

World

Policeman's head found as drug war killings soar to 12,500 in a year

Mexico

Girish Gupta Mahahual

Days after the kidnapping of a Mexican border town's only police officer, authorities in Cancun have found the severed head of one of her colleagues in a separate warring state.

Police discovered the federal police-

man's head after his bullet-ridden car was found abandoned on a highway in Nuevo León. Jorge Domene, the state government's security spokesman, said that the motive for the beheading remained unclear. Like many killings of police and government officials however, the murder is attributed to drug cartels battling for territory and control across Mexico.



Women mourn in Ciudad Juárez after Marisela Escobedo Ortiz was killed

with the bloodshed that it has seen throughout the year. With just under 12,500 people killed in drug-related violence this year alone, Mexicans are beginning to question President Calderón's strategy of taking on the cartels. Since he came to power in December 2006, drug-related deaths have risen sharply year-on-year, totalling more than 30,000.

Mexicans are still in shock after video footage of the killing of Marisela Escobedo Ortiz, a mother who had spent years campaigning against crime following the

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The two-way traffic of guns and narcotics is creating misery

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killing of her 17-year-old daughter, was circulated on the internet.

The video shows masked men pulling up in a car in front of the governor's office in the northern city of Chihuahua, with one of the men exchanging words with the campaigner. Seconds later she is seen running across the street, but is shot in the head.

The burnt and dismembered remains of Ms Escobedo's daughter were found in a rubbish bin in June 2009 in Ciudad Juárez, the most notorious of Mexico's violent cities, where more than 3,000 people have been killed this year.

After the murder of the Mayor of Guadalupe, the entire city police force resigned, except 28-year-old Erika Gandara. She was kidnapped at gunpoint just before Christmas, leaving the city devoid of any police presence.

On Tuesday a 13-year-old taxi driver was among four people killed on the outskirts of the city of Durango as federal forces fought with gunmen. Another victim, Maria Elena Nevárez Escobedo, was shot in the head, reportedly by gang members, as she travelled on a bus.

In the state of Durango four people were killed this week as Mexico ends 2010

British guard's trial begins

Baghdad The trial of a British security guard charged with murdering two colleagues opened with testimony from an Iraqi who said the contractor shot him.

Danny Fitzsimons, who attended the hearing, is charged with murdering a Briton and an Australian during an argument last year. He is also charged with attempted murder and could face the death penalty.

The case was adjourned until January 23. (AP)

Air traffic control sell-off in Spain

Madrid The privatisation of air traffic control at 13 airports was formally launched by the Spanish Government weeks after it clamped down on a wildcat strike by controllers. It plans to sell air traffic control services in 47 airports. (AFP)

Helicopter rescue for flooded town

Brisbane All 300 residents were airlifted by helicopter from Theodore, a town in eastern Australia, when water continued to rise after heavy rain. A total of 1,000 people have been rescued from central and southern Queensland. (AP)

Marathon man's global odyssey

Sydney Tristan Miller, 33, from Melbourne, became the first person to run 52 marathons in 52 weeks, covering all seven continents, including races in London, Mongolia and Antarctica. He ran about 1,364 miles (2,195km) in 42 countries.



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