
Alan Stoga, President Daniel Wilson, Managing Director and editor Mariana Campero, Vice President, Mexico City

Government Secretary Juan Camilo Mouriño killed in plane crash

President Calderón's closest adviser, **Juan Camilo Mouriño**, 37, was killed when his plane crashed as it was nearing the Mexico City airport. The Lear Jet plunged into a major thoroughfare, killing at least 13 persons, including all eight persons on board, and injuring at least 40 others. Mouriño was returning from a meeting with the governor of San Luis Potosi.

The other senior official on the plane was **José Luis Santiago Vasconcelos**, 51, a career Justice Ministry (PGR) official and former head of the organized crime bureau SIEDO in the PGR. He played a major role in the Mexican government's fight against the drug cartels over four administrations.

Mouriño was named by the President to head the Government Ministry in January 2008. He was the Government's chief political operator. He was in charge of negotiating the just completed energy reform, and was also responsible for the initiatives to improve domestic security. Prior to becoming a cabinet secretary, he was Chief of Staff in the Office of the President, manager for the 2006 electoral campaign, and the head of the transition team. His career in government service tracked Felipe Calderón's, and he had worked with the President at least since 2000. Mouriño's political career started in 1997 when he was elected to the state congress in Campeche; he became a federal Deputy in the 2000 elections.

In a nationwide speech last night, President Calderón called him "one of my closest collaborators and one of my best and most loved friends," and praised him as a "great Mexican, ... committed to his ideals and to the country." Mouriño is survived by his wife, three children, and his parents.

Mouriño had been viewed from the December 1, 2006 inauguration as President Calderón's heir apparent and as the PAN's most likely presidential candidate for 2012. His appointment as Government Secretary heightened this belief, despite mixed reviews on his effectiveness in the job. He was widely expected to leave the cabinet and run for Governor of his home state of Campeche in the July 2009 elections.

No cause of the crash has been announced, and the weather was clear. The Lear jet was following a Boeing 767 on the approach into Mexico City International, and some reports say the smaller craft was closer than the minimum 4 mile separation. The Army sealed off the site of the crash, which took place at approximately 7pm at the interchange of Reforma and the Periferico expressway about 12km from the runway, as well as the San Luis airport where the flight originated 50 minutes earlier. Secretary of Communications and Transportation Luis Téllez said that there were no emergency calls from the craft. "Up to the moment [of the crash] we had a completely normal flight," he said in an interview. Téllez added that there was no evidence that pointed to anything other than an accident.