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<http://www.rsf.org/mexico-open-letter-to-president-elect-of-16-10-2012,43542.html>

Americas - Mexico

Rule of law?

Open letter to president-elect of a country with 100 dead or missing journalists

16 October 2012

Dear President-Elect Peña Nieto,

You are ending a European tour with a visit to Paris before being sworn in as your country's next president on 1 December. Tomorrow you will meet with French President François Hollande and the next day you will address the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on "Changes in Mexico and their role in the panorama of global change."

Will the changes you refer to include the tragic toll of a decade of extreme violence in your country? Are they the proposals you plan to submit to your embattled country during your six years in office?"

Culminating with outgoing President Felipe Calderón's federal offensive, the Mexican tragedy has had a toll of more than 60,000 of your fellow citizens killed in the cross-fire between the drug cartels and security forces that are often infiltrated by organized crime.

The victims include more than 100 journalists killed or missing - 85 killed and 16 disappeared - in the past decade. The latest are **Ramón Abel López Aguilar**, 53, photographer and editor of the [Tijuana Informativo](#) website, murdered yesterday in Tijuana, and "**Ruy Salgado**" also known as "**El Santo**," a Mexico City-based blogger who disappeared mysteriously on 8 September amid a [controversy](#) about last July's federal elections.

The country you will lead from 1 December onwards is also scarred by the terrible repression in San Salvador Atenco in May 2006, when you were Mexico state's governor. What justice will be rendered? What sustainable judicial system will allow the rule of law to be restored?

And which constitutional guarantees will at last be applied so that journalists, bloggers, human rights defenders, civil society representatives and now also electoral transparency activists are able to exercise their freedom to obtain and impart information and question the authorities without fear of being harassed or killed?

The way the investigation into López Aguilar's murder in Tijuana is already developing reminds us of all the other police and judicial investigations that were either rushed or became bogged down in endless bureaucracy and just sustained the prevailing impunity.

López Aguilar's son-in-law, who also works for the news site, has been detained as a suspect on the grounds of contradictions in the statement he gave to the police. But the police have yet to identify a motive. As *Tijuana Informativo* had just published major [reports](#) on drug trafficking and organized crime in the region, what reason is there for excluding the victim's reporting as the most likely motive?

The same denial of reality has been seen in many other cases, such as the murder of [Regina Martínez](#), the magazine *Proceso's* correspondent in the east-coast state of Veracruz, now one of the world's ten most dangerous places for journalists. Justice and truth are so often sacrificed to political calculation or convenience at the expense of fundamental constitutional rights.

What commitments have you given on these issues? How do you plan to keep your promises? How

to plan to enlist the participation of a civil society disgusted by the institutions that are supposed to represent and protect them?

These are the key challenges that need to be addressed during your six years as Mexico's president. A watchful and unforgiving observer, Reporters Without Borders will press you for answers.

Sincerely,

Reporters Without Borders

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