

RESOLUTION ON MEXICO

Since PEN International's last resolution on Mexico in 2015, the Mexican government and authorities have not kept their promise to stop the constant infringement of freedom of expression and human rights.

Violence and impunity have not lessened, and threats and assaults against writers and journalists have not ceased either. Over 90 percent of these crimes are not adequately investigated, nor are those responsible brought to justice, as is the case for Veracruz photojournalist Rubén Espinosa, killed on 31 July 2015.¹ Mexico continues to be one of the most dangerous places to practise journalism. The forms of censorship change and become increasingly powerful tools to keep society quiet; also, social protest continues to be criminalised.

The Special Attorney's Office for Crimes against Freedom of Expression (FEADLE) reported 104 murdered journalists and 25 disappeared journalists from 2005 to June 2016. Michoacán, Tamaulipas and Veracruz states recorded four cases of disappearance each. Threats, abuses of authority, murder and arbitrary detention are included in the crimes most committed. From July 2010 to March 2016, the states with the highest number of preliminary investigations into violence against journalists were Mexico City, with 121 preliminary investigations, Veracruz with 78, Mexico State with 65, Oaxaca with 49 and Guerrero with 44.

In the first nine months of 2016, 12 communicators were murdered (details can be found in the annex). These murders are confirmation that Mexico is the most deadly country in the West for the media, according to the organisation Reporters without Borders (RSF).

Almost half of the threats against journalists are from state officials, while the rest are from organised crime, private persons or political parties. In Mexico City, the journalist and writer Héctor de Mauleón received death threats on social media on 21 June 2016 after publishing investigations by instalments in *El Universal* on alleged drug and weapons trafficking.² On 14 June, journalist Diego Enrique Osorno, who covers subjects relating to drug-trafficking, was informed of potential attacks on him after having published an investigation into a business network of the former governor of Oaxaca, Ulises Ruiz, on the Aristegui Noticias portal.³ The informant, a vigilante from the State University, said that another hit-man had been hired to harm him. Meanwhile, on 14 July 2016, the academic and columnist Sergio Aguayo was sued for 'further defamation' for the second time by Humberto Moreira, former governor of Coahuila State who has been detained in Spain for investigation into allegations of money laundering and links to organized crime⁴. On 21 July 2016, journalist Carmen Aristegui reported that she was being sued by Multivision (MVS) to withdraw her prologue to a book on President Enrique Peña Nieto's 'White House' mansion written by her team of reporters.⁵ Finally, in early

¹ <http://www.vanguardia.com.mx/articulo/periodistas-exigen-justicia-un-ano-del-asesinato-de-ruben-espinosa>

² <http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/mexico-journalist-and-writer-hector-de-mauleon-threatened-for-investigative-reports/>

³ <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2016/07/moreira-presentara-otra-demanda-contra-sergio-aguayo-por-nuevas-infamias-e-su-contra-dice/>

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/article/mexican-journalist-sergio-aguayo-sued-ex-governor>

⁵ <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/ultimas/2016/07/21/duenos-de-mvs-demandan-a-aristegui-por-prologo-sobre-la-casa-blanca>

August 2016, reporter Noé Zavaleta of *Proceso* was threatened by José Abella, businessman and owner of the newspaper *El Buen Tono* in Veracruz.⁶

The Assembly of Delegates of PEN International, meeting at its 82nd World Congress in Ourense, Galicia (Spain), 26th September to 2nd October 2016, urges the Mexican authorities to:

- Examine urgently matters relating to freedom of expression and establish as a matter of urgency the conditions that are essential for the free exercise of journalism throughout the country, complying with international conventions on human rights and freedom of expression to which Mexico is a state party;
- End the current impunity for murders of journalists that for years has been the rule rather than the exception, including by:
 - Ensuring that the federal and local authorities clarify the facts and exhaust all lines of investigation of all murders of journalists of a federal nature and show the connection between the murders and the journalists' work wherever it exists;
 - Ensuring the cases of the nine journalists murdered in Mexico in the first half of 2016 are subject to federal investigations;
 - Expediting the investigations into the more than 100 murdered journalists in the country, as 90 percent of cases are not being dealt with, including by facilitating cooperation between legislative chambers;
- Ensuring that the Mexican journalists' protection security protocols are reviewed and updated;
- Ensure that the federal and local authorities guarantee freedom of expression throughout the country and do not restrict access to information or dictate journalists' contributions to the media or oblige private companies to dismiss journalists from their jobs;
- Ensure that federal and local governments investigate and punish those responsible for threats to journalists and guarantee writers' safety so that they may work without censure or fear, thus guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression.

⁶ <http://www.pen-international.org/newsitems/mexico-veracruz-journalist-threatened-for-book-on-state-governor-fears-for-safety/>