

Public Affairs Chatter

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“Gen Z” Protest Polarizes Opinion

On Saturday, 15 November, thousands took to the streets across Mexico: in principle to demand justice for a murdered mayor and protest rising insecurity, but also to voice discontent with the country’s current political direction. While it was said to have begun as a youth-led demonstration under the banner of “Generation Z”, the gathering was far from homogeneous, and at least in part was influenced by anonymous anti-government social media accounts. The protests turned violent, with many decrying police brutality (captured on many videos by participants and journalists).

The organizers, operating as the so-called Generation Z collective, were joined by diverse groups: public healthcare workers decrying medicine shortages, offshoots of the populist Sombrero movement (without the overt blessing of Carlos Manzo’s widow Grecia Quiroz), supporters of outspoken businessman Ricardo Salinas Pliego, more traditional opponents of the “Fourth Transformation”, and violent groups just seeking to join the fray. Their common ground: rejection of the current administration. The litany of demands included an ambitious wish-list with no chance of actually happening: citizen-led mechanisms for recalling the president without party mediation, direct and independent elections for any replacement, transparent audits of public funds and social programs, counter-reform of the judiciary, demilitarization of internal security, and more inclusive legislative representation.

With a second wave already announced for November 20 (which would, not coincidentally, threaten to disrupt the official military parade), the question is how the government will choose to respond. For now, President Sheinbaum is choosing defiance, downplaying its significance, questioning its backers and stating that “we are invincible, the people and the government”, echoing AMLO’s usual rhetoric, but perhaps also signaling a hardening of her own, a message aimed at her opponents both outside and inside Morena (indeed, some analysts noted a portion of participants came from within the governing party’s own base).

International headlines, perhaps giving the movement too much importance considering small numbers involved as of now, didn’t hesitate to capture the moment, questioning Sheinbaum’s narrative of national unity: Reuters reported “Gen Z-styled protests spread in Mexico, fueled by mayor’s murder”, Al Jazeera highlighted “Clashes in Mexico City amid Gen-Z styled protests over crime and corruption”, and BBC News underscored the broader implications with “Mexico protests reflect growing generational and political unrest”. Even President Donald Trump weighed in, commenting that he had been “closely following” the events of the protest. He pointed to the demonstrations as evidence of Mexico’s “serious problems with drug cartels and security”.

So even though only a tiny fraction of the Mexican population joined for now the demonstrations, they have garnered headlines, and put Sheinbaum on the defensive. Without a doubt tackling insecurity in semi-failed states like Michoacán is her government’s biggest challenge right now, and should other high profile, popular officials get assassinated, the currently relatively small protests could spread into a wider

and broader anti-crime movement, perhaps led by the widowed Grecia Quiroz herself. And there is no shortage of well-off anti 4T businessmen and opposition figures who would like to take advantage of this.

Court vs. Salinas: A Birthday Topped Off with a Fine

Just three weeks ago, Mexican magnate Ricardo Salinas Pliego was celebrating his 70th birthday with an extravagant party at the Arena Ciudad de México. This week, the celebration gave way to a significant legal setback, albeit fully expected. The Supreme Court (SCJN) delivered a series of unanimous rulings against Grupo Elektra and TV Azteca, the building blocks of Salinas' business empire, reaffirming tax obligations totaling approximately 40 billion pesos (about US\$2.2 bn).

In total, 17 proceedings were resolved in a single session. None altered the prior rulings issued by lower courts, all of which favored the tax authorities. The issues at stake ranged from demands for the Court to enter into constitutional analysis to challenges regarding the impartiality of certain justices. The Court, however, concluded that none of the cases met the threshold of "importance and transcendence" required to merit constitutional review. The justices also rejected the notion that these disputes offered novel legal criteria or raised issues of exceptional public interest.

One ruling included a fine against Grupo Elektra for procedural delays, though the amount was not disclosed. These cases, while handled with technical rigor, have triggered fresh concerns in business circles about how the Court's new composition might approach future instances of economic and regulatory significance—such as import-related tax rules or outstanding corporate tax liabilities.

Though Salinas has signaled his intention to escalate the case to international tribunals, legal experts argue that this is not a realistic pathway. As constitutional law experts said, neither Ricardo Salinas Pliego nor his companies can take tax credit disputes (already resolved by Mexico's judiciary) to the Inter-American Human Rights System, because the Court was established to address grave human rights violations, not to serve as an appeals forum for fiscal matters.

More Measures Aimed Against Financial Firms, Unanimously Approved

The Mexican Chamber of Deputies has approved a reform package aimed at protecting financial service users from the all-too-common nuisance of unsolicited debit and credit cards. Championed by Deputy Ricardo Monreal Ávila of Morena, the bill cruised through with unanimous approval, underscoring the political challenges faced by the financial services industry. The bill now heads to the Senate, where approval is virtually a given.

At its heart, the legislation aims to eliminate the predatory practice of sending financial products to individuals who never requested them in the first place, a practice banned in the U.S. by Truth in Lending Act – in 1970. In Mexico, this has left many in debt or blacklisted by credit bureaus. Under the new law, financial and commercial institutions are barred from issuing cards without explicit consent and from charging any associated fees or penalties.

Institutions must now provide 24/7 mechanisms (digital, telephone, and in-person) for cancelling cards. The digital route will feature a prominently displayed button on mobile apps and websites, allowing users to cancel with the ease one might expect in the 21st century. And, crucially, all cancellations must be completed within five working days, with no hidden costs.

Furthermore, charges stemming from these unsolicited cards will be reimbursed, and any lack of usage can no longer be reported to credit agencies. Monreal emphasized that the reform is not merely about regulation but about digital inclusion and consumer respect. “You shouldn’t have to queue at a branch to cancel what you never asked for,” he pointed out.

Mexico Cedes to U.S. on AICM Slots

While details are scant, faced with U.S. retaliation over cargo rules, it seems Mexico has quietly agreed to hand over some take-off and landing slots at Mexico City’s main airport (AICM) to U.S. airlines and cargo carriers (e.g., UPS and American Airlines). President Claudia Sheinbaum confirmed that “weeks ago”, Mexican carriers “ceded” slots to U.S. players in the name of “competitiveness” and that everyone supposedly agreed.

Washington recently moved to cancel 13 new Mexico–U.S. routes, arguing that Mexico violated the 2015 air services agreement by unilaterally shifting cargo operations from AICM to the Felipe Ángeles Airport (AIFA). That shift, designed to decongest the Benito Juárez airport and justify AIFA’s hefty investment, disrupted U.S. cargo operators’ routines and triggered the aggressive response from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The compromise seems to look roughly like this, even if no official communication has been made:

- Mexico keeps most of its **cargo re-routing to AIFA**, which has become a serious freight hub (the government boasts nearly 900,000 tons of cargo moved since 2022).
- U.S. airlines and cargo get **more access to the country’s main gateway**, with Mexican carriers ceding scarce AICM slots.
- A new **digital slot-management system** is promised for next year, with the usual pledges of transparency and “more competition”.

Net-net: U.S. players largely get their way, but Mexico avoids a broader air-services confrontation and preserves its ability to keep opening new routes into the U.S.—as long as it plays by Washington’s reading of the treaty.

Move from 48 to 40 Hour Workweek Inches Forward

Mexico’s long-running debate over shortening the workweek from 48 to 40 hours is inching forward. After months of forums, consultations with experts, business groups, unions, and even international

organizations, the Labor Ministry is reportedly ready to unveil its proposal. Congress is supposed to begin debating it this month.

Deputy Patricia Mercado says all sides have finally accepted the idea of reducing hours; the only question now is how gradual the transition should be. Her party, Movimiento Ciudadano, is pushing for a two-year phase-in, while others prefer something longer. According to Mercado, the government's working assumption is that the President will submit the reform proposal around November 20, something Sheinbaum herself has hinted at during morning pressers. So it seems the reform will pass in some form this year but Mexicans should not expect a 40-hour week on January 1, 2026 as there will be a phase-in. Over how long remains to be seen.

Electoral Justice: Bátiz Inherits a Bench and a Battlefield

The newly elected president of the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF), Gilberto de Guzmán Bátiz García began his two-year term. The magistrate, elected through the unprecedented 2025 judicial elections, inherits not just a polarized court, but a docket thick with political landmines, including delayed rulings on gender parity, unresolved sanctions for previous internal leaks, and a looming electoral reform proposed by the Executive. Bátiz delivered five central commitments: judicial unity, a closer and more transparent tribunal, institutional stability, administrative efficiency, and a more humane justice. "A divided court does not serve Mexico," he warned. "I will be a catalyst for solutions, not a source of conflict."

Significantly, although the 2019 parity reform paved the way for gender-balanced candidacies, both state and federal legislatures have neglected to legislate on gubernatorial parity for five years, despite a 2020 TEPJF sentence urging compliance. The new leadership enters a fraught environment: regional congresses, local governors and political parties in 17 states are already gearing up for reform battles ahead of the 2027 cycle.

Bátiz will preside over the tribunal through the 2026 electoral reform and the 2027 elections, already billed as one of the most complex in the country's history. Internally, he inherits a legacy of dysfunction: accusations of sentence-trading, disproportionate spending, and political alignments within the bench. The court currently functions with only six magistrates, a composition that risks tied votes and fragile consensus.

A constitutional law scholar from Chiapas, Bátiz holds a master's in constitutional law and is currently completing his doctorate. He previously served as President of the Electoral Tribunal of Chiapas, and held posts in the state's judiciary, the local congress, and the Supreme Court's International Affairs division. In June 2025, he won over 4.4 million votes to become a magistrate, the first ever to ascend by direct popular vote.



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