

What is Violent about Mexico? Perspectives from Women in Journalism

Thursday, April 28 9:00 AM PDT

Panelists:

- Adela Navarro Bello, Director, ZETA
- Lydiette Carrión, Author "La Fosa del Agua" (femicide in the State of Mexico)
- Kendal Blust, Reporter, KJZZ's bureau in Hermosillo, Sonora
- Ann Deslandes, Freelance journalist in Mexico City

Moderator: Kate Morrissey, San Diego Union Tribune

Presenters:

- Jeff Light, Editor in Chief, The San Diego Union Tribune

- Discussion -

Current context of the violence in Mexico:

- Cycles of insecurity:
 - At least 7 journalists have been killed this year in Mexico so far
 - Femicide continues to be a major concern and has been getting worse
 - "Narcomenudeo," the sale of illegal drugs in relatively small quantities, is another ongoing problem.
 - AMLO's interventions, such as bringing in the military, are not bringing helpful results. They are not public policies being enacted to try and contain the cartels.
 - Polarization of the press is heightened by AMLO's negative comments and attacks on journalists, but this phenomenon began years before he took office.
- It is important to address the nuance of the violence in Mexico. It is not ubiquitous across Mexico or, in this case, the state of Sonora where reporter Kendal Blust works.
- For author, Lydiette Carrion, the way one covers the topic of femicide in Mexico matters. The consequences can be positive or negative because reporting gives visibility to certain cases, which does not mean femicide is not occurring elsewhere. Working as a journalist includes the responsibility to bring these stories into public communication to help society find solutions.

Adapting to conditions while on the job:

- Journalists often must be mindful about how they cover sensitive topics like femicide because they can face backlash.
- In making safety precautions, they rely on their network of journalists to look out for one another.

- Journalism is ill paid everywhere in Mexico and particularly bad in certain areas. Many journalists need to have a side job, which adds another layer of difficulty for journalists in staying safe and doing their jobs well.

Perspectives from women in journalism with different experiences:

- Perspectives from the international level (Ann Deslandes, Freelance journalist in Mexico City)
 - Recognition of the privilege of being a journalist in Mexico as a white person from Australia.
 - Facing challenges of macho culture in Mexico and drawing similarities to the international phenomenon of machismo.
- Covering violence against women in Mexico has further repercussions for female journalists who are also mothers.
- The dangers that women journalists face vary depending on different factors. Journalists like Kendal Blust, who are employed by international- or U.S.-based media outlets have more protection against threats and violence than journalists working on the local level.
- Having networks of other journalists, especially other women journalists, is crucial to navigating safety concerns.