

Mexico Political Chatter

July 30, 2026

The run-up to the 2027 electoral process has begun to shape the political agenda. The INE is projecting a request for a historic budget of 36.119 billion pesos for fiscal year 2027, in a key year for the renewal of the Chamber of Deputies and the simultaneous organization of multiple elections. In that context, Councilor Uuc-Kib Espadas proposed that deputies be elected through two separate ballots, arguing that the single-ballot model violates the right to a free vote. And to further heat up the atmosphere, the INE's Complaints Commission ordered the PRI and its leader, Alejandro "Alito" Moreno, to stop referring to Morena as a "narco-party" and to delete the posts linking the ruling party to organized crime, on the grounds that they attribute crimes without factual basis.

The debate over the limits of power versus freedom of expression escalated with the new guidelines on audience rights. Organizations such as Artículo 19, legislators, and constitutional experts warned that the proposal grants the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission powers that could open the door to the oversight of informational content and exceed what the Constitution provides. As Zepeda Patterson notes, although much of the proposal is reasonable, its main risk lies in the fact that disputes would ultimately be decided by a commission tied to whichever political force holds power.

In Baja California, Governor Marina del Pilar Ávila broke her silence about the leaked audios and claimed to have been the victim of a "psychological ambush" orchestrated by her predecessor, Jaime Bonilla, who, according to her account, made her believe she faced an investigation and possible extradition in the United States. The governor acknowledged that trusting that contact was a mistake, denied having negotiated information outside institutional channels, and announced a complaint over the recording. In parallel, Morena's national leader, Ariadna Montiel, called on Marina del Pilar and Bonilla to prioritize the movement's unity, in an attempt to contain a dispute that keeps Baja California at the center of the national agenda.

The case of former Governor Ernesto Ruffo Appel continued to generate reactions from the National Palace, where Sheinbaum maintained that it is exclusively up to the FGR to determine whether to investigate his alleged ties to the Arellano Félix Cartel, and rejected any political persecution; although, as Jorge G. Castañeda argues, the conditions of the process raise doubts about the impartiality of the justice system. To this were added the Senate's failure to publish its financial statements for 2025 and the first quarter of 2026, and Víctor Rodríguez Padilla's decision to classify, days before his departure, the findings of internal Pemex audits for three years.

Finally, the crisis over the UNAM entrance exam continued to escalate: while rejected applicants demand that the test be readministered, the university established a technical commission of 16 specialists to review the irregularities of the first fully virtual application, with the focus on Territorium Life, the company hired through direct award for up to 101.7 million pesos. As Salvador Camarena notes, the episode should serve to review internal processes with transparency, avoiding both uncritical defense and outright condemnation of the institution.

INE projects a historic budget for the 2027 elections

The National Electoral Institute is preparing to request a budget of 36.119 billion pesos from the Chamber of Deputies for fiscal year 2027, of which 22 billion would go to organizing the federal midterm elections, local elections in 17 states, and preparations for the judicial election and a possible recall referendum in 2028. The preliminary draft, endorsed by the Temporary Budget Commission and to be discussed by the General Council on August 18, also allocates 14 billion pesos for the body's ordinary operations. To this figure must still be added the prerogatives for political parties, estimated at around 9 billion pesos, meaning the total cost of the electoral system could exceed 45 billion pesos. The proposal anticipates a new debate between the INE and the Chamber of Deputies over the financing of electoral authorities, in a key year for the renewal of the Chamber and the simultaneous organization of multiple electoral processes.

Months after the debate over the elimination of proportional-representation deputies, Councilor Uuc-Kib Espadas proposed that the election of deputies in the 2027 elections be carried out using two ballots: one for first-past-the-post candidates and another for those of proportional representation, arguing that the current single-ballot model violates the right to a free vote because it forces citizens to vote for the same political force in both tracks.

And to further heat up the run-up to the electoral process, the INE's Complaints and Grievances Commission ordered the PRI and its national leader, Alejandro "Alito" Moreno, to refrain from referring to Morena as a "narco-party" and to delete the social media posts linking the ruling party to organized crime. The electoral authority granted precautionary measures regarding five posts published from the accounts of the PRI's national leader and four from the party's account, considering that they could constitute the imputation of false acts or crimes without factual basis.

-  [El Universal: INE seeks 36 billion pesos as its 2027 budget; General Council prepares discussion](#)
-  [La Jornada: Councilor Uuc-Kib Espadas proposes two ballots to elect federal deputies in 2027](#)
-  [Proceso: INE bars Alito from calling Morena a "narco-party"; the PRI leader complains of "censorship"](#)

Regulation or censorship? The clash over audience rights grows

The new guidelines on audience rights continue to raise tension among the government, specialists, and the opposition. Organizations such as Artículo 19 warned that the proposal grants the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission powers that could open the door to the oversight of informational content, an authority they consider incompatible with democratic standards and that brings Mexico closer to practices typical of autocratic regimes.

These criticisms were joined by legislators and constitutional experts, who argue that the draft exceeds what the Constitution provides by allowing the authority to intervene in the evaluation of content and impose sanctions on radio and television concessionaires. While the government defends that the proposal seeks to strengthen audience rights and combat disinformation, the debate has become a new front over the limits between media regulation and freedom of expression.

-  [El Universal: Audience rules exceed the Constitution, experts warn](#)

Marina del Pilar denounces a "psychological ambush"

Baja California Governor Marina del Pilar Ávila broke her silence about the leaked audios in which she speaks with an alleged intermediary of U.S. authorities and claimed she was the victim of a "psychological ambush" orchestrated by her predecessor, Jaime Bonilla. In an interview with El País, she stated that the meeting took place in December 2025, when a person introduced by Bonilla led her to believe she was facing an investigation in the United States and even possible extradition, with the aim of intimidating her and eliciting responses that would later be leaked. The governor acknowledged that trusting that contact was a mistake, denied having negotiated information outside institutional channels, and maintained that all her efforts to recover her visa were personal and within the legal framework. She also confirmed that she has already filed a complaint over the recording and leaking of the audios, while insisting that she will remain at the head of the state government.

In parallel, Morena sought to contain the case's political impact. The party's national leader, Ariadna Montiel, publicly called on Marina del Pilar and Jaime Bonilla to prioritize the movement's unity and set aside internal confrontations ahead of the 2027 elections. The message reflects the leadership's concern over a dispute that has escalated in recent weeks and that keeps Baja California at the center of the national agenda, following the cancellation of the governor's visa, the release of new audios, and the exchange of accusations between the two former allies. While the governor insists she was the victim of a political operation to discredit her, Morena seeks to prevent the conflict from further eroding the party's image in one of its main electoral strongholds.

 [El País: Marina del Pilar Ávila: "They set a psychological ambush for me. They even spoke of extradition to the United States"](#)

Under scrutiny: the company that operated the UNAM exam

The crisis over UNAM's undergraduate entrance exam continues to escalate. While rejected students protested again at Ciudad Universitaria to demand that the test be readministered, the university formally established a Technical Commission of 16 specialists that will thoroughly review the possible irregularities detected during the exam's first fully virtual application. The group will analyze the atypical results, the applicants' performance, and the functioning of the oversight mechanisms, and will determine whether there was cheating or breaches of the process, with a commitment to go "to the ultimate consequences." The decision keeps new-student enrollment suspended while it is determined whether the results can be validated or whether the evaluation will need to be repeated.

At the same time, the focus is also on Territorium Life, the company hired through direct award to develop and operate the exam's technological platform under a contract of up to 101.7 million pesos. The company asserted that its infrastructure functioned as expected and requested to appear before the commission to provide technical records that help clarify what happened; however, specialists and applicants question whether the surveillance systems were sufficient to prevent the use of artificial intelligence, external devices, or the leaking of test items. The review of the contract and

the company's performance will be key to determining whether there were breaches and eventual sanctions, in a case that already represents one of the most significant recent challenges to the credibility of the admission process at the country's top university.

 [Milenio: Millionaire contract and ignored safeguards: the failure of Territorium Life, the company UNAM turned to for administering exams](#)

 The Ruffo case keeps political pressure on the National Palace

The judicial process against former Baja California Governor Ernesto Ruffo Appel continues to generate reactions from the National Palace. This Wednesday, President Claudia Sheinbaum reiterated that it is exclusively up to the Attorney General's Office to determine whether there are elements to open an investigation into the PAN figure's alleged ties to the Arellano Félix Cartel, after the resurfacing of statements attributed to Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán and old accusations by former President Felipe Calderón. The president insisted that the case does not respond to political motivations, but to a criminal investigation related to alleged fuel-tax fraud, and rejected that there is any persecution against the former state governor. With this, the federal government keeps the issue on the public agenda while the opposition denounces a political use of justice and the FGR defines the course of the investigations.

 [Excélsior: It's up to the FGR to decide whether to investigate Ruffo for alleged protection of a cartel: Sheinbaum](#)

 Opacity in the Senate: financial statements vanish

The Senate faces new questions on transparency after it was revealed that it failed to publish its financial statements for the close of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026, despite regulations requiring this information to be posted on its institutional portal. The absence of the documents makes it impossible to know the state of the upper chamber's finances and hinders oversight of the use of public resources. According to the report, even in the case of the first quarter of 2026 only the document's record appears, but without the link to consult it. The case adds to other recent criticism over opacity in the Senate's administrative management and opens a new front of debate over accountability in the Legislative Branch.

 [Excélsior: The Senate hides its financial statements; budgetary opacity](#)

 Before leaving, Rodríguez Padilla shields Pemex audits

Days before Víctor Rodríguez Padilla's departure from the General Directorate of Pemex, the company's Transparency Committee approved classifying for three years the findings of internal audits carried out on subsidiary companies and information technology areas during 2025. The oil company justified the measure by arguing that disclosing the documents could compromise strategic economic and commercial information, as well as affect review processes that have not yet

concluded. However, the decision has generated questions over the timing in which it was made, since the public versions of the files contain dozens of completely redacted pages, making it impossible to know the observations, possible irregularities, and recommendations derived from the reviews. The case revives the debate over transparency and accountability at Pemex, particularly in a context of changes in its leadership and greater scrutiny of the state productive enterprise's management.

 [El Universal: Before leaving, Rodríguez Padilla sealed audits at Pemex; classified data for three years](#)

SEP moves against militarized schools

The SEP ordered educational authorities across the country to review the permits and Official Recognition of Studies of private schools to prevent, starting in the 2026-2027 school year, the operation of schools using the designations "militarized," "military," or "castrense." The ministry instructed the suspension of activities and the initiation of closure procedures for institutions that fail to comply with the provision, on the grounds that military training corresponds exclusively to the Armed Forces and the National Guard, and is incompatible with the principles of the New Mexican School and the protection of the rights of children and adolescents. The decision comes days after the case of Dafne Zapata, whose death during a militarized academy camp triggered a review of this type of institution.

 [El Universal: SEP orders closure of militarized schools; warns that military-style education is exclusive to the Army](#)

Opinion express

Ruffo Appel, a political prisoner? — Jorge G. Castañeda
Castañeda argues that the arrest of former Governor Ernesto Ruffo brings together elements pointing to political persecution and raises the need to internationalize the case to bring visibility to possible abuses of power. The former foreign minister argues that, regardless of the former governor's guilt or innocence, the conditions of the process and the political context raise doubts about the impartiality of the Mexican justice system. He also warns that the credibility of the rule of law depends on judicial processes being conducted without political motivations and with full respect for legal guarantees.

 [El Universal: Ruffo Appel, a political prisoner?](#)

Audience rights and the limits of the sovereign — Jorge Zepeda Patterson
Zepeda Patterson analyzes the Claudia Sheinbaum government's proposal to regulate audience rights and acknowledges as legitimate the desire to guarantee truthful information and safeguard the quality of public conversation, given that radio and television concessionaires use a public space that belongs to everyone. However, he raises the underlying tension: the concern that a body dominated by the 4T could rule on and sanction content to favor its interests or avoid criticism is equally valid.

 [Milenio: Audience rights and the limits of the sovereign](#)

Cuén, another unpunished fabrication — Ricardo Raphael
Raphael revisits the murder of Héctor Melesio Cuén to question the authorities' role in constructing the official version of events. The columnist reconstructs the narrative behind this murder to reveal the inconsistencies and manipulations in the investigation, which cost Sinaloa prosecutor Sara Bruna Quiñones her post. He warns that the lack of clarification strengthens impunity and deepens public distrust of the institutions responsible for administering justice.

 [Milenio: Cuén, another unpunished fabrication](#)

UNAM, between "immaculate" and "the worst of all" — Salvador Camarena
Camarena analyzes the crisis generated by the irregularities detected in UNAM's admission process and criticizes both those who present the university as an untouchable institution and those who dismiss it entirely. The columnist argues that the episode should serve to review internal processes with transparency, correct failures, and strengthen public trust, avoiding both uncritical defense and absolute condemnation of the country's top university.

 [El Financiero: UNAM, between "immaculate" and "the worst of all"](#)

 Agenda in brief

July 31 | Hearing of alleged drug trafficker Tony Montana, brother of "El Mencho," in Washington, D.C. He is expected to plead guilty.

August 1 | U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that talks will begin in Venezuela for a political transition following the fall of Nicolás Maduro.