

# *Two Mexican Murder Victims Previously Denounced Veracruz Government Threats*

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Mexico City, August 4 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Two of the five victims killed in Mexico City early July 31st had denounced death threats from the Veracruz government of Javier Duarte.

Nadia Vera, an activist, had told local television that if she was killed, Duarte would be responsible, and photojournalist Ruben Espinosa fled Veracruz to hide in Mexico City as he feared for his life at the hands of the same people Vera denounced.

Evidence has also surfaced that the victims had been tortured and then executed with one shot to the head with a .9 millimeter handgun. The four women were also apparently sexually abused.

The Mexico City Attorney General Rodolfo Rios Garza said they have questioned 14 potential witnesses and assured all "lines of investigation will be exhausted."

Rios Garza refused to answer to questions by reporters whether Duarte would be called in for testimony regarding the death threats and Vera's video accusing him of wanting to kill her.

There is no clarity as to why the governor of Veracruz would want to kill Vera and Espinosa but the fact remains that since Duarte took office in 2010, 14 journalists have been killed while five remain missing. The attorney general's office said under Duarte, journalism-related deaths have been steadily increasing.

Duarte sent a strong and menacing message to journalists in his state in July, during a public event to commemorate the Free Speech Week, when he said to them: "Please behave, I beg you. It's for your own good."

Despite the recent federalization of crimes against journalists, the federal Attorney General's office (PGR) has refused to take over the case, saying they would monitor the investigation closely and would assist if asked by the Mexico City authorities.

The Federal Penal Code was modified May 2013 after a reform bill was introduced to Congress to federalize crime against journalist and human rights defenders.

Specifically, Article 10 of the penal code was modified to say that all crimes against journalists should be investigated by the PGR when they constitute aggression against freedom of speech or press.

The article also states in clause II that when the victim or victims have pointed to state or municipal authorities as probable perpetrators, the PGR should take on investigations as they could be tampered with by state officials.

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