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## People's Tribunal for murdered journalists to hear the case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco in Mexico City



**Mexico City, 25 April 2022** – In an unprecedented effort to achieve justice in the killing of journalists, three leading press freedom groups launched a **People's Tribunal** in November 2021 to hold governments accountable. The Tribunal, a form of grassroots justice, relies on investigations and high quality legal analysis involving specific cases in three countries. The next Hearing of the Tribunal takes place in Mexico City on 26 and 27 April and will feature testimonies on the context of impunity for murders of journalists in Mexico, and the case of Miguel Ángel López Velasco in particular. The IACHR Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Pedro Vaca Villarreal, will be present at the hearing as an observer. Watch the Mexico hearing [here](#).

Violence against journalists is on the rise worldwide. Since 1992, over 1400 journalists have been killed, and in eight out of ten cases where a journalist is murdered, the

killers go free. Across the world, Mexico is one of the most dangerous countries for journalists: more than 150 journalists have been murdered in retaliation of their work since 2000. Responding to this ongoing impunity crisis, the People's Tribunal on the Murder of Journalists, spearheaded by the [Free Press Unlimited](#) (FPU), the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) (CPJ), and [Reporters Without Borders](#) (RSF) will recommence its hearings on 26 and 27 April with the Mexico Case Hearing.

The Mexico Hearing consists of two days. On 26 April, witnesses will present testimony regarding the context of crimes against journalists in Mexico, the systemic persistence of impunity in these cases, and the impact of this impunity for journalists, their relatives and colleagues, and Mexican society as a whole. **Witnesses** include renowned investigative journalists **Anabel Hernández**, **Jorge Carrasco** and **Adela Navarro**, legal expert **Sara Mendiola** from Propuesta Civica, federal prosecutor **Laura Borbolla Moreno**, and journalist and activist **Griselda Triana**, the widow of journalist Javier Valdez (1967-2017).

On 27 April, the Prosecutor presents the emblematic case of the murders of **journalist Miguel Ángel Lopez Velasco**, his wife Agustina Solana and their son Misael. Miguel Ángel wrote under the pen name 'Milo Vela', and covered crime, corruption and politics for the Veracruz newspaper *Notiver*. On 20 June 2011, Miguel, Agustina and Misael were brutally murdered in their home in Veracruz. The investigation of their murders remains open, and no one has been arrested to date.

Miguel Ángel's case represents a wider pattern of the failure of the Mexican government to protect journalists and conduct proper investigations into attacks on their life and work. The case is also emblematic of the dangerous working conditions for journalists in Veracruz, where more than 31 journalists have been killed since 2000. Impunity reigns in 95% of these cases. The Prosecutor has presented these facts in the indictment, which alleges the government's failure to protect journalists and conduct effective investigations following attacks on their life. The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal has officially notified the Mexican government and invited them to represent themselves during the hearing in order to present a defense.

People's Tribunals are designed to hold states accountable for violations of international law by building public awareness and generating a legitimate evidence record, and play an important role in empowering victims and recording their stories. Their judgments are not legally binding, but aim to contribute to accountability through documentation and public testimony.

The Mexico Case Hearing will take place from 09:00-17:00 GMT-5 (Mexico) on 26-27 April in Mexico City. The hearing is Spanish-spoken but simultaneous interpretation is available. The hearing will be livestreamed [here](#).

Free Press Unlimited is a non-profit press freedom organisation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands that helps local journalists in conflict areas to provide their audience with independent news and reliable information. By supporting local media professionals, Free Press Unlimited seeks to support the enabling of a sustainable, professional and diverse media landscape.

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