

Newsletter October 2012

Ana Lilia Pérez - Journalist from Mexico



Ana Lilia Pérez

Congratulations, Ana Lilia Pérez! On 8 October, she will be awarded the "Prize for Freedom and Future of the Press" by the Leipzig Media Foundation.

For years, Ana Lilia Pérez (36) has been putting the finger in the open wound Mexico has long been suffering from to the point of self-destruction. The 36-year old is researching and writing about corruption at the highest levels of the Mexican government, about illegal transactions of state-owned companies and their ties to organized crime, as well as about money laundering and drug cartels.

In her latest book "The Black Cartel (How Organized Crime Owns

PEMEX)", Ana Lilia Pérez continues to elaborate on her long-term research of illegal transactions of the state-owned oil company „Petróleos Mexicanos“ (PEMEX). PEMEX is one of the ten largest oil companies worldwide.

Numerous profiteers with various interests have attempted to take Ana Lilia Pérez to court, bribe her, or even murder her. Since 2008, she has continuously been receiving death threats. Bodyguards with bulletproof vests were assigned to her but could not in the least make her feel safe.

Yet, she is not even close to giving up on her work: "As a journalist, I work on the basis of two personal principles: for ethics and for the protection of the freedom of press and the right to information. Being a journalist in Mexico involves great risk. Those who pursue this profession are convinced that it is worth it. Because as journalists, we are committed to fighting for a democratic government, for a critical and free society, and for the freedom of thought. If my humble work has helped my country so far, it gives me the courage to go on."

We are pleased to provide Ana Lilia Pérez with a secure haven and thank the organization "Journalists help Journalists" for providing the financial means to do so.

LÄNDERINFORMATIONEN ZU MEXIKO

Drug cartels and other criminal organizations have murdered and abducted thousands of people, often with the tacit agreement of police and military. Nevertheless, the criminal justice system has not meted out justice or ensured security.

Those responsible for the majority of crimes against journalists, human rights activists, and women have not been

brought to justice. The government has not taken action to prevent or investigate the widespread and serious violations of human rights by the military and the police, which include enforced disappearances of persons, extrajudicial executions, torture, and arbitrary arrests. The international standards for fair trials have been ignored.

(ai: as of 31 Dec 2011)

EDITORIAL



Martina Bäurle

Tireless support

*Wir freuen uns über die neue Unter-
We greatly welcome the recent support
from the Hamburg Initiative for Hu-
man Rights. The efforts by this group
of committed Hamburg citizens are
highly appreciated as recognition of
our long years of work. Thank you!*

The „Hamburg Initiative for Human Rights“ was founded by us, a group of Hamburg citizens, who for many years have been involved in human rights activities. For a long time, our support had primarily been directed towards the "Human Rights Watch" organization, whose work we admire and deem politically important. However, in the past months we have come to the conclusion that we would like to support the advocacy of human rights more directly than is possible within the framework of Human Rights Watch. In Hamburg, there are several initiatives and projects invaluable contributing to our cause, i.e. human rights. Instead of adding another organization to the existing pool, we consider it most reasonable to assist these existing organizations and their respective activities with the means available to our group, thus increasing their effectiveness – be it through donations, through additional press and public relations, through events or publicity campaigns with our friends and within our networks.

For many years, the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People has been doing an exceptional job at providing persecuted people with care and protection. As such, it is a unique organization in Germany. It is with great pleasure and commitment that we support their work.

*Sincerely, Martina Bäurle
and the*

**HAMBURGER INITIATIVE
FÜR MENSCHENRECHTE**

Eddson Chakuma - Unionist from Zimbabwe



Eddson Chakuma

Since the beginning of September 2012, Eddson Chakuma (39) has been a guest with the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People. In spring 2011, the unionist from Zimbabwe was arrested in his home country because of watching a video about the Arab Spring at a union meeting. Along with five of his colleagues, he was charged with treason and, in July 2012, was given a two-year sentence in prison, wholly suspended.

In prison, Chakuma along with 44 other arrested colleagues had to endure abuse and torture. In spite of international protests, the government retained them in dirty and vermin-infested cells without medical assistance and often without any food. According to their lawyers, security

agents beat their backs, feet, and hands with metal poles, wooden boards, and broomsticks for the purpose of extracting confessions.

The activists were supposed to confess to scheming a revolt against the government. While most of the arrested were released without charge after several weeks, Eddson Chakuma and five fellow prisoners had to stand trial. They were only released on bail and on the condition of submitting their passports until the beginning of the trial.

Chakuma's employer, the "United Food & Allied Workers Union of Zimbabwe," dismissed him during his arrest due to alleged absences.

For a long time, Eddson Chakuma has been a member of the former opposition party MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), headed by the Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai. Chakuma is perceived as an opponent of the regime and may have to reckon with deliberate threats in the future.

We are very happy to be able to provide Eddson Chakuma with the opportunity to reorient himself and contemplate in which way he wants to engage in shaping the democratic process in Zimbabwe in the future.

INFORMATION ON ZIMBABWE

President Robert Mugabe (88), who has been autocratically ruling Zimbabwe since 1980 through his party ZANU-PF, is still holding on to power by all means. In the past year, he intensified his attacks on human rights activists, journalists, and members of the opposition party by having them arrested and tortured, and by unlawfully impeding their political activities (ai Country Report).

It is stated that he wants to hold early presidential elections at the end of this year or at the beginning of 2013, whereas his partner in the transitional government, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai of the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) party, presses for a referendum on a new democratic constitution before early elections can take place.

EVENTS

with Ana Lilia Pérez:

The Hydra of Organized Crime.

Wednesday, 17 October 2012

7 p.m. at the Ev. Hochschule (Evangelical College), Horner Weg 170 in Hamburg

Reading: Mexico: Fearing the Cartels.

Saturday, 27 October 2012

8 p.m. at the Haus Gostenhof in Nürnberg

Mexico: How Organized Crime is Destroying the Country.

Sunday, 04 November 2012

4 p.m. at the Antikriegshaus in Sievershausen

Freedom of Press in Mexico – How much longer can it last?

Thursday, 22 November 2012

7 p.m. at the Instituto Cervantes, Fischertwiete 1 in Hamburg

Taking on the Mafia. Voices for Freedom.

Ana Lilia Pérez from Mexico and Leoluca Orlando from Italy.

Wednesday, 05 December 2012

7 p.m. at the KörberForum, Kehrwieder 12 in Hamburg

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