

WAN-IFRA, IPI call for investigation into Mexican journalist's murder

The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the International Press Institute (IPI) have demanded that Mexican federal and state authorities immediately investigate the murder of a freelance journalist in the central Mexican state of Puebla.



Adrián Silva Moreno, a contributor to the newspaper Puntual, was shot and killed in his car on Wednesday after having covered the discovery of a warehouse reportedly filled with stolen fuel near the city of Tehuacán.

Reports indicated that the journalist was killed immediately, while a companion, who has been identified as former municipal police officer, was shot in the head while attempting to escape. The assailants fled the scene.

Silva Moreno is the 55th journalist killed as a consequence of reporting work in Mexico since 2006, according to IPI's Death Watch, though the first in the state of Puebla during that same time period.

Mexico was the deadliest country in the world for the media last year and in 2012 remains the deadliest in the Western Hemisphere with seven deaths.

Mortal threat facing journalists

"This latest, brazen killing, committed in broad daylight, is a testament to the mortal threat facing journalists Mexico," IPI Executive Director Alison Bethel McKenzie said today. "How many reporters need to die before the country's stakeholders realize that the appalling violence against the media is not only costing precious lives but also eating away at the foundations of free society?"

She added: "Our heart goes out to the family and colleagues of Adrián Silva Moreno, but we are sick of issuing condolences and hoping for an investigation. We want action and we want Mexican president-elect Enrique Peña Nieto to develop without delay a plan to end the impunity that is driving this vicious violence when he takes office on Dec. 1."

Vincent Peyrègne, the WAN-IFRA CEO, said: "The Mexican press is facing a critical situation that is jeopardising the very core of the country's democracy. The incoming administration needs to urgently tackle the issue with concrete and effective measures."

WAN-IFRA and IPI publicly called on Mexico's leading presidential candidates this summer and, later, Peña Nieto, to work to combat the cycle of violence that has engulfed the Mexican news media.

War correspondents

In an IPI special feature to mark World Press Freedom Day last May, Marcela Turati of the magazine

Proceso described how Mexican journalists have become "war correspondents" in their own country.

Earlier this year, a study conducted by University of Toronto Professor Dr. Anthony Feinstein concluded that Mexican journalists exhibit levels of traumatic stress similar to that of war correspondents.

WAN-IFRA's report "A Death Threat to Freedom - A Report on Violence Against Mexico's Press", published in September 2012, details the extent to which violence is undermining the media's existence in certain regions, as well as highlighting the ineffective response of authorities at federal, state and municipal levels

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