

Death of Victoria Salazar ignites more outrage in Mexico

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Women putting flowers on the perimeter wall of the Quintana Roo state offices sprayed with graffiti that reads 'Justice for Victoria' during a protest in Mexico City [Eduardo Verdugo/AP Photo]

Mexico City, March 31 (RHC)-- The death of Victoria Esperanza Salazar -- a Salvadoran migrant who died in Mexico after a policewoman put her knee on her back for several minutes -- continued to evoke outrage on Tuesday, after additional details of her life and how she died surfaced.

Dozens of women in the sprawling capital Mexico City and in Tulum, the city where Salazar lived, took to the streets in protest. Women chanted, waved signs, scrawled graffiti and held “die ins” on Monday evening, demanding justice.

Salazar, 36 years of age, died on Saturday after police said they responded to a public disturbance call in the resort town of Tulum. “She did not deserve to die like this,” Rosibel Arriaza, Salazar’s mother, told journalists outside the Salvadoran foreign ministry. “I feel indignation, I feel powerless, I feel frustrated,” she said. “I would have wanted to be there as a mother.”

She also called for justice for her daughter, saying even though she knows that it would not bring her daughter back, it would give her some satisfaction knowing that those responsible “paid” for what they did.

In the viral video, Salazar could be heard screaming as a female officer puts a knee to her back while she was handcuffed and barefoot, face down on the ground. Three other male police officers were standing by. The video then cuts to the officers carrying Salazar’s limp body still handcuffed onto the back of a police pick-up truck. She was not seen being administered any medical help.

Quintana Roo state prosecutor Oscar Montes said in a video on Monday that Salazar had died of a broken neck.

Mexico’s President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Salazar was “brutally treated and murdered” -- vowing a complete investigation into her death and prosecution of those responsible.

Local media reported that Salazar, who is survived by two daughters aged 15 and 16, had moved to Mexico in 2018 on a humanitarian visa. In Mexico, she worked as a housekeeper in a local hotel.

Officials said the four officers, three male and one female, have already been fired, detained and charged with femicide.

Citing official records, local media reported an average of 10 women are killed every day in Mexico, and less than 10 percent of those cases are solved.

Salazar’s death also drew comparisons with the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died in Minneapolis, Minnesota, last year after a white police officer put a knee against his back for nearly nine minutes. His death provoked protests all over the United States and around the world. It also ignited a widespread reckoning on race, police brutality and discrimination.

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