

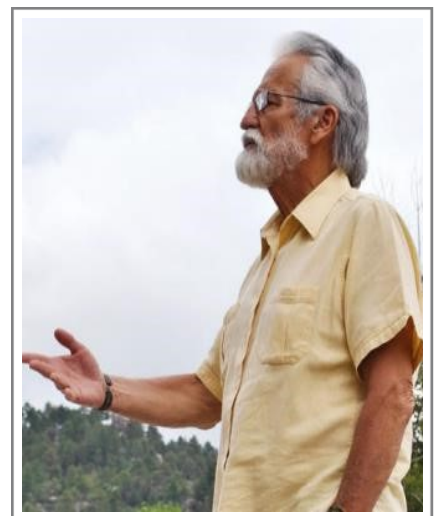
A CALL FOR A MEXICO FREE OF VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY



On this occasion I would like to talk to you about the murders of Pedro Palma, tourist guide and Jesuit priests, Javier Campos Morales, S.J., and Joaquín César Mora Salazar, S.J., in the Sierra Tarahumara on June 20. I write about this topic because, as many of you know, **I have always been very close to the Company of Jesus:** my uncle, Enrique Torroella, S.J., founded the Universidad Iberoamericana; I was educated at the Colegio Patria, a Jesuit school; and Father Javier Ávila, S.J., who knew the murdered priests and is in the Sierra Tarahumara, was my classmate at school and is a close friend of mine.

I begin with an outlook of the insecurity that has plagued our country in recent years. Since 2006, the year in which the Armed Forces were deployed to fight drug cartels, **around 400,000 Mexicans have died and 85,000 have disappeared.** In the last three presidential terms (16 years), 50 priests have been murdered and, only in the past month of May there were 2,833 homicides, the most violent month of 2022.

Father Javier Ávila has narrated what happened to the media, asking for an end to impunity and requesting that the attackers be held responsible: **"there have been worse moments and they have never bend us"** he declared. I have known him for 45 years. El Pato Ávila, as we know him, has dedicated a large part of his life to serving the people of that region and, especially, the Rarámuris (he speaks Rarámuri). On Sunday the 19th we sent each other messages by cell phone, in which he told me about the serious insecurity problems in the region. The next day, the unfortunate events that we all know occurred.





As the dean of Universidad Iberoamericana, Dr. Luis Arriaga Valenzuela, S.J., rightly said in a recent publication, **the Jesuits are “called to be people of the frontier. That is, to go where no one else wants to go. To be present where it is most necessary to share and build hope”**. The long history of the Company of Jesus in our country is a faithful testimony of this. For almost five hundred years they have traveled to the most remote regions of Mexico to be with the neediest, to found schools and build communities. And that is precisely what Fathers Javier Campos Morales, S.J., and Joaquín César Mora Salazar, S.J., did in the Sierra Tarahumara.

Today, I share their pain for the violence and impunity that have reached outrageous limits in our country. Using power to destroy human life is always reprehensible. **Father Javier Ávila, S.J., as well as members of the Tarahumara community were threatened to remain silent, but they still decided to speak.** Let's join them; let us be its echo for a Mexico free of violence and impunity.