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Americas - Mexico

Threats and exiles

Organized crime's hand seen behind threats to women journalists

13 August 2012

Two women journalists have received threats in connection with their work in the past few days. One is **Olga Wornat**, an Argentine journalist normally based in Mexico, who fled abroad at the end of last year because of earlier threats. The other is the Mexican independent journalist **Lydia Cacho**, who has just fled the country.

Wornat told Reporters Without Borders she is now being threatened over a soon-to-be-published book about outgoing President Felipe Calderón, which has just been excerpted in *Playboy México*. The magazine's Argentine-Mexican editor **Gabriel Bauducco** has also been "warned" in the past few days ([watch this video](#)).

Cacho, the author of "Esclavas del Poder" (Slaves of Authority), a 2010 book about the slave trade in women and children in Latin America, decided to flee abroad for a while after receiving renewed threats at the start of the month.

"In each case, a woman journalist has been threatened and intimidated for shedding light on organized crime's activities and infiltration into high-level political circles," Reporters Without Borders said.

"What Wornat and Cacho revealed has highlighted the need for a complete overhaul of the Mexican judicial system in order to combat impunity and provide people with real protection. We meanwhile urge the authorities to devise a plan for providing these two women with proper security so that they can return to Mexico."

Wornat, whose book about Calderón's 2006-2012 presidency is entitled "Felipe el Oscuro" (Felipe the Obscure), received threatening emails on 2, 8 and 11 August. The latest one said: "You see that no one is going to help you. Not one of these lousy little journalists is giving you any solidarity."

Referring to *Playboy México's* latest issue, which excerpted a chapter from the book, the email added: "You want to play with us by publishing your pathetic article in *Playboy*."

The chapter focuses on the parliamentarian Rosa María de la Garza, a member of Calderón's right-wing National Action Party (PAN), and on her husband, Alejandro Orozco, who are pastors in an ultra-conservative evangelical sect called La Casa sobre la Roca (The House on the Rock).

According to Wornat, the couple acted as Calderón's spiritual advisers and lived in a house confiscated from Vicente Carrillo Leyva, the drug trafficking son of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, an alleged Juárez Cartel chief known as "Lord of the Skies," who died in 1996.

De la Garza also heads the parliament's Anti-Human Trafficking Committee and, as such, has been accused by some Mexican media of politically exploiting people whose cause she is supposed to defend.

Cacho, who continues to defend women and children against exploitation, told Reporters Without Borders she decided to leave the country after hearing a man's voice on her emergency radio communication device saying: "We are going to send you home in little pieces, slut!"

Cacho added that she wants to return soon but pointed out that the Mexican authorities never implemented the protective measures that were requested by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2009.

Cacho was [illegally detained in 2005](#) on the orders of Puebla governor Mario Marín after linking an associate of his, businessman José Camel Nacif, to a major pedophile ring. Wornat was placed [under house arrest](#) the same year for allegedly defaming Marta Sahagún, the wife of then President Vicente Fox (2000-2006).

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