



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8 MARCH 2012

MEXICO

Murdered and Disappeared Women Writers

Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries in the world in which to be a writer. Since 2006, at least 45 journalists, writers and bloggers have been murdered or disappeared, most of them in the course of their work.

Since 2009 there has been an escalation in violence against writers, with women increasingly being targeted. Five of the nine Mexican writers killed in 2011 were women; their murders were particularly savage (see below).

On International Women's Day, PEN International calls on PEN members to remember our fallen and missing female colleagues.

You can do this in two ways:

1. Arrange for obituaries to be placed in national or local press (please see below for very effective examples by Swiss German PEN and Swiss Italian and Reto-Romansh PEN).
2. Write to the Mexican authorities calling for an end to impunity and a thorough investigation into the killings and disappearances of these women and of all the murdered and disappeared Mexican writers (see below for addresses).

PEN will be campaigning on Mexico throughout 2012, building on the successes of both the PEN Protesta delegation in January 2012 and the Day of the Dead Campaign in November 2011.

Please let us know what you will be doing to commemorate the murdered and missing women writers of Mexico on International Women's Day.

Example obituary: Swiss German PEN (on 2 November 2011)

Das DeutschSchweizer PEN Zentrum, zusammen mit dem P.E.N. Centro della Svizzera italiana e retoromancia und dem Centre PEN Suisse Romand, trauert mit den Menschen in Mexiko um ihre Kollegin, die Journalistin

Yolanda Ordaz de la Cruz

ermordet am 24. Juli 2011.

Eine der vielen verschleppten und ermordeten Journalistinnen und Journalisten in Mexiko ... An diesem Tag der Toten gedenken wir ihnen, entbieten all unseren Kolleginnen und Kollegen in Mexiko unser Beileid und sichern ihnen unsere Unterstützung in der Verteidigung der Meinungsfreiheit zu.

EP43uzgA

Il Centro P.E.N. della Svizzera italiana e retoromancia, unitamente ai Centri P.E.N. della Svizzera tedesca e romanda si associa nella giornata dedicata ai defunti al dolore del popolo messicano vittima di soprusi e aggressioni rimaste impunte per la connivenza delle autorità locali con la malavita organizzata nel ricordo della barbara uccisione della giornalista



**Yolanda
Ordaz de la Cruz**

assassinata e decapitata il 24 luglio 2011 per aver condotto un'inchiesta sul narcotraffico nello Stato di Veracruz. Una fra le decine di giornalisti e scrittori scomparsi. L'uccisione della collega giornalista e scrittrice è solo uno dei fatti di sangue che hanno colpito il paese nordamericano negli ultimi anni. Ai colleghi messicani va tutto il nostro sostegno morale nella condivisione di ideali a sostegno della libertà d'espressione e d'opinione.

Example obituary: Swiss Italian and Reto-Romansh PEN (2 November 2011)

Write to the President, Attorney General and Special Prosecutor for Crimes Against Freedom of Expression:

- Protesting the continuing attacks on journalists;
- Calling for an end to Mexico's climate of impunity in which attacks such as these take place;
- Calling on the government of President Felipe Calderón to fulfil promises to make crimes against journalists a federal offence, by amending the Constitution so that federal authorities have the power to investigate, prosecute and punish such crimes.

President

Lic. Felipe De Jesús Calderón Hinojosa
Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos
Residencia Oficial de los Pinos Casa Miguel Alemán
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec, C.P. 11850, DISTRITO FEDERAL, México
Fax: (+ 52 55) 5093 4901/ 5277 2376
Email: felipe.calderon@presidencia.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Presidente/ Dear Mr President

Attorney General

Lic. Marisela Morales Ibáñez
Procuradora General de la República
Av. Paseo de Reforma No. 211-213, Piso 16
Col. Cuauhtémoc, Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F. C.P. 06500
Tel: + 52 55 5346 0108
Fax: + 52 55 53 46 0908 (if a voice answers, ask "tono de fax, por favor")
E-mail: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx
Salutation: Señora Procuradora General/Dear Attorney General

Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Freedom of Expression

Dr Gustavo Salas Chávez
Fiscal Especial para la Atención de Delitos Cometidos contra la Libertad de Expresión (FEADLE)
Email: gustavo.salas@pgr.gob.mx, feadle@pgr.gob.mx

Murdered and Disappeared Women Writers

KILLED

1-6 January 2011

Susana CHÁVEZ CASTILLO, prominent poet and activist; led protests against the unsolved killings of women raped and killed in Ciudad Juárez

Location of murder: Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua state



Chávez (37) was found strangled with a bag over her head and her left hand cut off in the centre of Ciudad Juárez on 6 January 2011; her body was only identified five days later. The authorities were quick to deny that her murder was related to her activism and poetry highlighting the ‘femicides’ or to organized crime. The Chihuahua state attorney general’s office said that Chávez was killed by three teenage boys she had met while out drinking. The teenagers allegedly invited her to a house belonging to one of them and murdered her while they were drunk and high on drugs, cutting off her hand to try to make the murder look as if it was connected to organized crime. All three suspects were arrested and charged with her murder. For more information, [see here](#).

24-26 July 2011

Yolanda ORDAZ DE LA CRUZ, crime reporter and columnist for the regional daily newspaper *Notiver*

Location of murder: Boca del Rio, Veracruz



Ordaz was abducted by gunmen as she left her house on 24 July 2011; her decapitated body was found two days later, near the building of the newspaper *Imagen*. A note found with the body seemed to connect her murder with that of another *Notiver* columnist, Miguel Ángel López Velasco. The note said: “*Friends can also betray you*” and was signed “Carranza”. A former traffic police officer named Juan Carlos Carranza Saavedra has reportedly been identified as the main suspect in López’ murder. Ordaz had covered the war on drugs and the police beat for *Notiver*. At a press conference on 26 July, the state attorney general reportedly stated that the killing was not related to Ordaz’ journalistic work and that the evidence to date seemed to indicate that her killers were members of an organized crime group. However, a spokesperson for the state attorney general’s office later confirmed that the journalist’s work was one of the lines of investigation being followed. Mexico’s Human Rights Commission reportedly planned to open its own investigation into the murder. For more information, see the PEN International RAN alert [here](#).

31 August-1 September 2011

Ana María Marcela YARCE VIVEROS (f): founder, reporter and head of public relations at the bimonthly political magazine *Contralinea*

Location of murder: Mexico City, Federal District



Yarce (pictured, left) was found dead in a park in Mexico City on 1 September 2011, alongside freelance journalist and former Televisa reporter **Rocio González Trápaga** (pictured, right). Yarce and González, both 48, were reportedly abducted as they left their office in the city centre the previous night and strangled. Their bodies were found naked with nooses around their necks and their hands tied behind their backs. On 30 September and 1 October

2011, two men suspected of killing the journalists were arrested. The suspects reportedly confessed to the murders, and the Mexico City attorney general's office said that the motive for the killings was robbery. A third man is also thought to be under arrest in connection with the crimes. *Contralinea* has frequently exposed corruption in its coverage and has been the target of intimidation and judicial harassment, particularly since 2007 when it published reports that proved embarrassing for the national oil company PEMEX. For more information, see the PEN International RAN alert [here](#).

24 September 2011

María Elizabeth MACÍAS CASTRO, editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper *Primera Hora* and blogger

Location of murder: Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas state



Macías (39) was found dead in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas state, on 24 September 2011; her body had been decapitated. A note found next to her accused her of denouncing drug violence on social networks and websites such as Nuevo Laredo en Vivo (Nuevo Laredo Live), where members of the public can leave messages indicating to the security forces locations where gangs congregate and sell drugs. The state authorities said that the message had been left by a criminal gang. The note reportedly made reference to the pen name Macías used when blogging, 'La Nena de Nuevo Laredo', and was signed with the letter 'Z', usually associated with the Zetas cartel. A similar note was found near the bodies of two people discovered hanging from a bridge in Nuevo Laredo on 13 September.

The Tamaulipas state government reportedly expressed its "deepest condolences" to Macías' family and friends. The state attorney general's office is investigating the murder. For more information, see the PEN International alert [here](#).

DISAPPEARED

11 November 2009

María Esther AGUILAR CANSIMBE, reporter for the daily newspaper *El Diario de Zamora* and local correspondent for the regional daily *El Cambio de Michoacán*

Location of disappearance: Zamora, Michoacán state



Aguilar (32) was last seen leaving her home on 11 November 2009 after she received a call on her mobile phone. It is thought that her disappearance may be related to a series of articles she had recently written on local corruption and organized crime. On 22 October 2009, she covered a military operation near Zamora where at least three individuals, including the son of a local politician, were arrested on suspicion of collaborating with organized crime groups. On 27 October 2009, she reported on local police abuse, after which a high-ranking official was forced to resign. Three days later, she published a story on the arrest of an alleged leader of the drug cartel La Familia Michoacana. The Special Federal Attorney's Office for Combating Violence against the Media (FEADP) reportedly took over the investigation on 18 November 2009. A year later Cansimbe was still missing and her relatives feared that the investigation was going nowhere. No further news. For more information, see the PEN International RAN alert [here](#).