

Mexico Political Chatter

August 27, 2026

The political crisis in Sinaloa put President Claudia Sheinbaum's control over the so-called Fourth Transformation to the test, with Rubén Rocha Moya's attempt to return to the governorship without a prior political operation with the National Palace or with Morena's leadership, in a move that, faced with almost unanimous rejection and pressure, forced him to request a leave of absence again just hours after having returned to the post. The episode reinforced theories about friendly fire within the 4T and about the consolidation of the president's authority. To this was added the decision of Senator Enrique Inzunza, Rocha's former Secretary of Government and one of the names questioned in the case, to leave the Morena bench to declare himself an unaffiliated legislator.

The Sinaloa Congress ended up naming Graciela Domínguez Nava as interim governor, and her changes to the state cabinet were interpreted as a "cleansing" of rochismo ahead of the 2027 election. As García Soto analyzes, the episode marks the first open clash between Sheinbaum and the hardest-line sectors of Lopezobradorism, while for Alejandro Aguirre the mere 34 hours Rocha remained in office exposed a serious political miscalculation in the face of presidential power.

On the eve of the formal start of the electoral process, Morena got an early start on profiling its cards for the 17 governorships at stake, through the designation of the "state coordinators for the Defense of the Transformation": among the first to be unveiled are Nora Ruvalcaba in Aguascalientes, Santiago Nieto in Querétaro, and Imelda Castro in Sinaloa. The move comes after Sheinbaum's call to vet the profiles and avoid candidates with ties to organized crime.

On the bilateral relationship, Mexico and the United States gave a new sign of rapprochement with the first in-person meeting between Foreign Minister Roberto Velasco and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in Washington. The meeting shows an attempt to rebuild the dialogue, though the priorities remain different: while Mexico insists on sovereignty and shared responsibility, Washington demands more forceful measures against the cartels, fentanyl, and irregular migration. The meeting takes place while Marcelo Ebrard negotiates trade and tariff matters in parallel.

After weeks of intense public debate and accusations of possible censorship, the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRT) approved the new guidelines to protect the rights of radio and television audiences, with rules on media literacy, accessibility, content for minors, and complaint mechanisms, in addition to obligations for concessionaires regarding codes of ethics and audience ombudsmen.

Finally, on security and justice, the Michoacán Prosecutor's Office opened a new line of investigation in the Carlos Manzo case to clarify the possible relationship between the current mayor of Uruapan and the slain official's widow, Grecia Quiroz, and a former municipal official accused of allegedly leaking to the CJNG information about the movements of the murdered mayor. In parallel, the FGR announced the discovery in Mexico City of documents linked to former Governor Ernesto Ruffo and to the fuel-tax fraud network, and ruled out that, so far, there is any request to change the precautionary measure against the former Baja California governor, who will remain in mandatory pretrial detention.

The Sinaloa case returned to the center of the political agenda after Rubén Rocha attempted to retake the governorship without a prior political operation with Claudia Sheinbaum or with Morena's leadership. The move triggered a new crisis: faced with rejection and political pressure, Rocha had to request a leave of absence again just hours after returning to the post. The episode exposed the distance between the governor's decisions and the National Palace's strategy, just as the party sought to keep under control a file that has been generating political costs for months. Rocha's action, a total challenge to Sheinbaum, provoked an avalanche of speculation and reinforced theories about friendly fire against the National Palace within the 4T.

When it seemed the waters were beginning to recede, another front appeared. Enrique Inzunza, Rocha's former Secretary of Government and one of the names questioned in the case, did not request a leave from his post as senator, a suggestion made by some Morena members, but did leave the Morena bench to declare himself an unaffiliated legislator. Sheinbaum intervened publicly to contain the crisis, and the local Congress ended up naming Graciela Domínguez Nava as interim governor. More than resolving the problem, the succession leaves a political signal: Sinaloa became a matter Morena had to contain from the center in the face of decisions that escaped the control of its own state structure.

From the opposition, the episode has been used to question precisely that control. The PRI, PAN, and Movimiento Ciudadano rejected Domínguez's appointment and warned that Rocha's leave does not legally eliminate the possibility of his return to the post, while they have also pointed to a continuity of the political group that governed Sinaloa. The opposition's reading points higher: if a governor can return by his own decision, if a senator decides to break with the bench, and if the center has to intervene to order the succession, how disciplined is the 4T movement really under Sheinbaum's leadership?

 [El País: Sheinbaum tries to please everyone in Sinaloa](#)
 [Reforma: Inzunza leaves Morena bench; will serve as independent](#)

Morena gets an early start on the race for the governorships

Morena began to profile its cards for the 17 governorships that will be at stake in 2027, though it avoids calling them candidates and presents them as "state coordinators for the Defense of the Transformation." So far, the party has already unveiled Nora Ruvalcaba in Aguascalientes, Pablo Gutiérrez Lazarus in Campeche, Rosa María Bayardo in Colima, Santiago Nieto in Querétaro, and Imelda Castro in Sinaloa. In practice, they are the first profiles the party places in the electoral race, even though the formal process does not begin until September 10.

The move also comes after Claudia Sheinbaum's call for Morena to vet the profiles it will nominate and avoid candidates with ties to organized crime, a message that takes on special relevance after the Sinaloa crisis. The strategy allows the party to get an early start on the competition without formally using the word "candidacy," but it also opens a new front: the opposition can question that Morena is starting up its electoral machinery ahead of time and using party figures as a way to skirt electoral restrictions. The race for 2027, in other words, has already begun for Morena, even if legally it has not yet.

 [El Financiero: Sheinbaum asks that Morena's hopefuls not be linked to crime](#)

Mara Lezama, between private jets and a government supplier

The controversy surrounding Mara Lezama is not limited to the fact that the Quintana Roo governor acknowledged traveling on private planes: the problem is who the aircraft were linked to and who paid for the trips. A Reforma investigation documented at least 43 international flights by Lezama and her family on two Gulfstreams managed by PABE-TAX, a company linked to Grupo Seguritech, a supplier to the state government. The trips have been estimated at close to 20 million pesos, though that figure does not by itself constitute an invoice nor prove who paid for them.

The case puts pressure on the discourse of austerity, transparency, and separation between private interests and government that the 4T sustains. Lezama claims the trips were personal and covered with her own resources, but the explanation does not resolve the central point: the need to prove who paid for each flight and why a governor and her family used aircraft managed by a company linked to a contractor of her own government. The fact that Claudia Sheinbaum herself asked for the conditions of those trips to be clarified raises the political cost of the episode and places Lezama before a demand that goes beyond denying the use of public money: she has to demonstrate that there was no conflict of interest.

 [Reforma: Mara Lezama flies on supplier's planes](#)

Velasco and Rubio reopen the dialogue between Mexico and the U.S.

Mexico and the United States gave a new sign of rapprochement with the first in-person meeting between Foreign Minister Roberto Velasco and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in Washington, amid a relationship marked by tensions over security, migration, and trade. The meeting shows an attempt to rebuild the dialogue, though the priorities remain different: while Mexico insists on sovereignty, shared responsibility, and cooperation without subordination, Washington demands more forceful measures against the cartels, fentanyl, and irregular migration. The meeting also takes place while Marcelo Ebrard negotiates trade and tariff matters in parallel, so Claudia Sheinbaum's government faces the challenge of keeping the diplomatic channel with Donald Trump open without yielding on the issues that have caused the greatest bilateral friction.

 [El País: Mexico and the United States advance the thaw with a meeting between Roberto Velasco and Marco Rubio](#)

CRT strengthens audience protections

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRT) approved new guidelines to protect the rights of radio and television audiences, with rules on media literacy, accessibility, content for children and adolescents, as well as mechanisms to file complaints and receive responses from concessionaires. The measure seeks to update a regulatory framework that, following the elimination of the IFT and the creation of the new authority, needed to be adapted to the new institutional structure. The guidelines also establish obligations for concessionaires regarding codes of ethics and audience ombudsmen, once again placing the media's responsibility toward its audiences under scrutiny.

 [La Jornada: Telecommunications Regulatory Commission approved guidelines to protect audience rights](#)

Grecia Quiroz, under scrutiny over the Carlos Manzo case

The Michoacán Prosecutor's Office opened a new line of investigation to clarify the possible relationship between Grecia Quiroz, current mayor of Uruapan and widow of Carlos Manzo, and Samuel García Rivero, a former municipal official accused of allegedly providing the CJNG with information about the movements and schedule of the then-murdered mayor. The inquiry gained momentum after Yesenia Méndez, Manzo's former private secretary, expanded her statement and indicated that Samuel "N" had allegedly arrived at the city government on Quiroz's recommendation and maintained access to the mayor's private information. The Prosecutor's Office clarified that this hypothesis already existed, but that until now it had not carried the same weight, and that the new allegations will be investigated to determine whether there is any link to the murder.

 [Milenio: Relationship between Grecia Quiroz and man who leaked information for Carlos Manzo's murder under investigation](#)

FGR finds documents linked to Ruffo and fuel-tax fraud

The FGR reported the discovery in Mexico City of documents linked to former Baja California Governor Ernesto Ruffo and to the fuel-tax fraud network, as part of the investigation into the fuel smuggling scheme. The Prosecutor's Office indicated that the documents will be analyzed to determine their relevance to the case and to establish possible connections with other actors involved, while it ruled out that, so far, there is any request to change the precautionary measure against the former governor, who will remain in mandatory pretrial detention.

 [Reforma: FGR finds documents in Mexico City linked to Ruffo and fuel theft](#)

Interoceanic Train: a project that keeps costing the treasury

The Interoceanic Train, one of the emblematic projects of López Obrador's term to turn the Isthmus of Tehuantepec into a strategic logistics corridor, faces a reality very different from the original promise: more than two years after beginning operations, it maintains low cargo levels, few users, and infrastructure problems, while depending heavily on the public budget to keep running. According to information from the Finance Ministry and the Expenditure Budget, the project's total cost reached 62 billion pesos, more than triple the 20 billion originally estimated, and it currently operates with a practically nonexistent level of commercial self-sufficiency, as around 97% of its operating expenses are covered through public subsidies. The project that was presented as a bet to spur development in the southeast and compete for the movement of goods in the region thus faces a question increasingly difficult to dodge: how much longer will the treasury have to sustain a project that has yet to demonstrate it can sustain itself?

 [El Universal: Infrastructure failures and few users choke the Interoceanic Train; it operates with 97% subsidies](#)

 Opinion express

- **Sheinbaum prevails: halts the hardliners' rebellion — García Soto**
García Soto interprets the Sinaloa crisis as the first open clash between Claudia Sheinbaum and the hardest-line sectors of Lopezobradorism, which allegedly pushed for Rubén Rocha's return to the governorship. He argues that the president's reaction and the rapid alignment of Morena and the governors halted the challenge and prevented her authority from being called into question. For the columnist, Rocha ended up as the big loser: abandoned by those who backed him, forced to request a leave again, and without the control he maintained over the government and the Morena succession in Sinaloa. The episode, he argues, also marks a break from AMLO's "Maximato" and an advance by Sheinbaum in consolidating her own exercise of power.

 [El Universal: Sheinbaum prevails: halts the hardliners' rebellion](#)

- **The return of López Obrador — Raymundo Riva Palacio**
Riva Palacio argues that AMLO returned to Mexico City out of fear that the U.S. investigations will reach his son Andrés López Beltrán, and that from there he seeks to design strategies to protect him and maintain political influence. The columnist notes that the possibility of sending him to countries such as Russia, China, or South Africa was even explored, though the idea was ruled out due to the political costs it would entail. In parallel, López Beltrán abandoned his low profile and began moving politically in Tabasco, while the cancellation of his U.S. visa and new revelations about investigations into figures close to the former president raised the pressure on the family. For Riva Palacio, López Obrador's return also has an electoral dimension: he continues to operate to influence the selection of Morena candidates ahead of 2027, though Sheinbaum appears to hold the advantage in that dispute.

 [El Financiero: The return of López Obrador](#)

- **Disorder and authoritarianism — Jesús Silva-Herzog Márquez**
Silva-Herzog Márquez analyzes the transformation of Mexican political power and warns that today's authoritarianism combines a strong concentration of power with institutional disorder. His argument points to the fact that the elimination or weakening of checks and balances has not necessarily produced a more effective government, but rather a system where decisions are concentrated while institutions lose the capacity to process them and limit power. The columnist's central concern is that this combination of concentration and disorder may end up normalizing authoritarian practices without, at the same time, building a State with clear rules and institutional capacity.

 [Reforma: Disorder and authoritarianism](#)

- **Rocha, the miscalculation of the 34 hours — Alejandro Aguirre**
Aguirre centers his analysis on Rubén Rocha Moya's failed return to the Sinaloa governorship, considering that the mere 34 hours he remained in office exposed a serious political miscalculation. The governor had allegedly trusted that he had sufficient backing to return, but the reaction of Morena and President Claudia Sheinbaum showed that the support he believed he had was not enough in the face of presidential power. The episode ended with Rocha requesting a leave again and leaving the fracture within the movement exposed, in addition to the political cost of attempting a decision of that magnitude without correctly gauging the National Palace's position.

 [El Herald de México: Rocha and the miscalculation of the 34 hours](#)

Agenda in brief

August 30 | The Morena bench in the Chamber of Deputies will hold its plenary meeting at San Lázaro to define an agenda of around 30 legislative priorities for the next session period, in addition to reviewing the 2027 Budget. The meeting will be attended by members of the federal cabinet, among them Rosa Icela Rodríguez, Édgar Amador, Marcelo Ebrard, Roberto Velasco, and Josefina Rodríguez, as well as legal counsel Luisa María Alcalde and Morena's national leadership.

August 31 | The Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judicial Branch ordered the Somos México party to modify its name, emblem, and distinctive colors before August 31, considering that its current identity may generate symbolic appropriation of the national identity and confusion among the electorate.

September 1 | Claudia Sheinbaum will present her Second Government Report at the National Palace and, subsequently, will begin a tour of the country's 32 states to deliver specific reports on the works, programs, and actions carried out in each state.