**Instruction:**

Identify the text in the following words, then investigates its meaning and makes a sentence with each of them using the past progressive.

* Loyalty
* A brief court hearing
* Law
* Arrested
* Corrupted systems
* Untouched by the law
* Embezzling
* Block the law
* Organized crime
* Negotiate

# Powerful Mexican Teachers’ Leader Accused of Embezzlement

###### By [RANDAL C. ARCHIBOLD](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/a/randal_c_archibold/index.html) and ELISABETH MALKIN

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MEXICO CITY — She offered 59 brand new Hummers to regional union leaders to buy their loyalty. Mexican newspapers have closely tracked her displays of wealth, from California mansions and $5,000 Hermès bags to noticeable shifts in her looks as she went under the knife.

But the love for luxury flaunted by Elba Esther Gordillo, the most powerful woman in [Mexico](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/mexico/index.html?inline=nyt-geo), might have been her undoing. She was arrested Tuesday night on suspicion of embezzling $200 million in union funds for her personal use, including plastic surgery, multimillion-dollar spending sprees at luxury department stores and those seaside mansions near San Diego.

In court papers on Wednesday, Mexican prosecutors said her web of financial subterfuge, filtered through intermediaries and American and Swiss banks, was an act of organized crime. Investigators searched her apartment in an upscale Mexico City neighborhood on Wednesday.

During a brief court hearing, Ms. Gordillo, dressed in a simple T-shirt and beige pants, stared out bitterly from behind the bars of a prison courtroom as the charges were read against her. She declined to make any statement.

Her downfall, a shock to a nation accustomed to powerful figures untouched by the law, amounted to a bold statement by the new government that could open the way to weakening the vice grip of the 1.5 million-member teachers union, the largest in Latin America. It has exerted its influence so thoroughly that the government does not even know how many teachers there are — the union does the hiring, with jobs passed among family members like heirlooms — or even how many schools it has because they, too, are essentially run by the union.

Ms. Gordillo, given to bombastic speeches in her nearly 25 years at the union’s helm, lorded over Mexico, delivering votes to politicians like former President Felipe Calderón, whom she helped elect in 2006, and thwarting efforts to clean up a system everyone agrees is broken. Mexico’s education ranks in the cellar among nations of similar size and wealth, a deficiency long cited as a prime reason the country has not developed as much as it could have.

“The action taken by the government is very symbolic, and in politics symbols matter a lot,” said Marco A. Fernández, a former Education Ministry official and political scientist at Duke University who is writing a book on Mexican education and politics. “It opens the door to the cautious hope, and I do mean cautious, that it is possible to reform the education system in Mexico.”

Ms. Gordillo’s arrest came a day after President Enrique Peña Nieto signed a law that takes hiring out of the union’s control, mandates a census of schools and outlines steps toward weeding out bad teachers.

Congress must still rewrite Mexico’s education law for the changes to take effect, and analysts like Mr. Fernández noted that the union remained intact despite the arrest of the leader. It has immobilized states, and the nation’s capital, with strikes and other tactics to get its way. Before her detention, union leaders were meeting in Guadalajara to plot actions to block the law.

“It seems to me that the big battle is still to come,” said Ricardo Raphael, an analyst and journalist who has written about Ms. Gordillo.

Some commentators wondered if Mr. Peña Nieto was merely taking out a political foe, in the style of past Mexican presidents. But going after Ms. Gordillo, coupled with the changes in the law, injected an air of hope that one of the most corrupted systems essential to Mexico’s economic promise may get a cleansing and that the rich and powerful kingmakers a reckoning.

“Making Mexican education more effective, and making sure that Mexicans receive an education that opens up the possibility of meaningful university and college careers afterwards, will be essential if Mexico is to take advantage of the current economic optimism prevailing in the country, and to use it as a steppingstone to an economy based on skilled labor,” said Duncan Wood, director of the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Mexico Institute in Washington.

While Mexico has made strides in providing education for young children, older ones tend to fall behind; only 47 percent of students are expected to graduate from high school, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Only just over half of 15- to 19-year-olds are enrolled in education, an increase of 10 percent from a decade ago but trailing Brazil (75 percent), Chile (73 percent) and the organization’s average (82 percent).

In November, the group lamented that “despite the impressive expansion of the education system in the last few decades, educational attainment remains a challenge, and the high share of students leaving the education system too early with low skills remains also a major problem.”

Then there are the allegations of mismanagement.

Blanca Heredia, a professor at CIDE, a Mexico City research institution, found it breathtaking that, according to prosecutors, Ms. Gordillo spent $2.1 million at Neiman Marcus in San Diego in the past few years. She said the daily spending would be $3,000, three times what a well-paid teacher gets a month.

Mexicans were left wondering if the case would hold up. Prosecutors in Mexico have announced triumphant arrests in the past only for the cases to later fall apart under a cloud or lack of evidence.

Ms. Gordillo’s extravagances had long drawn the attention of the public, and the timing of the arrest prompted questions about whether it was as much a political strike as due diligence. Some decided it could be both.

“It’s a very, very clear show of force, a very loud and clear signal that the government will not tolerate union blockage,” Ms. Heredia said, adding that past presidents’ unsuccessful negotiations with Ms. Gordillo were like “somebody had hijacked your car and you negotiate with them over getting it back. Now they’re saying, ‘I’m taking back the car.’ ”

Karla Zabludovsky contributed reporting.

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| Category | Excellent | Good | Regular | Limited |
| Identifying Words | Words were fully identified. | More than half of the words (6) were identified. | Half of the words (5) were identified. | Less than half of the words (4 or less) were identified. |
| Meaning | All words have meaning its correct meaning. | More than half of the words (6) have their correct meaning. | Half of the words (5) have their correct meaning. | Less than half of the words (4 or less) have their correct meaning. |
| Grammar | Doesn’t make any grammar and spelling mistakes. | Less than half of the paper presents grammatical and spelling errors. | Half of the paper presents grammatical and spelling errors. | More than half of the paper presents grammatical and spelling mistakes. |

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