

## Wave of violence against journalists in Mexico continues

By [Carla Torres](#)

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Mexico has witnessed a surge in violence against journalists [Image: ProtoplasmaKid via Wikimedia Commons]

Journalist Carlos Domínguez was stabbed 21 times in front of his family on the 13 January in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, one of the regions most affected by the drug trade related violence. The day before his death, Domínguez had criticised the government by writing about the "*ridiculous use of speeches to hide the failure of the federal government in issues of public security*".

As the first journalist to be killed in 2018, the local authorities are investigating the possibility of the crime being connected to Domínguez's role as a columnist on the local newspaper *Diario de Nuevo Laredo*.

Unfortunately, counting murdered journalists and human rights defenders in Mexico is not a novelty. Along with Syria and Iraq, the country is considered one of the most dangerous countries for the profession.

In 2017 alone, twelve journalists that reported on drug trade were killed; Javier Valdez, Miroslava Breach, Cecilia Pineda Brito, Ricardo Monlui Cabrera, Filiberto Alvarez Landeros, Jonathan Rodríguez, Salvador Adame, Luciano Rivera, Cándido Ríos, Edgar Esqueda and Gumaro Pérez Aguinaldo. Crimes against them are accompanied with impunity: no one is under arrest for the murders committed on 2017.

The reality for reporters in Mexico is one of harassment, threats, illegal detention, and torture. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Méndez, the practice is widespread in the country: a statement denied by the government. The policy of president Peña Nieto's government, elected in 2012, has been to continue engaging in the 'War on Drugs' declared by his predecessor, Felipe Calderón (2006-2012).

Nevertheless, the wave of violence continues. Public authorities usually collude with organised crime, as evidenced by the disappearance of the 43 students of Iguala. In the official interest of national security, the government is criminalising human rights organisations, journalists, and social movements opposed to its policies.

In 2012, the National Congress approved a law for the protection of human rights defenders and

journalists, implementing a national mechanism for their protection. However, Human Rights organizations have claimed that the shortage of resources and trained agents stops the mechanism from working properly and giving an appropriate response.

On December 2017, a new internal security law was sanctioned. This law formalises the participation of the military in national security and reduces the incentive for civilian authorities to act in their traditional role.

So far, the Mexican government is designating all its resources on fighting the 'War on Drugs', and not that much attention nor resources to the national mechanism for the protection of journalists and human rights defenders which are paying this political decision with their lives.



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