

A Safer World For The Truth



**PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL ON THE
MURDER OF JOURNALISTS**

CASE FILE

English

CASE HEARING

MEXICO

26-27 APRIL 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. This case file contains the materials presented to the Panel of Judges of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) in the context of the second hearing of the PPT's 50th Session: the People's Tribunal on the Murder of Journalists in Mexico. This hearing takes place in Mexico City on 26 and 27 April 2022. The hearing is organized by Free Press Unlimited (FPU), Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in close consultation with Propuesta Cívica.

2. **The first day of the hearing** starts with the testimony of various experts and overview witnesses to set out the background and the context of impunity for crimes against journalists in Mexico. They will present the different types of attacks on journalists, specific groups of journalists at risk, and the role of the State in the prevention and investigation of these crimes. **The second day of the Mexico hearing** will focus on the emblematic case of journalist Miguel Ángel López Velasco, also known as 'Milo Vela', who was murdered together with his wife Agustina Solana and their son Misael on 20 June 2011 in Veracruz. The case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco reflects the wider patterns of systemic impunity and violence committed against members of the press both in Veracruz and more generally in Mexico.

3. This case file includes an outline of the evidence to be presented during the hearing. Sections 1.1 and 1.2 contain an overview of the submitted materials ([list of annexes](#)) and witnesses ([witnesses](#)) who will testify during the hearing. This overview connects these materials and testimonies to the points made in the indictment concerning the context of crimes against journalists in Mexico and the case of journalist Miguel Ángel López Velasco. After the hearing, this case file will be expanded with the testimonies delivered during the hearing.

1.1 Contextual Background of Crimes against Journalists in Mexico

1.1.1 Targeted crimes against journalists

4. In the last two decades, Mexico has become one of the most dangerous places in the world for journalists.¹ As of April 2022, between 51 and 153 journalists were reported to have been murdered in Mexico since 2000.² In the first three months of 2022 alone, 8 journalists were murdered, presumably in retaliation of their journalistic work.³ In addition, since 2003, 25 Mexican journalists have been reported as having disappeared.⁴ Academic research confirms that the high rate of journalist murders is not a result of general criminal violence, but rather the consequence of targeted killing (**Annex C**).⁵

5. During the first day of the hearing, investigative journalist [Anabel Hernández](#) will provide contextual testimony concerning the causes of the systemic violence against the press in Mexico and introduce the dynamics of violence against the press in Mexico. These determinants are also described in the academic research included in **Annex D-F**. Journalists [Adela Navarro](#), [Jorge Carrasco](#) and [Patricia Mayorga](#) will present overview evidence on the systematic targeting of journalists, based on their own experiences in Baja California, Veracruz and Chihuahua respectively - three states with the highest rates of violence against journalists.⁶

6. These testimonies will also document the various types of violence faced by Mexican journalists including threats, physical attacks, harassment and intimidation, and surveillance (**Annex G**). Witness [Martha Olivia López Medellín](#), journalist and member of the collective Reporteras en Guardia, will give evidence relating to the gender dimensions of these attacks against female journalists.

¹ RSF. World Press Freedom Index. <https://rsf.org/en/mexico>. Retrieved 4 April 2022.

² CPJ. <https://cpj.org/data>. Retrieved 4 April 2022; Artículo 19.

<https://articulo19.org/periodistasasesinados/>; Retrieved 4 April 2022

³ The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. March 24 2022.

<https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/showarticle.asp?artID=1230&IID=1>

⁴ RSF. 2021 Balance. December 2021.

<https://rsf.org/es/noticias/el-numero-de-periodistas-encarcelados-arbitrariamente-crece-un-20-en-2021-488-estan-hoy-0>

⁵ Annex C

⁶ Artículo 19. <https://articulo19.org/periodistasasesinados/>; Retrieved 4 April 2022

1.1.2 Impunity for crimes against journalists

7. Several state institutions in Mexico, both at the state and federal level, are tasked with the protection of journalists and the specialized investigation of murders of journalists. However, despite these existing mechanisms, impunity in the cases relating to crimes against journalists persists: in more than 95% of the cases, the killers run free.⁷ For crimes against journalists overall, in 2019, the perpetrators remained unpunished in 99% of the cases.⁸

8. Witness [Sara Mendiola](#), director of **Propuesta Cívica**, a Mexican non-profit organization that provides legal assistance to journalists and human rights defenders, will supplement the overview of the structure and state protocols in place as well as the systemic lack of effectiveness (**Annexes H, I, J and T**) by presenting the main patterns of negligence, lack of effective protection and investigations across cases in Mexico involving the murder of a journalist drawing on her experience as a legal representative of the family members of the murdered journalists.

9. Witness [Lucía Lagunes](#), journalist and sociologist and member of the Advisory Board of Mexico's Federal Protection Programme for Journalists and Human Rights Defenders, will testify in the latter capacity and speak about the protection structure for journalists and the pattern of ineffective protection across cases of journalists who are threatened in response to their work.

10. Witness [Laura Borbolla Moreno](#) is a federal prosecutor. She previously worked for FEADLE, the specialized federal prosecution agency tasked with the investigation of crimes against journalists. She is currently the *Coordinadora de Investigación de Delitos de Género y Atención a Víctimas de la Fiscalía General de Justicia de la Ciudad de México* and will reflect on her observations as a prosecutor investigating these crimes in Mexico, including the main obstacles and challenges associated with these cases.

10. The Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Pedro Vaca Villarreal, who has been

⁷ RSF. December 2021.

<https://rsf.org/es/noticias/rsf-aboga-por-la-proteccion-de-los-periodistas-y-contra-la-impunidad-en-la-mision-internacional-de>

⁸ Artículo 19. Protocolo de la Impunidad en Delitos contra Periodistas. 2019. [Annex J]

reporting about the impunity of crimes against the press in Mexico and whose office made a recent statement concerning the worsening violence against journalists in the first months of 2022 will attend the hearing as an honorary guest (**Annex K** and **G**).

1.1.3 Impact of the impunity for crimes against journalists

10. Several journalists and family members of journalists who were murdered in Mexico will testify to the impact of these crimes on the relatives and colleagues of journalists, including:

a) [Griselda Triana](#), journalist and widow of murdered journalist Javier Valdez (1967-2017). (See also her report on the issue, "*The forgotten ones: Relatives of murdered and disappeared journalists in Mexico*" in **Annex T**);

b) [Patricia Mayorga](#), correspondent for Proceso who reported about the alleged links between the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and organized crime, will speak to the impact that the murder of journalist Miroslava Breach in 2017 had on the work of her colleagues and other journalists in Chihuahua as well as on the situation of Mexican journalists forced into exile (her recent profile of Miroslava Breach is included in **Annex U**); and

c) [Témoris Grecko and Priscila Pacheco](#), will jointly testify. Témoris is a journalist who published a book 'Killing the Story', in which he profiles several of the Mexican journalists murdered in retaliation of their work, will testify about his experience in researching these murders, speaking about the implications of these crimes for the journalistic profession in Mexico, and highlighting specifically the case of journalist Francesco Pacheco shot in 2016 in Taxco, Guerrero state. Priscila is Francesco's daughter and will speak together with Témoris about the hurdles her family encountered in their pursuit of justice.

11. These testimonies illustrate one of the central points of the indictment: journalists in Mexico who report about organized crime and state corruption are routinely left without effective protection, despite existing mechanisms in the state's framework, and the perpetrators of crimes against them systematically go unpunished. This

impunity further emboldens the killers and inevitably silences an entire community of journalists.⁹ The witnesses underline that impunity not only causes grave sorrow to those left behind, but it also affects the ability of society as a whole to inform itself, engage into dialogue and debate and demand the accountability required to maintain a healthy democracy (See also the research included in **Annex L**).

1.2 The case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco (1956-2011)

12. Miguel Ángel López Velasco was a crime reporter, and well-known columnist for the newspaper *Notiver* in Vera Cruz with more than forty years of journalistic experience, writing under the name 'Milo Vela'.¹⁰ He regularly covered politics, corruption, crime and drug trafficking often implicating officials from governor Javier Duarte's administration,¹¹ often challenging them directly.

13. His son Misael was a photographer who started working with his father at *Notiver* in 2006/2007. His other son, Miguel Jr., collaborated with his father as a journalist as well.

14. On 20 June 2011, Miguel Ángel López Velasco, his wife Agustina Solana and their son Misael were brutally murdered in their home in Veracruz.

15. This case is emblematic of the pattern of murders during the administration of Javier Duarte, which saw 18 murders of journalists between 2010 and 2016,¹² as well as the ongoing lack of effective protection of journalists following threats, and of thorough investigations following the murders.

16. The murders of Miguel, his wife and son, followed the murder of journalist Noel López Olguín only 20 days earlier.¹³ Only one month later, Miguel Ángel's colleague at *Notiver*, Yolanda Ordaz de la Cruz was kidnapped and found murdered.¹⁴ All of their cases remain unresolved to date.

⁹ Annex L; UNODC. GLOBAL STUDY ON HOMICIDE: Understanding homicide. 2019. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_3.pdf

¹⁰ Annex S, [confidential] - par. 13

¹¹ Annex O, p. 1

¹² Artículo 19. <https://articulo19.org/periodistasasesinados/>; Retrieved 4 April 2022

¹³ RSF. Encuentran el cuerpo de un periodista desaparecido desde marzo.

<https://rsf.org/es/noticias/encuentran-el-cuerpo-de-un-periodista-desaparecido-desde-marzo>. 2011.

¹⁴ Artículo 19. <https://articulo19.org/periodistasasesinados/>; Retrieved 10 April 2022

17. This section will start by presenting the context of impunity for crimes against journalists in Veracruz before addressing the particulars of the case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco.

1.2.1 Impunity for crimes against journalists in the state of Veracruz

18. While murders of journalists occur across Mexico, among the 32 federal entities of Mexico, the State of Veracruz is one of the most dangerous places for journalists. Between 2000 and 2016, 20% of the murders of journalists in Mexico took place in Veracruz.¹⁵ This violence persists to date: the 31 journalists murdered since 2000 represent the highest number of killings of journalists across all Mexican states.¹⁶ 18 of them were murdered during the term of governor Javier Duarte, whose term ran from 2010 to 2016.¹⁷

19. Witness [Celia Palacia del Montiel](#) lecturer at the Center for Culture and Communication Studies at the Universidad Veracruzana has extensively researched the history of journalism and violence against the press in Mexico, and in Veracruz specifically. She will provide her testimony on the context of the media landscape of Veracruz, including the role of Miguel Ángel López Velasco's newspaper *Notiver*, and the main causes of the structural violence committed against journalists in this state, particularly during the period 2010 to 2016 - when PRI-governor Duarte was incumbent (Two of her publications have been included in **Annexes V and W**).

20. Reflecting the national pattern of impunity, none of the 31 murders in Veracruz since 2000 have been fully solved and all of the investigations remain open to date.¹⁸ The reports in **Annexes M and W** illustrate that, particularly during the administration of Javier Duarte, the state contributed to a climate of fear. Governor Duarte personally threatened journalists in public, during a period when threats to journalists were often followed with severe forms of violence, including murder.

¹⁵ RSF. Veracruz: Los periodistas frente al Estado de miedo. 2017. [Annex M]

¹⁶ Artículo 19. <https://articulo19.org/periodistasasesinados/>; Retrieved 4 April 2022

¹⁷ Artículo 19. <https://articulo19.org/periodistasasesinados/>; Retrieved 4 April 2022

¹⁸ El Financiero.

<https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/2022/03/14/impera-impunidad-a-periodistas-asesinados-mientras-amlo-discute-con-parlamento-europeo/>. 14 March 2022.

Simultaneously, state-level prosecutors have been ineffective and negligent in their investigations and have been accused of using torture and duress.¹⁹

21. Journalist [Noé Zavaleta](#) will also testify specifically about the impunity for crimes against journalists in Veracruz. In 2016, he published the book '*Javier Duarte's Hell: Chronicles of a Fateful Government*', describing the causes of impunity and links with corruption and acts of violence by state officials. In response to this book, he was subjected to threats and intimidation.

22. Witness [Norma Trujillo Báez](#), a journalist from Veracruz, will testify about her, and her colleagues' experiences during this period. She contributed to the investigation of the Vestiges Project, initiated by photojournalist [Félix Márquez](#), which features photos of objects recovered by the families of six journalists murdered in Veracruz, including Miguel Ángel López Velasco and his son Misael, and aims to document and explore their life and identity.²⁰ As part of this investigation (included in **Annex X**), she interviewed several of her colleagues about the impact of these threats and of the unresolved murders of their fellow journalists. She also documented several other emblematic cases from Veracruz, and can speak to the different types of violence journalists continue to face in Veracruz, including the disappearance of journalists.

23. Several witnesses have provided testimony regarding the life and work of Miguel Ángel López Velasco including several of his colleagues. Their written testimonies, submitted to the judges prior to the hearing, will contextualize Miguel's publications as a journalist (see **Annexes Q and R**) as well as some of the threats Miguel Ángel López Velasco received in response. During the hearing, the Prosecutor will summarize their written submissions.

24. [Balbina Flores](#), a representative of RSF in Mexico, who has monitored the case of the murder of Miguel Ángel López Velasco, his wife Agustina Solana and their son Misael since 2011 who will testify about the context of the case (see **Annex O**), the

¹⁹ RSF. Veracruz: Los periodistas frente al Estado de miedo. 2017. [Annex M], p. 12-13; Norma Trujillo Baez. "El sexenio en el que los periodistas repetíamos: 'Nos van a matar'." 2021. [Annex X]

²⁰ Vestiges Project.

<https://quintoelab.org/project/vestiges-project-catalog-objects-slain-mexican-journalists>. 2020.

responses and investigations by the authorities and the impact of the murders in Veracruz and Mexico.

1.2.2 Milo Vela: Miguel Ángel López Velasco's work as a journalist

26. Miguel Ángel López Velasco started working at *Notiver* at the age of 19, and spent most of his training as a journalist at the newspaper. During Miguel Ángel's career, he also wrote for the *Diario de Xalapa* and had programmes on the radio show *La Pantera* and television channel *TV Azteca*.²¹ In turn, he trained his sons Misael and Miguel to become journalists.²²

27. Miguel Ángel typically wrote under the pen name 'Milo Vela', and covered politics, corruption, crime and drug trafficking. He regularly implicated officials from governor Javier Duarte's administration²³ (A selection of Miguel Ángel's last writings has been included in **Annex Q**, including his last column in **Annex R**).

28. Javier Duarte was elected as governor of the state of Veracruz on 1 July 2010, and inaugurated on 1 December of the same year. Under his predecessor, Fidel Herrera, the "Los Zetas" Cartel controlled most of the territory of Veracruz. During Duarte's term, the violence in Veracruz rose considerably and another cartel, el Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación, took control.²⁴

29. Part of Duarte's policies included concealing the actual level of violence (as further described in the contextual analysis in **Annex O**). Duarte started questioning the freedom of the press during his conferences or interviews, and in 2011, he introduced a law that created the crime of "disturbance of public order to punish false statements through any means, including social networks such as Twitter (known as the Duarte Law).²⁵ In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that Article 373 approved by the Duarte Congress violated the Constitutional guarantees of free expression, the right to

²¹ Annex S, [confidential] Testimony of Miguel - par. 3

²² Matar a Nadie. <https://mataranadie.com/miguel-angel-lopez-velasco-misael-lopez-solana/>. Retrieved 11 April 2022.

²³ Annex O, p. 1

²⁴ Annex O, p. 2-3

²⁵ Celia del Palacio Montiel. *Periodismo impreso, poderes y violencia en Veracruz 2010-2014. Estrategias de control de la información*. 2015. [Annex W], p. 30

information, and the exact application of criminal law.²⁶ The new government after Duarte's departure, uncovered evidence that the former prosecutor Luis Ángel Bravo had hidden 85% of all the formal complaints about missing persons in the state.²⁷

30. In this context, Miguel Ángel continued to write about politics, corruption, and organized crime. An analysis of his articles from January to May 2011 shows that the majority referred to political events, clearly identifying by name public officials whose work he criticized and often addressing them directly.²⁸ His articles in this period covered, among others, the mayor of the City of Veracruz, Carolina Gudiño Corro, whom he accused of corruption and electoral interference.²⁹ He also wrote about the State government, the political party PRI, and prosecutor Luis Ángel Bravo.³⁰

1.2.3 Threats in response to Miguel Angel's journalistic work

30. Prior to his murder, Miguel had received several threats in response to his work. While he had been threatened earlier in his career,³¹ the threats worsened from 2007 onwards.

31. Most notably, on 3 May 2007, World Press Freedom Day, a human head was delivered to the doorstep of *Notiver*, with a note that said 'We are leaving you a present here (...) Heads are going to roll. Milo Vela knows it and many others know it too'.³²

32. This threat did not discourage Miguel Ángel from his reporting.³³ Family members reported that local authorities offered an armed escort to Miguel Ángel at the time. However, Miguel Angel refused.³⁴ At the time, no specialized protection measures or programmes for journalists were in place in Veracruz, or at the federal level. As a result, it is understood that the same local government Miguel Angel

²⁶ <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2013/06/corte-tumba-la-ley-duarte/>

²⁷ Arturo Angel. Duarte, el priista perfecto. 2017, seccion 4.

²⁸ Annex O

²⁹ Annex Q

³⁰ Annex Q

³¹ Annex S [confidential] - par. 3

³² Matar a Nadie. <https://mataranadie.com/miguel-angel-lopez-velasco-misael-lopez-solana/>.

Retrieved 11 April 2022.

³³ Annex S, [confidential] - par. 15

³⁴ Annex S, [confidential] - par. 15

regularly criticized in his columns, would have provided these measures had Miguel Ángel accepted them. The threat was not investigated by the authorities.

33. In the same period, a YouTube-video was published in which Milo Vela, his son (the latter not by name), and Yolanda Ordaz were mentioned and accused of taking money from the Zetas.³⁵ Miguel Ángel perceived the video as a threat, and temporarily relocated his wife and children to a location outside of the city. No member of the family was questioned by the authorities about the video.³⁶

34. Approximately one month before the murder, Miguel Ángel Jr. noticed that his father changed his routines and started calling more than was usual. He did not ask his father why. His mother was reportedly under severe stress during this period. In this period, *Notiver* published several articles under Milo Vela's name concerning violent confrontations between the *Secretaría de Marina* (the Secretariat of the Navy) and members of the Zetas.³⁷

35. Several days before the murder, Miguel Ángel was publicly threatened in Cafe La Merced, Veracruz City, by a traffic officer called Osorio López.³⁸ Despite these repeated threats, Miguel Ángel continued his work.

36. On the morning of 20 June 2011, Miguel Ángel's final column was published.³⁹ In this article, he criticized the appointment of two officials to the Traffic and Roads authorities as part of governor Duarte's "Adelante"-programme.

37. On 20 June 2011, after forcing the lock of their home around 5am, three armed men were reportedly seen by neighbors entering the house. One or more of them shot Miguel Ángel López Velasco, his wife Agustina Solana and their son Misael with different caliber pistols. The murder was reported to the police in an anonymous call from someone who had heard shots at the house.⁴⁰

³⁵ Annex S, [confidential] - par. 16

³⁶ Annex S, [confidential] - par. 16

³⁷ Annex S, [confidential]- par. 21

³⁸ Matar a Nadie. <https://mataranadie.com/miguel-angel-lopez-velasco-misael-lopez-solana/>.

Retrieved 11 April 2022.

³⁹ Annex R

⁴⁰ Annex N, p. 3

1.2.4 Failed investigation of Miguel Ángel López Velasco's murder

38. After the murder, an investigation was initiated by the Attorney-General of Veracruz.⁴¹ This investigation did not lead to any arrests. On 31 December 2013, the Federal Prosecutor for the Investigation of Crimes Against Journalists (FEADLE) formally assumed jurisdiction over the case.⁴²

39. An analysis of the case file and the evidence provided by the family members and colleagues of Miguel Ángel, outline that the following omissions were made during both the state-level and federal investigations of the murders:

40. On multiple levels, the investigations conducted were not effective nor thorough:

- 1) **The link between Miguel Ángel López Velasco journalistic work and the murders was not investigated thoroughly.** The case file shows that the state investigators did receive several of Miguel Ángel's columns and emails,⁴³ but an analysis of these materials is missing entirely, and they are not referenced elsewhere in the investigation. After FEADLE assumed jurisdiction over the case, a contextual analysis of Miguel Ángel's work was requested, but the case file does not demonstrate that such an analysis was performed and incorporated in the investigation findings.⁴⁴

Moreover, the investigation only superficially mentions several of the threats Miguel Ángel received prior to his death. The public threats from 2007 are only mentioned briefly, and were not investigated.⁴⁵ At both stages of the investigation, information was requested about some of the individuals implicated in the threats made in 2011.⁴⁶ Several of these requests did not lead to information, and of others, the results are not included or incorporated in the case file.⁴⁷ Although investigative action was taken against one individual accused of threatening Miguel Ángel prior to the murder - Juan Carlos

⁴¹ Annex N, p. 2

⁴² Annex N, p. 3

⁴³ Annex N, p. 4

⁴⁴ Annex N, p. 19

⁴⁵ Annex N, p. 3

⁴⁶ Annex N, p. 21 and p. 30

⁴⁷ Annex N, p. 30

Carranza Saavedra, also known as “Ñaca” (see 2. below) - the case file does not contain any information as to the content or reason for the threats. The case file does not contain any evidence regarding hypotheses or potential motives for the threats and murder.

The lack of immediate prioritization of investigating the potential link between the murder and Miguel Ángel’s publications is particularly distressing in light of the murder of his colleague Yolanda Ordaz, little over a month later. The case file does not indicate that any protection measures were taken vis-a-vis Miguel Ángel’s colleagues or other fellow journalists in Veracruz, nor does the file include an analysis of the risk of further attacks against journalists. Protection measures for journalists were only requested on 4 May 2012. This request was denied a week later.⁴⁸

This omission is emblematic for investigations of murders of journalists, leading to a systemic failure to identify the motive and (all of) the perpetrators of the crime.⁴⁹ In the case of Miguel Ángel’s colleague Yolanda Ordaz, who was murdered on 26 July 2011, the State prosecutor of Veracruz, Mr. Reynaldo Escobar Pérez, even dismissed this line of investigation already on the day of the discovery of Ordaz’ body. He stated that the crime was not linked to her work, alleging that Ordaz had been implicated with organized crime and declared this to be the main line of investigation.⁵⁰

- 2) **Very early on, the investigation focused solely on a man identified as Juan Carlos Carranza Saavedra, also known as “Ñaca”, who was suspected to have been involved in the murder.** The pursuit of el Ñaca followed statements, made shortly after the murder, that el Ñaca had threatened Miguel Ángel Sr. prior to the murder.⁵¹ According to witness statements and media reports, Juan Carlos Carranza Saavedra was a member of the Zetas until 2010, when he

⁴⁸ Annex N, p. 4

⁴⁹ Artículo 19. 2019. <https://articulo19.org/informeimpunidad/>; IAP. Guidelines for prosecutors on cases of crimes against journalists. 2020. P. 6

⁵⁰<https://www.proceso.com.mx/nacional/2011/7/27/exige-notiver-la-renuncia-del-procurador-89987.html>

⁵¹ Annex N, p. 2

joined the Mata Zetas (later known as the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación*).⁵² Based on the fact that at least two different caliber cartridges were found at the crime scene, at least one other individual was involved in the perpetration of the crime. Additional witness testimony, taken in the days after the murder, suggest at least two other individuals participated in the crime.⁵³

On 22 June 2011, an attempt was made to locate El Ñaca, to no avail.⁵⁴ On 21 May 2013, the investigators concluded that El Ñaca died in a confrontation with the Navy.⁵⁵ The investigators requested his official death certificate, but the analysis of the case file suggests that this certificate appears to never have arrived.⁵⁶ The case file includes an article from *Notiver*, in which doubts are expressed as to whether El Ñaca actually died.⁵⁷

At three different points, the case file includes names of individuals who may have been involved in the crime as well.⁵⁸ These names emerged following an anonymous email, an unattributed audio recording and a twitter message dated 28 July 2011 (from the case file of Yolanda Ordaz, which was integrated in the case file of Miguel Ángel).⁵⁹ Between May 2012 and January 2013, the investigators requested information about these individuals from various government agencies.⁶⁰ These requests did not yield information and/or the results from these requests are not incorporated into the investigation. After the investigators concluded El Ñaca had died in May 2013, the case file suggests that no other actions were taken to identify the (other) perpetrators of the crime. Moreover, the case file does not contain any conclusive evidence as to El Ñaca's role in the murder.

⁵² Annex N, p. 10;

<https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/noticia/Identifican-cadaver-de-sicario-20130518-0017.html>;
<https://www.start.umd.edu/tracking-cartels-infographic-series-violent-rise-c-rtel-de-jalisco-nueva-generaci-n-cjng>

⁵³ Annex N, p. 3

⁵⁴ Annex N, p. 16

⁵⁵ Annex N, p. 7

⁵⁶ Annex N, p. 38

⁵⁷ Annex N, p. 19

⁵⁸ Annex N, p. 10, p. 21 and 30

⁵⁹ Annex N, p. 10 and 17

⁶⁰ Annex N, p. 21, 30-33

- 3) **FEADLE combined the investigations of the murders of Miguel Ángel, Agustina and Misael with the investigation files of five other cases, including the murders of journalists Gabriel Huge and Yolanda Ordaz, without justification or hypothesis about the linkage between these cases.** The case file contains several references to the linkage between the murders of Miguel Ángel and Yolanda, based on an anonymous email, reports about statements from detainees that could not be verified and a voice recording.⁶¹ The aforementioned detainees allegedly claimed that the perpetrator of the murders of Miguel Ángel and Yolanda, killed Gabriel Huge as well.⁶²

The case file does not include a justification for the decision to combine the investigations of the murders of these eight individuals, and does not even link three of them to the cases of Miguel Ángel and Yolanda.⁶³ The decision to merge the files is based on largely unverified information that El Ñaca murdered both Miguel Ángel and Yolanda, without reference to a potential motive, link between both victims, or supporting evidence he committed both crimes. The decision to merge the files thereby seems to have supported the single line of investigation described under 2), omitting contextual analysis of the relationships between all victims and potential alternative hypotheses regarding the perpetration of the murder.

- 4) **The investigation of the murders of Miguel Ángel, Agustina and Misael are marked by undue delay on the part of the authorities.** Between 20 June 2011, the day of the murder, and 22 June 2011, the State investigators took 27 witness statements.⁶⁴ In May 2012, 13 other witnesses were identified, of which only six were found. The content of their statements appears to be missing from the case file, and did not lead to any arrests.⁶⁵ It is unclear why nearly a year lapsed between the murder and the identification of these witnesses. Between May 2012 and April 2013, the case file primarily refers to requests for information from other agencies, the tracing of two phone numbers, request for surveillance footage, descriptions of open source

⁶¹ Annex N, p. 6, 10 and 17

⁶² Annex N, p. 6

⁶³ Annex N, p. 11

⁶⁴ Annex N, p. 64

⁶⁵ Annex N, p. 5

materials and the verification of the statements of the aforementioned detainees.⁶⁶

After FEADLE attracted the case on 31 December 2013, the case file only includes three more investigative actions. In August 2014, FEADLE interviewed two inmates, who both declared they had “no knowledge whatsoever’ about the case of Milo Vela.⁶⁷ The case file also includes a list of incarcerated individuals, without clarification regarding their link to the case.⁶⁸ In 2019, FEADLE requested a contextual analysis of Miguel Ángel’s work and an interview with a colleague of Miguel Ángel, which does not appear to have been conducted.⁶⁹ When the case file was accessed for the completion of the analysis in Annex N, November 2021, no other investigative action had been taken.

41. To this day, more than ten years after the crimes, the murderers of Miguel Ángel López Velasco, his wife Agustina Solana and their son Misael remain free and investigators have failed to follow up leads connected to the threats Miguel received prior to his death. The family members of Miguel, Agustina and Misael are still waiting for justice. The government has not released any information in recent years, and upon request from UNESCO only noted that the investigation remains open.⁷⁰

42. As Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission noted in a 2013 recommendation, no progress has been made in the case. The Commission also notes that in this case, and other cases relating to journalists, the responsible government actors have failed to take the actions required to fulfill their duty to investigate and prosecute the murders of journalists.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Annex N, p. 23-24

⁶⁷ Annex N, p. 18

⁶⁸ Annex N, p. 18

⁶⁹ Annex N, p. 19

⁷⁰ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory/country/223773>

⁷¹ Annex P

2. WITNESS BIOGRAPHIES

2.1 Day 1 - Systematic targeting of journalists in Mexico (26 April 2022)

2.1.1 Anabel Hernández

Investigative journalist and writer

Anabel Hernandez is a leading investigative journalist in Mexico. With a career of 30 years, during the last 22 years has been focused in investigating the drug trafficking cartels in México, principally Sinaloa Cartel; the corruption, violations of human rights, forced disappearance and abuse of power of the Mexican government. As a result of her works as a research journalist Hernandez, her family and sources received a documented series of death attacks, and acts of intimidation so far unpunished. She was awarded several prizes for her journalistic work throughout her career, and was published by many national and international media outlets.

2.1.2 Adela Navarro

Journalist and director of Semanario ZETA

Adela Navarro Bello is the General Director of weekly magazine Semanario ZETA in Tijuana. Adela has also been a guest columnist for Proceso magazine, Reforma newspaper and the Spanish edition of The Washington Post. Adela Navarro studied Communication Sciences at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC). Navarro has received multiple awards such as the María Moors Cabot Award, in its 2021 edition, administered by the School of Journalism at Columbia University in the United States. *Zeta* is one of the only publications to regularly run investigations on organized crime, drug trafficking, and corruption in Mexico's northern states, where self-censorship is rampant. The cost of *Zeta's* coverage of crime along the U.S.-Mexico border has been high, drug cartels have murdered several of her editors and repeatedly threatened to kill Adela. However, she refuses to stop writing about Mexico's raging violence.

2.1.3 Jorge Carrasco

Journalist and editor-in-chief of Proceso

Jorge Carrasco has been a reporter for 15 years and is currently the director of the magazine *Proceso* since February 2020. *Proceso* is one of Mexico's most well-known

investigative outlets. Several of its journalists have been under attack and in 2012 and 2015, two of its collaborators were murdered: journalist Regina Martínez and photojournalist Rubén Espinosa. Jorge Carrasco published an investigative feature about the murder of Regina Martínez in 2013. In 2016, he worked on the Panama Papers, an international investigation into tax evasion focusing on the Mexican clients of the Panamanian firm Mossack Fonseca.

2.1.4 Patricia Mayorga

Journalist and correspondent

Patricia Mayorga is a correspondent for Proceso who reports about the forced disappearances of indigenous people in Mexico, and alleged links between the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and organized crime. She is also a founding member of the Red Libre Periodismo (Free Journalism Network), a collective that provides professional support, networking, and ethical training for young journalists in Chihuahua state. Earlier in Mayorga's career, she reported for the daily El Heraldo, the Ciudad Juárez-based daily El Diario and other regional and national publications. Mayorga received threats in response to her work and said that she feared for her life after the murder of her colleague Miroslava Breach. She fled Chihuahua state and recently published an article dedicated to her (**Annex U**).

2.1.5 Martha Olivia López Medellín

Journalist and member of the coordination team of Reporteras en Guardia

Martha Olivia López Medellín is a journalist from Tamaulipas, and has worked at several media outlets in Oaxaca, Mexico State and Tamaulipas. In addition to her journalistic work, she has engaged in several civil society organizations and currently co-coordinates *Reporteras en Guardia* - an independent collective of more than 100 journalists across Mexico. The collective initiated the online memorial 'Matar a Nadie' to document the stories of journalists murdered in reprisal of their work. During the hearing, she will provide testimony about the gender dimensions of crimes against journalists in Mexico, and the impact of these crimes on female journalists in particular.

2.1.6 Sara Mendiola

Executive director of Propuesta Cívica

Sara Mendiola is a human rights lawyer and the executive director of the organization 'Propuesta Cívica', a Mexico City nonprofit organization that provides legal assistance to journalists and human rights defenders. She has represented multiple

families of Mexican reporters who have been killed after reporting on criminal gangs or criticizing local authorities amongst others. She has given visibility to the organization's work and strengthened alliances with national and international organizations and institutions such as Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

2.1.7 Lucía Lagunes

Member of the Consejo Consultivo del Mecanismo de Protección para Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas

Lucía Lagunes is a feminist journalist and Mexican sociologist specialized in gender perspective, non-sexist journalism, human rights, health, work and childhood. Lucia is also co-founder of the National Network of Journalists (Mexico) and co-coordinator of the International Network of Journalists with a Gender Vision. She is a member of the Advisory Council of Civil Society of UN Women-Mexico and the Council for Prevention And Eradicate Discrimination in Mexico City. She will testify in her capacity as member of the *Consejo Consultivo del Mecanismo de Protección para Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas* and will speak about the protection network for journalists in Mexico.

2.1.7 Laura Borbolla Moreno

Coordinadora de Investigación de Delitos de Genero y Atención a Víctimas de la Fiscalía General de Justicia de la Ciudad de Mexico

Laura Borbolla Moreno is currently the Federal Prosecution's Coordinator of the Investigation Unit tasked with Gender Crimes and Victim Support. She has fulfilled several posts as a federal prosecutor, and is specialized in the intersection of human rights, criminal law and security. From 2012 to 2015, she worked for FEADLE, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Attention for Crimes Against Freedom of Expression.

2.1.8 Griselda Triana

Journalist and activist

Griselda Triana is a journalist, activist and human-rights defender. She is the founder of the Javier Valdez library in Mexico City and host of the radio programme Siempre Vivas, in which she interviews female journalists. She works to strengthen support networks for victims of violence against journalists in Mexico, and in 2019 she was a grantee of the GI-TOC's Resilience Fund. In 2021, she published "The forgotten ones: Relatives of murdered and disappeared journalists in Mexico - documenting the impact of these crimes, and the subsequent impunity, for the families of these journalists. Her husband, journalist Javier Valdez, was murdered in 2017.

2.1.9 Témoris Grecko and Priscila Pacheco

Journalist and documentary maker

Témoris Grecko is a journalist who regularly contributes to *Proceso* and *Aristegui Noticias*. He covered stories in 94 countries including Gaza, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Congo, Mali, the Philippines, and Myanmar. In 2013, he was abducted in Syria by Al-Qaeda affiliates with two colleagues. After returning to Mexico, Grecko, along with a group of journalists, writers, photographers and filmmakers, formed 'Ojos De Perro vs la Impunidad', a media collective to expose corruption. He started investigating the situation of press freedom in Mexico. He published six nonfiction books in Spain and Mexico and produced two documentaries: 'Watching Them Die: The Mexican Army and the 43 Disappeared' and 'The Truth Shall Not Be Killed'. For the latter, he documented several cases involving the murder of a journalist, including that of Mexican journalist Francisco Pacheco (1966-2016).

Priscila Pacheco is a lawyer and the daughter of Francisco Pacheco. She will provide testimony together with Témoris Grecko during the hearing to testify about the impact of the murder of her father and the fight for justice. Priscila and her family have publicly advocated for an investigation into the connection between her father's investigations and his murder - to date without avail.

2.2 Day 2 - The case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco (27 April 2022)

2.2.1 Celia del Palacio Montiel

Academic and lecturer at Universidad Veracruzana

Celia del Palacio Montiel works as a researcher and teacher at the Center for Culture and Communication Studies at the Universidad Veracruzana. Her main research topics include the history of the press and violence against journalists in the various

regions of Mexico. She is the author of nine books and coordinator and co-author of sixteen more, as well as a significant number of academic articles in indexed and journals. She is also the author of five historical novels and a book of short stories. Her current project is titled "*Precarities and violences. Multiple crises of Latin American journalists today. Proposals from the margins*".

2.2.2 Noé Zavaleta

Journalist

Noé Zavaleta is a journalist from Veracruz and has written extensively about the Duarte government and impunity in Veracruz, including for his books "*El infierno de Javier Duarte*" and "*ImpuneMex*". He received several threats and was subjected to intimidation for his publications.

2.2.3 Félix Márquez

Photojournalist

Félix Márquez is an independent photographer and visual journalist based in Mexico. Márquez has specialized in covering the war against drug trafficking in Mexico, migration, human rights and childhood in Latin America. His work has been published in various Mexican and international outlets. He is from Veracruz and has documented the rise of violence, including against members of the press, in his home state. He initiated the Vestigues Project, which features photos of objects recovered by the families of six journalists murdered in Veracruz, including Miguel Ángel López Velasco and his son Misael, and aims to document and explore their life and identity.

2.2.4 Norma Trujillo Báez

Journalist

Norma Trujillo Báez has worked as a journalist for more than 30 years, and currently writes for the newspaper *La Jornada* in Veracruz. She is also a member of the '*Voz Alterna*', a digital medium and collective of journalists from Veracruz demanding justice for the colleagues they have lost. She produced, among others, investigations concerning the journalists who have disappeared in Veracruz ("*La geografía de los desaparecidos en Veracruz*"), and the journalists killed during the six-year term of Javier Duarte (**Annex X**).

2.2.5 Miguel Ángel Lopez Jr and Yazmin Lopez

Children of Miguel Ángel Lopez Velasco and Agustina Solana

Miguel Ángel Lopez Jr and Yazmin Lopez are the son and daughter of Miguel Ángel Sr. and his wife Agustina Solana. Miguel Ángel Lopez Jr also worked with his father as a photographer at *Notiver*. During the second day of the hearing, they will testify about their memories of their parents and their brother Misael, their father’s work as a journalist and the impunity that followed after the murders.

2.2.6 Balbina Flores

Representative of Reporters without Borders in Mexico

Balbina Flores works as the representative of Reporters without Borders (RSF) in Mexico. She has previously worked for multiple media and communication outlets and has fulfilled the role of Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression at Mexico City’s Commission of Human Rights. As representative of RSF in Mexico, she actively monitors press freedom developments across the country, reports on individual cases and leads advocacy efforts in Mexico in close coordination with family members, colleagues and other journalists and communicators.

2.2.7 Lic. Cortes Javier

Attorney-at-law

Lic. Cortes Javier is a criminal attorney from Mexico City. For this hearing, he was commissioned to formally request access to the official FEADLE investigation file. He has produced the summary and analysis of this file, as included in Annex N, and will provide testimony during the hearing to present his analysis.

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

| ANNEX | TITLE | YEAR | AUTHOR |
|------------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| 3.1 General materials | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|------|--|
| A | Draft programme of the Mexico case hearing (version 05 April 2022) | 2022 | N/A |
| B | Indictment submitted by the Prosecutor of the People's Tribunal on the Murder of Journalists to the PPT | 2021 | N/A |
| 3.2 Materials concerning context of impunity for crimes against journalists in Mexico | | | |
| C | "Murder in Mexico: are journalists victims of general violence or targeted political violence?" | 2018 | Jos Midas Bartman |
| D | "Informally Governing Information: How Criminal Rivalry Leads to Violence against the Press in Mexico" | 2017 | Bradley E. Holland and Viridiana Rios |
| E | "Forced Silence: Determinants of Journalist Killings in Mexico's States, 2010–2015" | 2017 | J.A. Brambila |
| F | "Local-Level Authoritarianism, Democratic Normative Aspirations, and Antipress Harassment: Predictors of Threats to Journalists in Mexico" | 2018 | Sallie Hughes and Mireya Márquez-Ramírez |
| G | "Special Report on the Situation of Freedom of Expression in Mexico Joint Report of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of IACHR, Edison Lanza, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, on their mission to Mexico" | 2018 | IACHR/ OHCHR |
| H | "Bajo Riesgo: Cómo superar las deficiencias de los programas de protección de periodistas en América Latina (Brasil, Colombia, Honduras y México)" | 2022 | RSF |
| I | "Protocolo Homologado de Investigación de Delitos Cometidos Contra La Libertad de Expresión" | 2018 | Procuraduría General de La República de |

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|--|
| | | | México |
| J | “Protocolo de la Impunidad en Delitos contra Periodistas” | 2019 | Artículo 19 |
| K | “The Office of the Special Rapporteur warns about the normalization and worsening of violence against journalists in Mexico and urges the authorities to activate complementary measures” | 2022 | IACHR (OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression) |
| L | “Violence Against Journalists and Freedom of the Press: Evidence from Mexico” | 2020 | José A. Jurado and Juan S. Morales |
| M | “Veracruz: Los periodistas frente al Estado de miedo” | 2017 | Reporteros sin Fronteras |
| 3.3 Materials corresponding to the case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco | | | |
| N | [confidential] Case file of the FEADLE investigation of the murder of Miguel Angel Lopez Velasco, Agustina Solana Melo y Misael Lopez Solana | 2021 [copy case file] | FEADLE |
| O | Contextual analysis of the case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco | 2020 | RSF Mexico |
| P | RECOMENDACIÓN GENERAL No. 20 | 2013 | Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos México |
| Q | Columns written by Miguel Ángel López Velasco between January and May 2011 | 2011 | Miguel Ángel López Velasco |
| R | Final column by Milo Vela (Miguel Ángel López Velasco) | 2011 | Miguel Ángel López Velasco |
| S | [confidential] Written testimony | 2022 | [confidential] |
| 3.4 Materials written or produced by witnesses who provide testimony during the hearing | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|------|--|
| T | The forgotten ones: Relatives of murdered and disappeared journalists in Mexico | 2021 | Griselda Triana [Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime] |
| U | Miroslava Breach Velducea | 2022 | Patricia Mayorga |
| V | ‘Resistencia, resiliencia y luchas por la memoria de la violencia. Los periodistas en Veracruz, México.’ | 2020 | Celia Del Palacio Montiel |
| W | ‘Periodismo impreso, poderes y violencia en Veracruz 2010-2014. Estrategias de control de la información’ | 2015 | Celia Del Palacio Montiel |
| X | “El sexenio en el que los periodistas repetíamos: ‘Nos van a matar’ | 2021 | Noe Norma Trujillo Báez y Félix Márquez |