

OUR VOICE

I will deliberately begin this editorial by expressing how profoundly upset and unsettled we Mexicans feel about the increase in violence over recent months. The government has been adamantly maintaining that the victims were, for the most part, members of the drug cartels and their security platoons. However, the horrific scenes that flashed around the world after the August attack on Monterrey's Casino Royale, which resulted in more than 50 dead, force us not only to go into national mourning, but also to seriously reflect about the chaos threatening to devour us.

We were shaken again a month later when the coastal state of Veracruz experienced another chapter in this dramatic saga: 35 more victims were dumped in broad daylight on one of the city's most heavily traveled streets in front of shocked, disbelieving passersby.

Given this scenario, the general perception of the growing number of these despicable acts is that Mexico is not envisioning any alternate route for breaking with this cycle of violence in the short term. Day after day I ask myself what the duty is of those of us citizens who want to recover the future for our well-meaning men and women. And I come to the conclusion that, for a start, we must not add to the confusion, much less divide our positive actions.

It is a fact that violence, corruption, and impunity constitute a perfect triangle in Mexico. What should be done, then, to break it? I also think that persevering in the construction of citizen alliances and networks to promote and monitor the transparency and accountability of all government actors who are directly or indirectly obligated to guarantee our security would be a good beginning. In addition, once and for all, we must rid ourselves of all the daily acts of corruption that many of us Mexicans refuse to recognize because we think they hurt no one. This only legitimizes them under the guise of making life easier.

This issue, then, dedicates its "Special Section" to a detailed reflection about the state of transparency and the right to information in our country, recognizing them as guiding axes for strengthening our democracy. The reader has here the opportunity of looking at details about the origins, characteristics, and specificities of the legal norms regulating them, guided by our expert contributors.

Nevertheless, the application and administration of those norms are an intricate structured maze in which distinguished jurist Alonso Gómez Robledo puts forward a question that stands out in stark relief about the limits that national security puts on access to information, above all in the current high risk scenario the country is experiencing.

In our "Politics" section, Raúl Plascencia's article points to the advances for Mexicans represented by the recent constitutional reform on human rights. This centered, among other things, on the state's commitment to educate the population about the existence and exercise of these prerogatives. Researcher Imer Flores, for his part, brings us a closer look at the recurring practice in Mexico of amending our Constitution in order to "adapt it" to new conditions in which obviously the pressure of political parties stands far and above that of

other traditional actors. In this same vein, the topic of the day is precisely to foster a new political reform, in which the key pieces would be the possibility of putting independent candidates on the ballot, as well as including in our laws the right to hold referendums, among other mechanisms for governing.

I would also invite you to peruse the ideas that several authors offer us in this issue about the current political scene in Canada, as well as its repercussions in North America. We must not forget that this country is the number one destination for U.S. exports, and the second for Mexican ones.

In the cultural sphere, let me invite you to find out about the struggle of women in my country, through the efforts of Dr. Patricia Galeana to realize the dream of having a Women's Museum in Mexico. This sets a precedent: not only does it pay tribute to the firmness and tenacity of generations of true warriors in the political, economic, and social spheres, but, above all, in the spaces of daily life. These women were capable of transcending the stereotypes to pave the way for the freedoms and opportunities that many of us Mexican women today enjoy. However, we must recognize that there is still much that remains to be done; for that reason, it is we professional women who, having had the privilege of an education, are obligated to give and do more for other women.

I must also mention the splendid articles that, to our delight, talk of the indigenous men and women who have been capable of preserving, transmitting, and recreating our ancestral traditions, pursuing health, and also comforting the undeniable spirituality that constitutes us all as human beings.

To conclude, I return to the painful events I mentioned at the start of this editorial, and the meaning of loss, since Mexico has had to say its last goodbye with great sadness to the talented artist Leonora Carrington, to whose memory we dedicate the words of prestigious writer Elena Poniatowska. A proponent of surrealism, Leonora settled in our country, which in turn served her as inspiration. She lived here with passion and intensity until becoming an international figure, characterized by her eminently rebellious, controversial essence.

Paradoxically, the CISAN also recently suffered the loss of a dear colleague, Elsie Montiel Ziegler, who collaborated exceptionally as editor of *Voices of Mexico*, making a fundamental contribution to positioning it as a publication of incalculable value for communicating in English the aims and work of our university.

Let, then, the work and dedication of our academic community act as a tribute to her and Leonora personally, and to the victims of our country's violence and their families, with the aim of reasserting the value of life based on an untiring struggle.

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