

**Main Topics**

- Calderón launches new immigration initiative; schedules U.S. trip
- Murder of pop singer brings narco-violence home
- Senate approves new electoral code
- PRD congressmen reject AMLO demands
- Martínez elected PAN leader; commits to end internal conflicts

**Key Dates**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> half of December:** Minimum wage announcement for 2008
- 02/03/08:** Baja California Sur and Quintana Roo state elections
- 02/17/08:** Hidalgo state elections
- 03/08:** PRD elects party president

Speaking to Mexico’s ambassadors and consuls general in the U.S. and Canada, President Felipe Calderón instructed them to develop a **diplomatic strategy to defend Mexicans from anti-immigrant sentiment**. “I am preoccupied with the rancor and the seeds of ill-will—in some cases approaching hatred and discrimination—that are being sown. This is not only against migrants, but at times against Mexicans in general.” He specifically called on Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan to deepen the dialogue with the U.S. about the need for a comprehensive immigration reform. “I am convinced that working together the U.S., Canada, and Mexico can create a united and powerful North America that instead of putting up walls builds bridges of prosperity and wellbeing for its citizens.” El Universal reports that Calderón will visit the major cities of Mexican migration in February, including Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. (La Jornada 12/7, Universal 12/9)

Sergio Gómez, the popular singer of the band K-Paz de la Sierra, was kidnapped, tortured, and killed after a concert in Michoacán, in a gangland hit. According to Milenio, there have been 2,743 **drug and organized crime-related murders** so far this year. “We must recognize that we are at war. The optimistic government propaganda is worthless if our security personnel, who cost millions of pesos per year, can’t stop the executions or protect the citizens,” said columnist Sergio Sarmiento. (Milenio 12/2, Reforma 12/5)

The Senate approved the **reform of the electoral code** (Cofipe) by a vote of 90 to 16. PAN, PRI, most PRD, and PVEM voted for, while PT, Convergencia, and five of the 26 PRD senators voted against. The approved text compromises on the “eternal life” clause for political parties. To maintain their registry, parties will need to win 2% of the vote in federal elections, of which no more than 1% can come from participation in coalitions. The law now goes to the Chamber of Deputies. (Reforma 12/5, Milenio 12/8)

In voting for the Cofipe reform, the majority of PRD senators ignored a last-minute public demand from **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** to reject the law. AMLO said weakening electoral coalitions was undemocratic and the new law enshrined the ability of PAN and PRI to dictate the composition of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE). “The opinions of Andrés Manuel López Obrador are important, so much so that [the central committee is] meeting here to analyze his letter. But he has to understand that the party makes decisions in an institutional manner,” said Guadalupe Acosta Naranjo, the party’s secretary general. (Reforma 12/4)

Germán Martínez, the former Secretary of Public Function and Calderón ally, was elected **the new president of the PAN** by the party’s national council. Martínez was the sole candidate to succeed Manuel Espino. More than half of the new 40-person central committee are considered *felipistas*, including Senator Guillermo Anaya of Coahuila, who becomes secretary general. In his inaugural speech, Martínez said, “We must put an end to the conflicts between PANistas. The Electoral Tribunal will no longer have to decide our internal affairs; we will weave our internal dynamic by means of the free governing bodies of the Party, and through tolerant and respectful dialogue.” (Reforma 12/8-10, Universal 12/9)

**Opinion Polls**

A GEA-ISA national survey showed that **public opinion of the PAN** has declined significantly since its peak in early 2007. The PRI has more than doubled its support since the post-election low. In a mirror image, the PRD has lost half its support since the July 2006 elections. The same survey found a 60% approval rating for President Calderón, down from a peak of 69% in June 2007. (www.isa.org.mx)

