

10-11-2017

# Tamaulipas Files Charges against Ex-Governor Eugenio Hernández Flores

Carlos Navarro

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

---

## Recommended Citation

Navarro, Carlos. "Tamaulipas Files Charges against Ex-Governor Eugenio Hernández Flores." (2017).  
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/6387>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [amywinter@unm.edu](mailto:amywinter@unm.edu).

## Tamaulipas Files Charges against Ex-Governor Eugenio Hernández Flores

by Carlos Navarro

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 2017-10-11

The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) continues to be hammered by charges of corruption on the part of its governors. The latest embarrassment involves former Tamaulipas Gov. Eugenio Hernández Flores (2005-2010), who has been accused in Mexico of embezzlement and faces charges of money-laundering in the US. Reports of Hernández Flores' involvement in illegal activities are not new: He and two other former Tamaulipas governors, Manuel Cavazos Lerma (1993-1999) and Tomás Yarrington Ruvalcaba (1999-2005), are suspected of having connections to the Gulf cartel and the Zetas ([SourceMex, Feb. 29, 2012](#), and [May 30, 2012](#)).

The federal government—either under ex-P resident Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) or President Enrique Peña Nieto—has taken no action against Hernández Flores. However, Tamaulipas Gov. Francisco García Cabeza de Vaca, a member of the conservative Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) who campaigned on an anti-corruption agenda and was elected in 2016, has moved to prosecute him ([SourceMex, June 15, 2016](#)).

On Oct. 3, the state's attorney general's office (Procuraduría General de Justicia del estado de Tamaulipas) filed formal charges against Hernández Flores, accusing him of selling 1,600 hectares (about 3,954 acres) of publicly-owned land to a frontman for about 16 million pesos (US\$857,000). The sale of the public land, in 2007, was not only illegal but the transaction was undervalued. According to state authorities, the property is worth about 1.584 billion pesos (US\$85 million).

The property in question is located in the port of Altamira, one of Mexico's five largest ports. According to a press release from the Tamaulipas government, the property has changed hands several times. The land was first expropriated by the federal government in 1996 and transferred to the Nuevo Santander Trust organization in 2002. The trust sold the land to a "private individual" that same year, and it was sold to another individual five years later, during the Hernández Flores administration.

Tamaulipas authorities said two companies purchased the land. One firm is led by Fernando Cano Martínez, who is also suspected of acting as a frontman for Yarrington Ruvalcaba. Yarrington is himself facing charges of drug trafficking and money laundering filed by both Mexico and the US ([SourceMex, Feb. 29, 2012](#), and [May 30, 2012](#)).

The second company under question is the property of Alberto Berlanga Bolado, who served as Tamaulipas public works and urban development minister in the Hernández Flores administration.

### *Money-laundering charges in US*

Yarrington, who preceded Hernández Flores as governor of Tamaulipas, was arrested by Italian authorities in Florence in April ([SourceMex, April 19, 2017](#)) at the request of the Mexican government. In September, an Italian court approved his extradition. The former governor will likely be extradited to the US before facing charges in Mexico.

Like Yarrington, Hernández Flores is facing charges in the US. He is accused of accepting money from the Zetas in exchange for allowing the drug cartel to operate in Tamaulipas. The money obtained from the Zetas was allegedly laundered through banks in the US and through real estate transactions.

The charges filed by the US Justice Department in 2015 are based on testimony by Guillermo Flores Cordero, a Mexican entrepreneur who admitted helping Hernández Flores and his relatives launder money in the US. Hernández Flores' brother-in-law, Óscar Gómez Guerra, is also named in the US indictment.

US authorities have seized four properties belonging to Hernández Flores in McAllen and Austin, Texas, valued at more than US\$2 million.

Despite the US indictment against Hernández Flores, a formal request has not been made for his extradition, according to Mexico's foreign relations ministry (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, SRE).

"Unless he is extradited, the impact of his case in Mexico could be limited, as he is being prosecuted at the state, not federal, level," according to Insight.com, a foundation that tracks the activities of organized crime in the Americas.

Hernández Flores is the latest in a series of Mexican governors, mostly from the PRI, to face charges of corruption in recent years. Javier Duarte de Ochoa (2010-2016) of Veracruz, Roberto Borge (2011-2016) of Quintana Roo, Roberto Sandoval Castañeda (2011-2017) of Nayarit, César Duarte Jáquez (2010-2016) of Chihuahua, and Rodrigo Medina de la Cruz (2009-2015) of Nuevo León have either faced charges of corruption or are under investigation ([SourceMex, Aug. 17, 2016](#), [Oct. 12, 2016](#), [July 19, 2017](#)).

One other former PRI governor, Humberto Moreira (2005-2011) of Coahuila, was accused of malfeasance and corruption while in office but has managed to escape prosecution, allegedly because of his close connections with President Enrique Peña Nieto ([SourceMex, March 9, 2016](#)).

Two former governors from the conservative Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Luis Fernando Reynoso Femat (2004-2010) of Aguascalientes and Guillermo Padrés Elías (2009-2015) of Sonora, have also faced corruption charges in recent years ([SourceMex, May 21, 2014](#), and [July 15, 2015](#)).

### *Ex-Quintana Roo governor fights extradition*

Duarte de Ochoa and Borge fled the country, presumably to avoid prosecution. Duarte left before completing his term ([SourceMex, Oct. 12, 2016](#), and [March 1, 2017](#)) and was eventually detained in Guatemala and extradited to Mexico ([SourceMex, April 19, 2017](#), and [July 19, 2017](#)).

Borge, who fled Mexico shortly after leaving office, eventually surfaced in Panama, where authorities took him into custody at the request of the Mexican government ([SourceMex, June 21, 2017](#)). In October, Panamanian authorities agreed to extradite Borge to Mexico, but his lawyers immediately filed an injunction in Mexican courts to block the extradition. If the injunction had been successful, Panamanian authorities were prepared to release Borge rather than keep him in custody. The injunction was unsuccessful, however, as a federal judge in Mexico rejected the request by Borge's lawyers.

Borge's legal team in Panama then scored a small victory by securing a delay in the extradition. On Oct. 6, the Panamanian Supreme Court (Corte Suprema de Justicia de Panamá) ruled that Borge could not be returned to Mexico until after magistrates were able to review the full document presented by the Mexican government to Panama's foreign relations ministry (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores).

While in a Panamanian jail, Borge held a hunger strike to protest what his Panamanian attorney Arturo González Baso described as "subhuman conditions and violation of his rights" by the Panama National Police.

### *Embezzled funds enough to pay for earthquake reconstruction*

The corrupt practices of the former governors have had a major negative impact on the finances of the states they governed, not only because funds were taken from the state coffers but also because of the high levels of debt the governors left for their successors ([SourceMex, Aug. 17, 2016](#)).

Two reports suggest that money stolen by Mexican governors would have been more than enough to cover reconstruction and other costs related to the two major earthquakes that rocked Mexico in September ([SourceMex, Sept. 13, 2017](#), and [Sept. 27, 2017](#)).

One report, published by the daily newspaper El Universal summed up the funds allegedly embezzled by 22 former governors at about 259 billion pesos (US\$13.8 billion). According to the report, the total is 29 times the balance of the federal disaster relief fund (Fondo de Desastres Naturales, FONDEN) and more than enough to rebuild the infrastructure damaged or destroyed during the Sept. 7 and 19 earthquakes.

Furthermore, the report noted that funds allegedly stolen by seven ex-governors on the list represent nearly half the total embezzled by the 22 governors. The seven governors, all members of the PRI, are Duarte de Ochoa, Duarte Jáquez, Sandoval, Medina, Borge, Mario Anguiano Moreno (2009-2015) of Colima, and Rodrigo Zapata Bello of Yucatán. Zapata is the only one of the seven still in office.

A separate report published by Huffington Post México also compared the cost of reconstruction to the amounts allegedly stolen by state executives. However, the report took into account the amount embezzled by four governors: Duarte de Ochoa, Duarte Jáquez, Borge, and Padrés. Together, they took about 97.5 billion pesos (US\$5.2 billion), according to the report.

"The money taken by the four ex-governors ... would have been sufficient to cover the costs of reconstruction, estimated at 38.1 billion pesos (US\$2 billion) in the areas damaged by the earthquakes," Huffington Post México reported.

The report from El Universal drew a contrast between the actions of governors who allegedly embezzled state funds and several current governors in relation to the earthquake. According to El Universal, at least three governors have pledged large sums from their personal funds for earthquake relief. Francisco Domínguez Servién of Querétaro has pledged to donate his year-end bonus, about 250,000 pesos (US\$13,370) while Jaime Rodríguez Calderón of Nuevo León pledged almost one month's salary, which amounts to just over 105,000 pesos (US\$5,600). José Ignacio Peralta Sánchez, governor of Colima, donated 48,500 pesos (US\$2,593), which is half his monthly salary.

Domínguez is a member of the PAN, Peralta is affiliated with the PRI, and Rodríguez is an independent.

-- End --