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UNCLASS SECTION 01 OF 03 CIUDAD JUAREZ 4296

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX
SUBJECT: CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ

REF: (A) 2000 CIUDAD JUAREZ 5266 B) 2000 CIUDAD JUAREZ 1512

1. SUMMARY: A recent homicide of a young woman that fits an eight
eyear old pattern of sexually motivated murders in Ciudad Juarez
has refocused attention on the issue. NGOs and local officials
have called for the resignation of the special prosecutor for
women's homicides, charging her with inefficiency and ineptitude,
but the Chihuahua State Attorney General has defended her
performance. Some NGO representatives are starting to blame
some analysts claim that the killings are connected to
globalization. END SUMMARY

2. LATEST VICTIM. The discovery of the body of 17-year old Lilia
Alejandra Garcia-Andrade on February 21 sparked renewed concern
about violence against women in Ciudad Juarez. Since 1993, 233
young women have been raped and murdered in similar circumstances.
The victims are generally young factory employees who disappear
while on their way to or from work. Their bodies, when found at
all, turn up in isolated desert areas. Garcia-Andrade, an
employee of a local maquiladora disappeared after work on February
14. ON FEBRUARY 21ST, HER SEMI-NUDE BODY, WHICH HAD BEEN RAPED AND STRANGLED, WAS DUMPED IN AN EMPTY LOT CLOSE TO HER PLACE OF WORK. HER WRISTS SHOWED SIGNS OF HAVING BEEN TIED TOGETHER AND POLICE DETERMINED THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN HELD CAPTIVE FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE SHE WAS MURDERED. SHE LEFT BEHIND A TWO-YEAR OLD GIRL AND A FIVE-MONTH OLD BOY. IN MARKED VARIANCE FROM THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THE OTHER MURDERS, LILIA'S BODY WAS DUMPED IN AN EMPTY CORNER LOT IN A WELL-DEVELOPED AND RELATIVELY WELL-TO-DO AREA OF THE CITY

3. CALLS FOR PONCE'S RESIGNATION IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A UNIVERSITY STUDENT LAST FALL, VARIOUS NGOs HAD QUESTIONED THE EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY OF THE INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY AGENTS UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR FOR WOMEN'S HOMICIDES HEADED BY SULY PONCE. THE MURDER OF GARCIA-ANDRADE HAS RENEWED CALLS FOR PONCE'S RESIGNATION. PONCE'S

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HANDLE OF THE GARCIA-ANDRADE CASE HAS SERVED TO FOCUS LONG-STANDING FRUSTRATION WITH HER SEEMING INABILITY TO SOLVE THE SERIES OF CRIMES. THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR ORDERED A RAID ON A TRAVELING CIRCUS THAT HAD BEEN OPERATING NEAR THE SITE WHERE THE BODY WAS DUMPED. IN THE FEBRUARY 23RD OPERATION PONCE'S AGENTS TOOK TO THEIR OFFICES FOR INTERROGATION THE CIRCUS OWNER, THE OWNER'S SON AND SEVERAL WORKERS. THE INTERROGATIONS PRODUCED NO INCriminating EVIDENCE AGAINST THE DETAINED. MANY SAW PONCE'S MOVE AS A DESPERATE SEARCH FOR A SCAPeGOAT.

4. MANY IN JUAREZ ALSO QUESTION THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S BELIEF THAT ALMOST ALL OF THE OTHER SIMILAR KILLINGS CAN BE BLAMED ON ONE MAN—ADEEL LATIF SHARIF, AN EGYPTIAN NATIONAL WITH A HISTORY OF SEXUAL ASSAULT CHARGES AND IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS IN THE U.S. ON OCTOBER 11, 1996, SHARIF WAS ARRESTED IN CIUDAD JUAREZ AND WAS SENTENCED IN 1999 TO 30-YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR THE HOMICIDE OF ELIZABETH CASTRO-GARCIA. THE CONVICTION WAS NULLIFIED IN APRIL 2000 BASED ON AUTOPSY DISCREPANCIES. SHARIF IS STILL IN JAIL AWAITING A NEW VERDICT. (REF B) PONCE BELIEVES SHARIF IS BEHIND MOST OF THE OTHER KILLINGS, INCLUDING THOSE THAT HAVE OCCURRED WHILE HE HAS BEEN IN PRISON. THE THEORY IS THAT FROM HIS JAIL CELL SHARIF PAID TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS—A STREET GANG CALLED LOS REBELDES AND A GROUP OF BUS DRIVERS—TO COMMIT MURDERS TO DRAW SUSPICION AWAY FROM HIM. SHARIF AND THE OTHERS CHARGED IN THE MURDERS CLAIM THEY WERE TORTURED INTO CONFESSIONING. ONE OF SHARIF'S ACCUSED ACCOMPLICES IMPRISONED IN JUAREZ, BERNARDO HERNANDEZ, IS REPORTED TO BE LOSING THE SIGHT IN HIS LEFT EYE, AS A RESULT OF THE TORTURE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF STATE AGENTS DURING HIS INTERROGATION IN THE FACILITIES OF THE POLICE ACADEMY.

5. CANDIDATES FROM OPPOSING POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE FOUND COMMON
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ACTION WHA-00

INFO LOG-00 MFA-01 NP-00 AID-00 CA-02 CIAE-00 INL-00
DCOE-00 DOE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 ED-01 FBIE-00 UTED-00
FEO-00 VC-00 HHS-01 H-01 SSA-01 TEDE-00 INR-00
L-00 VCE-00 AC-01 NSA-00 NSCE-00 OCS-03 OMB-01
OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SP-00
IRM-00 SSO-00 SS-00 TEST-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 ASDS-01
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GROUND IN CRITICIZING PONCE'S PERFORMANCE. ROBERTO BARRAZA
JORDAN, PRI CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR, ACCUSED PONCE OF INSENSITIVITY
TOWARD THE FAMILIES OF MURDERED WOMEN. RAMON AGUILAR ARMENDARIZ,
PAN CANDIDATE FOR PARTY PRESIDENT CALLED PONCE TOTALLY INCAPABLE
AND INEPT. THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
(CANACO), LUIS HUMBERTO MERINO, CALLED FOR AN EVALUATION OF THE
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PROSECUTOR'S PERFORMANCE. ALFREDO LIMAS-HERNANDEZ, RESEARCHER AND
SOCIOLOGIST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CIUDAD JUAREZ AND HEAD OF A PANEL
OF PROFESSORS ON THE SUBJECT OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN, BLAMED THE
PROSECUTOR FOR MANAGING FILES RATHER THAN PURSUING JUSTICE.
LIMAS-HERNANDEZ AND OTHER PROFESSORS CHARGED THE GOVERNMENT WITH
DELAYING ACTION AND WITH ASSIGNING A LOW PRIORITY TO THE CRIMES.
JUAREZ MAYOR GUSTAVO ELIZONDO DEFTLY SIDESTEPPED THE ISSUE WHEN
QUESTIONED BY THE MEDIA, SAYING IT WAS A MATTER FOR THE STATE OF
CHIHUAHUA TO ADDRESS.
6. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY. ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY ABOUT 70 CHANTING DEMONSTRATORS CARRIED OUT A THREE-HOUR PROTEST AT THE OFFICES OF THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR. THE MODEST TURNOUT INCLUDED MOSTLY THE MOTHERS, SISTERS, OTHER RELATIVES, AND FRIENDS OF THE VICTIMS. THE GOAL OF THE DEMONSTRATION WAS TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION AND AID OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THROUGHOUT THE MARCH DEMONSTRATORS SOLICITED SIGNATURES FOR A PETITION TITLED SOS INITIATIVE TO BE DELIVERED TO PRESIDENT FOX AND TO THE VATICAN. THEY CARRIED A LARGE PINK WOODEN CROSS INSCRIBED WITH THE WORDS: "STOP THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - NOT ONE MORE" WHILE THE CROWD CHANTED "NOT ONE MORE!" THE DEMONSTRATORS PROCEEDED TO PONCE’S OFFICE CHANTING "OUT WITH SULY PONCE" AND "INEPT." PONCE AGREED TO MEET WITH THE GROUP, WHICH DEMANDED APPOINTMENT OF A NEW SPECIAL PROSECUTOR. SHE DEFENDED HER OFFICE SAYING THAT MANY INHERITED CASES CONTAINED PROCEDURAL ERRORS OR FILES THAT LACKED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE VICTIM’S REMAINS OR OF THE RECOVERY SITES. SHE SAID THAT SHE WOULD ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY ONLY FOR CASES THAT HAD BEEN INITIATED UNDER HER WATCH IN 1998. UNDER THE INSISTENCE OF THE DEMONSTRATORS PONCE ALLOWED FAMILY MEMBERS PRESENT ACCESS TO THE CASE FILES OF THEIR MURDERED RELATIVES.

7. PONCE’S PERFORMANCE IS SUPPORTED BY THE STATE. DESPITE THE CRITICISMS, PONCE CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE SUPPORT OF THOSE WHO MATTER MOST—CHIHUAHUA GOVERNOR MARTINEZ AND STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL ARTURO GONZALEZ-RASCON. THE LATTER RECENTLY AUDITED THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE AND GAVE HER HIGH MARKS. GONZALEZ-RASCON ACCUSED THE MEDIA OF DISTORTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE MURDERS. HE SAID HOMICIDES OF WOMEN ARE MORE NUMEROUS IN MANY OTHER STATES IN MEXICO, BUT COMPLAINED THAT CIUDAD JUAREZ MURDERS ARE THE MOST PUBLICIZED IN THE WORLD. HE SAID A DNA LABORATORY WAS PLANNED, THOUGH HE BELIEVED VERY FEW CASES REQUIRED SUCH TECHNICAL SUPPORT. IN THE END, GONZALEZ-RASCON SAID THE RESULTS OF HIS AUDIT WERE CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION, A STATEMENT IMMEDIATELY DENOUNCED BY NGOs. SOME OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES HAVE ALSO SUPPORTED PONCE. JUAREZ (PRI) COUNCILWOMAN PAMELA FRANCO DEFENDED PONCE'S PERFORMANCE, SAYING SHE HAD OUTPERFORMED HER PREDECESSORS. COUNCILMEN ARTURO HERRERA AND PABLO GOMEZ ALSO MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT. PONCE ALSO FOUND SUPPORT IN A SPECIAL MEETING WITH CONGRESSIONAL PAN REPRESENTATIVES.

8. FINGERS POINTED AT MAQUILADORAS, GLOBALIZATION. THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE VICTIMS HAVE BEEN EMPLOYEES OF MULTINATIONAL MAQUILADORA PLANTS HAS CAUSED SOME CRITICS TO INVOKE GLOBALIZATION AS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE CRIMES. THEY ARGUE THAT THE PRESENCE OF MULTINATIONALS IN JUAREZ HAS ATTRACTED THOUSANDS OF YOUNG WOMEN FROM OTHER AREAS OF MEXICO WHO, LACKING THEIR HOME TOWN FAMILY AND
SOCIAL NETWORKS, ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO SEXUAL PREDATORS. THE CRITICS WANT THE MAQUILADORAS TO DO MORE TO COMPENSATE FOR THE SOCIAL DISRUPTION AND TO PROTECT THEIR WORKERS. ON WOMEN'S DAY, JULIA MONARREZ-FRAGOSO, RESEARCHER AND PROFESSOR AT EL COLEGIO DE LA FRONTERA NORTE (COLEF) PUBLISHED A PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLIC SECURITY PLAN. BASED ON HER THEORY THAT CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN ARE

RELATED TO GLOBALIZATION, HER MODEL CALLS FOR A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIES; COMMUNITY; THE STATE AND PRIVATE BUSINESS. ON EARTH DAY, NGO'S LINKED GLOBALIZATION AND THE KILLINGS. A DEMONSTRATION AT THE ONE OF THE JUAREZ-EL PASO PORTS OF ENTRY ALSO FOCUSED ON GLOBALIZATION. A NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE VICTIMS HAVE JOINED WITH A LOS ANGELES-BASED GROUP, "JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN JUAREZ," TO PUBLICIZE THE ISSUE IN THE U.S. THE GROUP PLANS TO TAKE TO THE U.S. CONGRESS THEIR DEMAND THAT THE LARGELY U.S.-OWNED MAQUILADORA INDUSTRY IN JUAREZ TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT SUCH KILLINGS, CHARGING THE FACTORIES HAVE NOT DONE ENOUGH TO PROTECT THEIR PREDOMINATELY YOUNG FEMALE WORKFORCE FROM PREDATORS.

9. THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DIVIDE. JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN JUAREZ CLAIMS THE LOW SOCIAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE VICTIMS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LACK OF POLICE ACTION. THIS THEME HAS ALSO CAUSED DISSENSION IN THE RANKS OF LOCAL NGO'S. FOLLOWING THE
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WOMEN'S DAY PROTEST AGAINST PONCE了一些的抗议者指出，一些有权势的NGO领导人的个人议程，他们往往是富有的女性，他们在公共领域中扮演角色，且拥有金钱和时间参与志愿服务。

Because the families of victims come from the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, the aunt of victim...

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ONE VICTIM SAID THAT SHE HAD WITNESSED THE MISMANAGEMENT OF DONATIONS AND ACCUSED ONE LEADER OF EXPLOITING FOR PERSONAL GAIN THE FAMILIES' GRIEF. SHE ACCUSED ANOTHER LEADER OF INVOLVING THE FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE VICTIMS IN PARTISAN POLITICS. NGOS ALSO FELL TO BICKERING AMONG THEMSELVES. ONE GROUP BLAMED ANOTHER FOR FAILING TO KEEP CONFIDENTIAL THE IDENTITIES OF INFORMANTS, AND ONE NGO LEADER WAS CRITICIZED FOR HER STRONG TIES TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND HER ORGANIZATION ACCUSED OF EXISTING AS A POLITICAL REWARD.

10. A VISIT WITH SULY PONCE. CONOFF RECENTLY VISITED SULY PONCE'S OFFICE TO GET HER PERSPECTIVE ON THE CRIMES. THE SPARSELY FURNISHED AND STAFFED OPERATION CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH THE OFFICE'S HEAVY CASELOAD. PONCE'S OFFICE ITSELF LACKS THE SHELVES OF REFERENCE MATERIALS AND THE SPILL OF PAPERWORK ONE USUALLY ENCOUNTERS IN SUCH OFFICES. PONCE HERSELF APPEARED PHYSICALLY TIRED AND MENTALLY UNFOCUSED. SHE SAID SHE HAD REQUESTED A TRANSFER BECAUSE TWO AND A HALF YEARS ON THE JOB WAS ENOUGH. HOWEVER, SHE DEFENDED THE PERFORMANCE OF HER OFFICE, SAYING THAT YEAR 2000 HAD PRODUCED ONLY 15 HOMICIDES OF WOMEN, TWO OF WHICH WERE SEX MURDERS, COMPARED WITH 43 KILLINGS IN 1996. SHE CREDITED THE DECLINE TO THE PREVENTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SHE HAS INITIATED IN MAQUILADORAS. SHE ALSO HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF BLAME TO ASSIGN, FIRST OF ALL TO THE MEDIA FOR PROVIDING TOO MANY DETAILS ABOUT THE MUTILATION OF THE BODIES OF VICTIMS AND OTHER INFORMATION THAT PERPETRATORS CAN MIMIC. SHE ADDED THAT THE CRIMES COMMITTED DURING THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION ARE THE WORK OF COPYCAT KILLERS.

11. PONCE SAID HER ABILITY TO SUCCEED IN HER JOB WAS ALSO ENCUMBERED BY TWO FACTORS: THAT SHE IS A WOMAN, AND THAT SHE IS UNCLASSIFIED

FROM CHIHUAHUA RATHER THAN MEXICO CITY. ACCORDING TO PONCE, THESE TWO FACTORS RESULT IN A LACK OF INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES. ONE EXAMPLE SHE PROVIDED IS THAT DURING THE
PAST YEAR HER OFFICE, USUALLY STAFFED BY 26 AGENTS, FUNCTIONED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME WITH ONLY 8. PONCE ALSO ACCUSED LOCAL WOMEN'S GROUPS OF UNFAIR AND ENVIOUS BEHAVIOR AND FAULTED A SOCIETY TOO FEARFUL TO TURN IN CRIMINALS. CITING THE CASE OF GARCIA-ANDRADE, SHE SAID THE DUMPING OF THE BODY IN A BUSY AREA SHOULD HAVE PRODUCED WITNESSES. SHE ALSO VOICED DISSATISFACTION WITH MEXICAN LAWS REGARDING THE DETENTION OF SUSPECTS. SHE FOUND TOO RESTRICTIVE CURRENT LAWS THAT ALLOW POLICE TO DETAIN SUSPECTS FOR ONLY 48 HOURS. SHE ALSO COMPLAINED THAT HER OFFICE IS OVERBURDENED WITH CASES THAT DO NOT INVOLVE CRIMES OF HOMICIDES AGAINST WOMEN. PONCE MENTIONED A DNA LABORATORY AND A SAMPLE LIBRARY AS ESSENTIAL RESOURCES HER DEPARTMENT LACKS. REFUSING TO BEND TO PUBLIC PRESSURE, SHE SAID THAT SHE HOPED TO CONTINUE TO ORGANIZE THE COMMUNITY AROUND THE ISSUE OF HOMICIDES OF WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ.

12. COMMENT. WHILE THE NUMBER OF SUCH VICTIMS HAS DECREASED, THERE CONTINUE TO BE OCCASIONAL CASES THAT FIT THE 8-YEAR OLD PATTERN. SPECIAL PROSECUTOR PONCE'S THEORY THAT ALMOST ALL SUCH KILLINGS HAVE BEEN THE WORK OF ABDEL LATIF SHARIF-SHARIF AND THOSE WORKING FOR HIM--AND THUS HAVE ESSENTIALLY BEEN SOLVED EVEN IF CONVICTIONS ARE LACKING--HAS BEEN GREETED WITH INCREASING SKEPTICISM IN RECENT MONTHS. HER THEORY IS NOT SUPPORTED BY PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BUT RELIES ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON CONFESSIONS WHICH THE ACCUSED CLAIM WERE COERCED. CLEARLY THE LACK OF BOTH ADEQUATE RESOURCES AND GOOD INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES ARE MAJOR BARRIERS TO SOLVING THESE CRIMES. THE LARGER POINT MADE BY SOCIAL SCIENCE CRITICS SUCH AS COLET'S MONARREZ-FRAGOSO IS CERTAINLY SALIENT: THE YOUNG WOMEN WHO WORK IN JUAREZ'S MAQUILAS ARE A VULNERABLE CLASS. AWAY FROM HOME WITHOUT FAMILIAL PROTECTION IN A MACHO SOCIETY, WITH A CERTAIN LEVEL OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE YET STILL DRIVEN BY LOW WAGES TO LIVE IN CRIME-INFESTED SLUMS, THEY ARE EASY PREY. TO BLAME THIS ON "GLOBALIZATION" AND SO BY IMPLICATION ON U.S. COMPANIES IS DISINGENUOUS: MODERNIZATION, WHETHER NATIONAL OR TRANS-NATIONAL WILL PRODUCE THE MOVE FROM TRADITIONAL RURAL SOCIETY TO THE CITY THAT HAS PLACED THESE WOMEN AT RISK. A BETTER CANDIDATE FOR SERIOUS BLAME IS WOefully INADEQUATE POLICE COVERAGE OF THOSE PARTS OF THE CITY WHERE THESE WOMEN LIVE.

VAZQUEZ