MIRANDA INTELLIGENCE

Mexico Political Chatter

May 14, 2026

With the crisis over the death of two CIA agents in Chihuahua still unresolved, a CNN report about an alleged covert CIA operation in the State of Mexico that resulted in the death of Francisco Beltrán, "El Payín," a Sinaloa Cartel operator, reignited the debate over the scope of U.S. presence on Mexican soil. The federal government's reaction was immediate: both President Claudia Sheinbaum and Security Secretary Omar García Harfuch flatly rejected the account, and the CIA itself called the report "false and sensationalist." Sheinbaum went further, accusing CNN and The New York Times of participating in a conspiracy to damage relations between the two countries. In Chihuahua, the presence of armed U.S. agents inside the state prosecutor's office days before the operation was confirmed, triggering accusations of sovereignty violations. The Attorney General's Office accused the state government of encroaching on federal jurisdiction, while Morena threatened to pursue a political trial against Governor Maru Campos, who responded by closing ranks with the other three PAN governors and insisting there is "nothing to hide."

In Sinaloa, the pressure on Rocha Moya continues: Sheinbaum confirmed that the governor on leave requested federal security protection following an armed attack on his home, while a review of the National Transparency Platform revealed that key agencies in his government — including the secretariats of Security, Finance, and Social Welfare, as well as the state Attorney General's Office — published no internal or external audits over five years of administration, despite this being a legal obligation.

In another security crisis, since May 5 the criminal group Los Ardillos unleashed a wave of violence that forced the displacement of more than 120 people from the communities of Xicotlán, Tula, and Acahuehuetlán in Chilapa, Guerrero, with armed drones, burning of homes, and indigenous women calling directly on Donald Trump for help amid the government's initial lack of response. The Secretariat of the Interior traveled to the area with more than 1,200 federal forces, but indigenous organizations warn that militarization will not resolve the underlying conflict. As Denise Maerker notes, the apparent reduction in homicides in Guerrero does not reflect a stronger state but rather fragile criminal equilibriums.

The Farías Laguna case opened another uncomfortable front for the armed forces: the Attorney General's Office accuses Fernando and Manuel Roberto Farías Laguna of heading a fuel smuggling network through maritime customs with alleged protection from within the Navy, putting former Navy Secretary Rafael Ojeda Durán under pressure. The case escalated after Sheinbaum acknowledged having received letters from one of the accused claiming innocence and asked the Attorney General's Office to make the evidence and any institutional protection links transparent.

On the institutional front, the Secretariat of Education generated a week of national uncertainty by proposing to move up the end of the school year, only to reverse course and maintain the original calendar through July 15. Meanwhile, with the 2026-2027 electoral process just months away, INE President Guadalupe Taddei informed that postponing the second judicial election from 2027 to 2028

would save around 2 billion pesos, reopening the debate over the costs and viability of the model for electing judges and magistrates.

Finally, today marks the first anniversary of the assassination of Ximena Guzmán and José Muñoz, close collaborators of Mexico City Head of Government Clara Brugada. With the hitman and the intellectual authors still unidentified, the motive unresolved, and the investigation under secrecy, Brugada called a special press conference to account for the state of the investigation — one year after one of the most politically resonant cases of violence in the current city administration.

🚨 Suspicions of covert CIA operations in Mexico remain alive

With the crisis over the death of two CIA agents in Chihuahua still unresolved, and following the U.S. government's bombshell request for the extradition of ten Morena-linked Sinaloa politicians on alleged ties to organized crime — which has triggered a clash of positions between the Sheinbaum and Trump administrations — a new round of investigative reporting rattled the bilateral relationship after CNN reported that the CIA allegedly participated in a covert operation in the State of Mexico that resulted in the death by explosion of Francisco Beltrán, "El Payín," a Sinaloa Cartel operator.

The federal government's reaction was immediate: both President Claudia Sheinbaum and Omar García Harfuch flatly rejected the account, and the CIA itself called the report "false and sensationalist." Nevertheless, the episode reignited doubts fueled by recent events in Chihuahua and Sinaloa, where reports of U.S. intelligence involvement in operations against drug trafficking had already emerged, feeding the perception of a growing Washington footprint inside Mexico.

🔗 CNN: CIA intensifies secret war against cartels with lethal operations inside Mexico

Morena intensifies pressure against Maru Campos

The Chihuahua case continues to escalate politically and surface uncomfortable new details about security cooperation with the United States. This week, the presence of armed U.S. agents inside the Chihuahua prosecutor's office before the operation against alleged organized crime members was confirmed, triggering accusations of sovereignty violations and Morena threats to pursue a political trial against Governor Maru Campos. The Attorney General's Office added to the political pressure, accusing the state government of encroaching on federal jurisdiction during the operation. The PAN governor responded by closing ranks with the other three PAN governors, defending binational security coordination and insisting "there is nothing to hide," while the case continues to feed doubts about the scope of U.S. participation in operations inside Mexico.

🔗 El Universal: Presence of U.S. agents at Chihuahua prosecutor's office before operation confirmed; one was armed

U.S. pressure over Rocha case continues

Pressure from the United States over the case of Rubén Rocha Moya continues to mount while doubts persist in Mexico about his actual situation. Although President Claudia Sheinbaum confirmed that the governor on leave did request federal security protection following the armed attack on his home in Sinaloa, his whereabouts remain publicly unclear. Meanwhile, the DEA issued warnings that the case "is only the beginning" of new actions against political actors linked to drug trafficking, while reports of irregularities and opacity in Rocha's government — including the concealment of official audits — continue to surface. The episode keeps the political crisis in Sinaloa alive and feeds the narrative of growing U.S. pressure on figures within the 4T.

🔗 Expansión Política: Rocha did request security, Sheinbaum clarifies, and defends the election that brought him to power

🔥 **Guerrero revives the forced displacement crisis**

Violence erupted again in the Chilapa region of Guerrero, where clashes between criminal groups left at least 120 people displaced and six injured, forcing the federal government to deploy more than 1,200 Army, National Guard, and state police elements. The offensive came after several days of roadblocks, armed attacks, and denunciations from indigenous communities accusing the government of institutional abandonment in the face of groups such as Los Ardillos and Los Tlacos. Although the government of President Claudia Sheinbaum claimed to have "taken control" of the area, collectives and indigenous organizations warn that militarization will not resolve the underlying conflict or the criminal dispute that has dominated the Montaña Baja region of Guerrero for years. The episode reopens the debate over forced displacement in Mexico and undercuts the official narrative on falling homicide rates, just as the federal administration is touting a national decline in violence indicators.

🔗 El País: Authorities deploy 1,000 agents in Guerrero's Montaña Baja amid the latest violence crisis

📚 The SEP opened a crisis… only to end up in the same place

After several days of controversy, the Secretariat of Public Education reversed course and confirmed that the 2025-2026 school year will end on July 15 as originally planned, dropping the proposal to move up the holiday break due to heat and the 2026 World Cup. President Claudia Sheinbaum defended the proposal as "not a whim," but the government ultimately backed down following criticism from parents, teachers, and specialists who accused it of improvisation and disruption for millions of families.

The episode exposed a political problem entirely of the SEP's own making: for nearly a week, the government generated national uncertainty, tensions with teachers, and questions about educational backsliding, only to maintain exactly the same calendar. While some states will be allowed to make exceptional adjustments due to extreme heat, the public perception was that of a government that improvised an unpopular measure and retreated under social pressure.

🔗 El Universal: SEP reverses course; agrees not to move school year closing date

⚖️ INE raises alarms over judicial election

The 2027 judicial election is already facing resistance from the electoral arbiter itself. INE President Guadalupe Taddei Zavala and several councilors called for postponing the process to 2028, citing "logistical and operational" risks from its overlap with the federal midterm election. From the Chamber of Deputies, Morena coordinator Ricardo Monreal called it "viable" to review the calendar. The proposal reveals that the judicial reform is beginning to run into implementation problems even before it has consolidated. The INE acknowledges operational overload and technical difficulties in simultaneously organizing both processes, which could open the door to modifying once again the original design pushed by Morena and reignite the debate over the viability of the model for electing judges and magistrates.

🔗 Reforma: Chamber backs INE request to postpone judicial election

🚢 Farías Laguna case opens uncomfortable front for the Navy

The case of the Farías Laguna brothers has become one of the largest corruption scandals linked to the armed forces. Fernando Farías Laguna, detained in Argentina, and Manuel Roberto Farías Laguna are accused by the Attorney General's Office of heading a fuel smuggling network through maritime customs, exploiting alleged protection networks within the Navy. While Argentina blocked his immediate deportation and opened a formal extradition process, the case escalated politically after President Claudia Sheinbaum acknowledged having received letters from one of the accused claiming innocence and asked the Attorney General's Office to make transparent the evidence and any possible institutional protection links.

The investigation directly undermines the narrative of military incorruptibility built during the López Obrador administration and puts former Navy Secretary Rafael Ojeda Durán under pressure, given his alleged family and political ties to the accused. The case is already seen as the most sensitive "fiscal fuel theft" scandal in recent years — not only for the allegedly diverted multimillion-peso amounts, but because it exposes possible complicity networks within key security and customs institutions.

🔗 El Universal: Roberto Farías Laguna claims he was taken to criminal proceedings "without solid evidence"; asks Sheinbaum to intervene

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🔍 The Ximena and José case: one year on, the intellectual authors remain unidentified

Nearly one year after the assassination of Ximena Guzmán and José Muñoz, close collaborators of Mexico City Head of Government Clara Brugada, the case maintains open lines of investigation and unanswered questions. What is known: it was a planned attack with at least 20 days of preparation, carried out by six people with prior experience and considerable logistical resources, who fled in a pickup truck toward the eastern State of Mexico; 13 people were detained in August during 11 simultaneous raids in Mexico City and the State of Mexico. What remains unknown: the identity of the hitman and the intellectual authors, the motive, the possible ties to organized crime, and whether evidence was tampered with. The investigation remains under secrecy by joint decision of the city prosecutor's office, the Attorney General's Office, and the federal Security Secretariat, which classified the case as "sensitive" last June.

🔗 Milenio: The Ximena and José case: one year on, the advances and doubts that persist over the intellectual authors of the murders

🗣️ Opinion express

The president's voluntary solitude — María Scherer Scherer portrays President Claudia Sheinbaum as an increasingly politically isolated leader, caught between Morena's internal discipline and the difficulty of building her own circle of trust and operation. The columnist argues that, despite maintaining high approval ratings, Sheinbaum governs under a logic of control and caution that has reduced internal deliberation and left her carrying key decisions alone. For Scherer, this "voluntary solitude" is beginning to show in tensions within the ruling party, communication errors, and a governing style that is less political and more technocratic, precisely as internal and external pressures on her administration grow.

🔗 La Política Online: The president's voluntary solitude

Guerrero's narco peace — Denise Maerker Maerker warns that the reduction in homicides in Guerrero does not reflect a stronger state, but a dangerous criminal stabilization driven by agreements or dominance among drug trafficking groups. She recalls that violence in the state has been cyclical, marked by disputes between organizations such as Los Ardillos, Guerreros Unidos, and La Familia Michoacana, while security institutions remain weak and unable to recover territorial control. For Maerker, the apparent calm is deceptive and reveals how in some regions of the country governability depends more on criminal equilibriums than on effective state presence.

🔗 Milenio: Guerrero's narco peace

Improvisation as education policy — Valeria Moy Moy criticizes the federal government's attempt to abruptly modify the school calendar over the 2026 World Cup and high temperatures, arguing the episode exposed improvisation, poor coordination, and little genuine concern for educational quality. She questions how decisions of high impact for millions of students were announced and corrected within days, without planning or technical evidence, while Mexico continues to struggle with serious educational backlogs and poor international test results. For Moy, the episode reflected that education remains subordinated to political and media contingencies rather than treated as a long-term strategic priority.

🔗 El Universal: Improvisation as education policy

A loose end in Buenos Aires — Raymundo Riva Palacio Riva Palacio addresses the capture in Buenos Aires of Fernando Farías Laguna, identified as a key figure in the fuel smuggling network tied to relatives of former Navy Secretary Rafael Ojeda. The columnist argues the case threatens to uncover a far broader structure of corruption and institutional protection, given the detainee's cooperation with U.S. authorities. For Riva Palacio, the investigation could become one of the largest fuel theft and corruption scandals within the armed forces, while also evidencing the growing involvement of U.S. agencies in cases sensitive to the Mexican government.

🔗 El Financiero: A loose end in Buenos Aires

Indigenism, elites, and the cultural dispute — Enrique Krauze and Violeta Vázquez-Rojas The debate over indigenism escalated this week after Enrique Krauze criticized what he called the current government's "demagogic indigenism," accusing the 4T of using pre-Hispanic symbols for political purposes while, in his view, weakening the country's institutional and legal order. A day later, Violeta Vázquez-Rojas responded by accusing Krauze of representing an "elite demagoguery," arguing that the López Obrador movement did push concrete changes for indigenous peoples, including the reform to Article 2 of the Constitution, justice plans, and the direct delivery of resources to communities. The exchange opened a broader debate about national identity, indigenous representation, and the clash between traditional intellectual elites and the cultural narrative promoted by the so-called Fourth Transformation.

🔗 Reforma: Indigenist extravagances

🔗 Milenio: From "indigenist demagoguery" to elite demagoguery

📝 **Agenda in brief**

The CNTE announced mobilizations for May 15, Teachers' Day, ahead of a potential national strike as the World Cup approaches.

Morena called for a march on May 16 in Chihuahua to demand a political trial against PAN Governor Maru Campos over the CIA agents case.

Mexico and the European Union will sign the modernization of the Global Agreement, or TLCUEM, on May 22 — a historic update to the existing trade treaty.