracruz police detained two men presumed responsible for carrying out the attack. Governor Herrera Beltrán said that the quick arrests were evidence that crimes in his state do not go unpunished. State investigators have said that the murders were sparked by an inter-familial conflict, though state PAN leaders continue to insist that they were politically motivated.

SOURCES:

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 Carvajal, Ignacio. "PAN rechaza versión de PGJE por asesinato de militantes en Las Minas." *E-consulta* June 8, 2010.
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BAJA CALIFORNIA

Baja California preparing for oral trials in August



Baja California justice officials continue to report advancements in their preparations for the new criminal justice system, slated to go into effect August 11 of this year.

Public prosecutors and defense attorneys underwent training by experts from Argentina, considered to be a Latin American pioneer in the application of oral trials. Justice reform implementation was delayed last year, due to a determination by state justice authorities that infrastructure and personnel training would not be in place by the set deadline.

At a conference at the University of Tijuana, acclaimed lawyer and law professor Juan Velásquez said that the implementation of oral trials is an advancement for the country, but warned that they are doomed to fail under their current circumstances. He said that while the reforms are being carried forward with good intentions, they have yet to see the resources necessary to properly train personnel, particularly police officers who are required under the reforms to shift from preventive functions to becoming investigators of crimes. He said that the problems extend beyond Baja California, arguing that the Federal Police, established a year ago, have yet to produce efficient and trustworthy criminal investigators.

SOURCES:

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MORELOS

Morelos continues to report progress in accusatorial justice reform



The state of Morelos, one of six states currently in the active process of implementing the accusatorial justice system, has reported advancements in that area. Personnel from the Emiliano Zapata Public Security Secretariat (Secretaría de Seguridad Pública, SSP) in Morelos underwent a workshop on crime scene marking, preservation, and documentation as well as handling detainees as part of their training in the accusatorial justice system, currently under a gradual implementation.

At the political forum "Security and Justice," attended by governors from around the country, Morelos Governor Marco Adame Castillo touted his state's efforts in continuing to move toward full implementation of the reforms. He emphasized his state's efforts toward restorative justice, which orders individuals convicted of property crimes to pay restitution to their victims, instead of going to jail. Adame Castillo said that in the 19 months since oral trials were introduced in the state, 90% of individuals ordered to pay restitution in lieu of jail time have complied. He also reported success in the state's adolescent justice system, reporting that 51 of 58 cases have been successful. However, the governor echoed concerns of others at the conference that more resources are needed from the federal government for the training of judges, police officers, and prosecuting and defense attorneys, as well as bolstering course offerings at law schools.

SOURCES:

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About the Project: *The Justice in Mexico Project studies rule of law developments in Mexico, and is coordinated through the Trans-Border Institute (TBI) at Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego. The Justice in Mexico Project conducts and disseminates research on three broad categories related to the rule of law: law and order, transparency and accountability, and access to justice. The project receives generous financial support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Tinker Foundation. To make a financial contribution to our organization, please visit: <http://www.sandiego.edu/tbi/support>.*

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