

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TV3

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

GLOBAL CONVERGENCE & INSTABILITY: FEBRUARY 23, 2026

A Day of Historic Reckoning, Cartel Chaos, and International Deadlock

FEB 23, 2026

SPAIN & CATALONIA: DECLASSIFICATION & DOMESTIC TENSIONS

Historical Reckoning Transparency

23-F COUP RECORDS (1981)

Clarifying Roles?

CATALONIA BUDGET DEADLOCK

CATALAN PRESIDENT SALVADOR ILLA

TAX SOVEREIGNTY DEMAND

€1.25 BILLION FOR HOUSING

HOUSING CRISIS

PRICES +40% IN A DECADE

Speculative Ceiling
Lack of Supply

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

↑ RISING STI CASES

↓ DECLINING CONTRACEPTIVE USE

GOVERNANCE & TRENDS

Weaponization of History

Labor Market Linguistic Shifts

Ci Diploma Premium Skill

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER: CONFIRMED UNRELATED TO LAB

MEXICO: NARCO-LEADER KILLED, NATION ERUPTS

NEWS

ELIMINATED

BREAKING NEWS

NEMESIO OSEGUERA, alias "El Mencho"

CJNG LEADER KILLED IN JOINT US-MEXICO OP

WIDESPREAD CHAOS IN 16 STATES

BURNING GUARD MEMBERS, VEHICLES

GUADALAJARA AIRPORT PANIC

THE END OF THE "NARCO-PEACE"

SUCCESSION WARS & FRAGMENTATION

PROLONGED BREAKDOWN IN CIVIL ORDER

SECURITY & GOVERNANCE

CARTEL WEAPONIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

STATE ANTICIPATES BREAKDOWN

Short Term: Spike in Homicides, Narcobloqueos

Long Term: Decentralized Violence, Difficult Pacification

INTERNATIONAL CRISES: US-EU TRADE WAR & UKRAINE STALEMATE

US-EU RELATIONS

TRUMP'S 15% GLOBAL TARIFFS

EU FREEZES TRADE TALKS

RETALIATORY MEASURES

EXECUTIVE BYPASS

UKRAINE WAR: YEAR 4 STALEMATE

300KM RECOVERED IN SOUTH

INTENSIFIED RUSSIAN STRIKES ON ENERGY

CIVILIAN MORALE UNDER PRESSURE

GLOBAL SCANDALS & DIPLOMACY

BUSINESS NEWS

ARREST OF PETER MANDELSON (UK)

ELITE NETWORKS UNDER INVESTIGATION

LINKS TO EPSTEIN CASE

US-IRAN NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS (THURS)

US NAVAL BUILD-UP

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

- EU: Prepare for Protectionism, Diversify Trade
- Investors: Supply Chain Diversification, Real Estate Caution
- NATO: Address Ukraine Energy Collapse

OVERARCHING THEMES & FUTURE OUTLOOK



SHORT TERM (1-4 WEEKS):
Escalation in Mexico, 23-F Media Firestorm, Catalan Budget Crunch



MEDIUM TERM (1-6 MONTHS):
Peak Trade War, Trade Slowdown, Nuclear Talks Outcomes



LONG TERM (1-5 YEARS):
Permanent Renter Class in Catalonia, Brain Drain, Decentralized Cartels

THE WORLD IN 2026: A CONVERGENCE OF HISTORY AND UNCERTAINTY

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SPAIN DECLASSIFIES 23-F COUP RECORDS AS MEXICO ERUPTS FOLLOWING THE KILLING OF THE WORLD'S MOST WANTED NARCO-LEADER AND THE EU FREEZES US TRADE TALKS.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 23, 2026, serves as a high-stakes convergence of historic reckoning and contemporary instability. Domestically, the Spanish government has leveraged the 45th anniversary of the 1981 "23-F" coup attempt to announce the [declassification of over a hundred documents](#), a move intended to provide transparency into the role of the military and the monarchy during the failed takeover. Simultaneously, the Catalan government under Salvador Illa has decided to push forward with a [unilateral approval of the 2026 budget](#), attempting to break a political deadlock with Esquerra Republicana (ERC) over tax collection powers. These domestic maneuvers occur against a backdrop of increasing social anxiety regarding the housing market, where prices have risen 40% over the last decade, and public health concerns over a [sharp rise in sexually](#)

[transmitted infections](#) and declining contraceptive use among youth.

Internationally, the landscape is dominated by the killing of Nemesio Oseguera, alias "El Mencho," the leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), in a joint operation with U.S. intelligence. The assassination has triggered [widespread chaos across Mexico](#), with blockades and violence reported in 16 states. In the United States, a security breach at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence resulted in the [death of an armed intruder](#), while Trump's move to bypass the Supreme Court and impose 15% global tariffs has led the [European Union to freeze trade deal ratifications](#). As the Ukraine war enters its fourth year, the conflict remains a stalemate of attrition, though Ukrainian forces have reportedly [recovered 300 square kilometers](#) in the south, even as Russian missile strikes continue to devastate energy infrastructure and civilian morale.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Mexico: Death of "El Mencho" and National Chaos**
 - The leader of the CJNG, Nemesio Oseguera, was killed in a [military operation supported by the DEA](#) and U.S. intelligence.
 - Immediate retaliation by cartel members included [burning 25 members of the Guard](#) and setting fire to vehicles and businesses in 16 states.
 - Panic erupted at the [Guadalajara airport](#) following false reports of a cartel takeover.

- **Spain: Declassification of the 23-F Coup Archives**

- The Council of Ministers will [declassify secret documents](#) from the 1981 attempted coup to "settle a historical debt."
- The documents will be [published online this Wednesday](#), potentially clarifying the roles of King Juan Carlos I and military leadership.
- Critics from the PNB and Junts demand a more [ambitious reform of the Secrets Law](#) of 1968, which remains in effect from the Franco era.

- **US-EU Trade War: Tariffs and Treaty Freezes**

- The European Parliament has [halted the ratification of trade agreements](#) with the U.S. following Trump's 15% global tariff hike.
- The U.S. Supreme Court had previously [declared Trump's previous tariffs illegal](#), leading to his retaliatory 15% across-the-board increase.
- Tensions have escalated into a [potential 30% tariff on certain European goods](#), severely threatening transatlantic economic stability.

- **Ukraine: Fourth Anniversary of the Invasion**

- Ukrainian forces have achieved a [significant territorial recovery of 300km](#) in the Zaporizhzhia region.
- Russia has intensified strikes on [civilian energy centers](#) as a form of "punishment" coinciding with the anniversary.
- A profound [refusal to cede territory](#) for peace remains the dominant public sentiment in Ukraine.

- **UK/Global Scandal: Arrest of Peter Mandelson**

- The former British ambassador and minister Peter Mandelson was [detained in London](#) for his alleged links to the Jeffrey Epstein case.
- He is accused of [misconduct in public office](#) involving the sharing of sensitive official information with Epstein.
- The arrest follows the [detention of Prince Andrew](#) the previous week, indicating a widening investigation into elite networks.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Economic Security & Housing The Catalan housing market has reached a critical juncture, with [prices rising 40% in a decade](#). Experts warn that the lack of supply is driving prices to a "ceiling" that the average citizen cannot afford, forcing more residents to seek [mortgages despite rising interest rates](#). The Generalitat is attempting to implement a [ban on speculative housing purchases](#) to stabilize the market. Additionally, the [VAT on contemporary art](#) remains at 21% in Spain, causing "fiscal dumping" as artists move sales to France or Portugal where rates are as low as 4-5%.

Diplomatic Engagement & International Relations The [US and Iran are scheduled to meet](#) in Geneva this Thursday for a third round of nuclear negotiations, though the U.S. continues to [deploy carriers to the Mediterranean](#) as a show of force. Simultaneously, the EU's decision to freeze trade talks marks a significant [deterioration in Western bloc cohesion](#) due to U.S. protectionism.

Domestic Stability & Civil Unrest Mexico faces a [national security crisis](#) as cartels

weaponize social media to spread false information and block vital infrastructure. In Catalonia, political stability is threatened by a [stalemate over the IRPF collection](#), with ERC demanding tax sovereignty as a condition for budget approval. President Illa's decision to [approve the budget without a guaranteed majority](#) is an aggressive use of executive power to pressure legislative rivals.

Biosurveillance & Disease Outbreaks After three months of investigation, the [African Swine Fever outbreak](#) in Collserola has been confirmed as unrelated to the Irta Cressa research center. Genetic sequencing proved the [strain does not match laboratory samples](#), suggesting the disease was introduced through external vectors, possibly the "sandwich theory" (contaminated food discarded in nature).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity today focused on transparency, cultural protection, and regional fiscal policy. The central government is moving to replace the archaic Secrets Law while regional leaders attempt to navigate a fragmented parliament to pass essential spending bills. In the background, industry-

specific regulations for cinema and art are stalled by partisan friction.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED

- **Reform of the Secrets Law:** A proposal to [replace the 1968 Franco-era law](#) with modern transparency standards. The PNB is pushing for automatic declassification of documents after 25 years [with a 10-year optional extension](#).
- **Catalonia Budget 2026:** A project of law to be [approved by the Catalan executive on Friday](#), including 100,000 school lunch grants and €1.25 billion for housing.
- **Cinema Law:** Currently [blocked in the Spanish Parliament](#) due to opposition from the PP, according to Minister Urtasun.
- **Media Transparency Law:** An upcoming [limit of 35% on institutional advertising](#) revenue for media outlets to ensure editorial independence.

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS

- **Ernest Urtasun Interview:** The Minister of Culture discussed [Sumar's political mobilization](#) and the declassification of 23-F papers as an exercise in "democratic hygiene."
- **Salvador Illa Press Conference:** The Catalan President [pressured ERC to support the budget](#), emphasizing that "ambitious Catalonia" requires immediate resources.
- **Pepi's Testimony:** A public hearing on [addiction in the Vallès Oriental](#) highlighted a 20% increase in cases over the last decade.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The End of the "Narco-Peace" in Mexico

The precision strike on El Mencho, while a tactical victory for the U.S. and the Sheinbaum administration, signals a [period of extreme volatility](#) for Mexico. Historically, the decapitation of a major cartel leads to internal "succession wars" and predatory moves by rivals like the Sinaloa Cartel. The [closure of schools in ten states](#) suggests the state anticipates a prolonged breakdown in civil order. This development also cements Sheinbaum's alignment with the Trump administration's anti-fentanyl agenda, possibly to [avoid threatened trade sanctions](#).

The Weaponization of History

The declassification of 23-F documents 45 years later is not merely a historical gesture but a strategic political move. By releasing these records, the Sánchez government [targets the "zones of shadow"](#) of the transition, potentially undermining the traditional narratives supported by the right-wing opposition. However, the [exclusion of other sensitive episodes](#), like the GAL or the 17-A attacks in Barcelona, from this declassification initiative suggests that the government is selective in its commitment to transparency.

Labor Market Linguistic Shifts

An analysis of 10,000 job offers reveals that [only 25% of jobs in Catalonia](#) require Catalan language proficiency, despite the majority being in the service sector. Paradoxically, jobs requiring Catalan are [paid 5-10% more](#), indicating that while the language is losing its status as a basic requirement, it is gaining value as a "premium" skill for social and professional advancement.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks) Expect a spike in [homicides and "narcobloqueos"](#) in Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit as CJNG factions splinter. In Spain, the publication of 23-F records on Wednesday will trigger a [media and political firestorm](#), likely focusing on the intelligence services' prior knowledge of the coup. Catalonia will enter a 40-day [legislative countdown](#) for the budget, with high risk of a "no" vote leading to a governance crisis.

Medium Term (1-6 Months) The EU-US trade relationship will likely hit its [lowest point in decades](#) as retaliatory tariffs take effect, potentially causing a slowdown in European manufacturing exports. The [US-Iran nuclear talks](#) in Geneva will either produce a framework for de-escalation or lead to a significant naval build-up in the Persian Gulf if Trump's "maximum pressure" continues.

Long Term (1-5 Years) The structural failure to address Catalan housing [will lead to a permanent "renter class"](#) and increased brain drain to regions with lower living costs. In Mexico, the void left by El Mencho may be filled by even more [decentralized and violent criminal cells](#), making national pacification nearly impossible for the current administration.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy

- **Transatlantic Trade:** EU policymakers should prepare for a [permanent shift toward protectionism](#) in the U.S. and accelerate trade diversification with the Global South.

- **Mexico Security:** Foreign embassies should [issue long-term travel warnings](#) for central and western Mexico, as succession violence is unlikely to subside quickly.
- **Ukraine Support:** NATO allies must address the [impending energy collapse](#) in Ukraine as Russia shifts its strategy toward winter attrition and civilian demoralization.

For Private Sector/Investors

- **Supply Chain Diversification:** Companies reliant on U.S.-EU trade should [re-evaluate their pricing models](#) to account for a potential 15-30% tariff environment.
- **Real Estate Exposure:** Investors in the Catalan market should [anticipate tighter regulations](#) on speculative buying and a potential "stabilization" or drop in demand as prices hit affordability ceilings.
- **Agricultural Resilience:** The African Swine Fever confirmation [clears the Irta Cressa laboratory](#), but high-biosecurity measures must remain for Catalan pig exports to avoid catastrophic market closures.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching

trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.