

## Statement SMX Collective

Today, we, the SMX Collective, take the first of many steps in the fight against the systematic human rights violations and impunity in Mexico. We are launching the campaign: "Activating Justice in Mexico: Money laundering is not a victimless crime", and will start by filing a complaint against the Rabobank Group and its executives.

Money laundering is a serious crime that has consequences far beyond banks and financial institutions. Money laundering strengthens the violence generated by organised crime, reinforces corruption and legitimises impunity, further deepening the severe human rights crisis in Mexico.

Is it really a serious crime? YES IT IS.

Which crimes are committed under the umbrella of money laundering? There is torture; intentional killings; forced disappearance; kidnapping; extortion; theft; piracy and trafficking of people, drugs, and other illicit goods. Some of these are crimes against humanity, and all are sponsored and legitimised by money laundering.

For us, money laundering is just the tip of the iceberg. All these crimes are committed against people who have a face, a name, a family like you, like me. A long list exists of people affected by the violence funded by money laundering, including children, teenagers, men, women and journalists. According to human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Article 19, more than 230,000 people have been killed since 2006; 27,000 people have disappeared; more than 100 journalists have been killed and 23 have disappeared; in the city of Ciudad Juarez alone, 12,000 children have been orphaned as a consequence of this violence; 30,000 children are in some manner involved in the complex structure of organised crime; and 70,000 people are victims of human trafficking every year (about 1.5 times the Amsterdam Arena at full capacity), which produces \$42 million dollars for the criminals involved.

As a prominent Mexican intellectual said when visiting Amsterdam recently: "The tragedy is that the outside world knows about impunity in Mexico and yet, the business logic prevails" (Lorenzo Meyer in *The Mexican Connection*, De Balie, Amsterdam 2016)

Although organised crime is part and parcel of the Mexican government, today we are focusing on the banks, specifically one bank. The SMX Collective believes that justice cannot be achieved if only the direct perpetrators are prosecuted; we demand that also those institutions like the Rabobank, that benefit from the wealth created at such high cost of human life, if found guilty must be held accountable.

One of the victims of drugs violence said: "The prisons are full with people like us, yet the bankers, who have enriched themselves through drug trafficking, remain free."

We urge the Dutch prosecutors to heed our call for an investigation into the money laundering by Rabobank Group. By upholding their own principles and commitment to protect and defend human life, above injustice and profits, we ask Dutch prosecutors not to be passive or silent. This investigation cannot end in a settlement, as so often happened in the past. We ask the prosecutors not only to investigate if the Rabobank and its executives have done enough to prevent money laundering, but also to take into account the severe human consequences this crime provoked for many Mexicans. Only criminal prosecution can bring justice to the victims and serves as deterrent for other banks.

Apart from our demands to the Dutch prosecutors, we invite everyone to support our campaign:

File a complaint against Rabobank on their website

Follow and join our campaign ([www.moneylaunderingkills.nl](http://www.moneylaunderingkills.nl))

This is one of many steps in the fight against the systematic human rights violations and impunity in Mexico. With this case, we intend to set a precedent. We hope that in the future, financial institutions will think twice before engaging in money laundering. Finally, we would like to stress that the violence in Mexico is not that far away from the Netherlands: Mexico gets the dead while those banks laundering money get the profit. In this deal it is time for Mexico to get something else: Justice!

"Activating Justice in Mexico: Money laundering is not a victimless crime"

SMX collective, Amsterdam 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2017