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# Crusading Mexican editor killed

*THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

TIJUANA, Mexico - Gunmen ambushed and killed a key editor of a crusading Mexican newspaper Tuesday, the latest in a series of attacks against the weekly's leadership.

Masked men in a pickup truck opened fire on Francisco Ortiz Franco as he left a clinic with his two children, the state attorney general's office said.

The children, ages 8 and 10, were unharmed, it said.

The weekly Zeta is known for its reporting on the influence of drug traffickers in Tijuana, home to several narcotics operations. The paper had no immediate comment on the killing.

State investigators re-enacting the slaying at the scene said a gunman jumped from a black Jeep and shot Ortiz four times as he sat in the driver's seat of his car, according to Francisco Castro Trenti of the attorney general's office.

Virginia Monje, 30, heard the shots from her kitchen. "They sounded like fireworks," she said.

She went outside to see Ortiz's two children running from the scene shouting "Papi! Papi!" They were later escorted from the scene by people wearing plainclothes, Monje said.

The newspaper has been targeted before. Its co-founder, Hector Felix Miranda, was ambushed and killed on April 20, 1988. Two men were convicted in the shooting.

In 1997, the newspaper publisher Jesus Blancornelas was badly wounded in a gangland-style attack that killed his bodyguard.

Shortly before he was shot, Blancornelas had written a column linking the Arellano Felix drug gang to the shooting deaths of two Mexican federal agents in Tijuana.

Mexican President Vicente Fox ordered federal officials to collaborate with local authorities in the investigation and sent a message to Blancornelas expressing his "worry" and "indignation" at the killing, according to a news release.

"The federal government reiterates its condemnation of every act that pretends to weaken the integrity of journalists and its conviction that a free and critical press is the best guarantee for the strengthening of our democracy," the release said.

The Miami-based Inter-American Press Association issued a statement Tuesday afternoon expressing its "outrage" at Ortiz's killing.

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