

# El International de México

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## Leading Mexican DNA Scientist Murdered

### Temixco Professor of genetic developments Assassinated in airport cubicle

**MEXICO CITY: Dr. Pedro Juan Beltran of the Temixco Biotech Institute was found dead last night in the cubicle of a bathroom in Mexico City International Airport.**

Shot twice in the head, Dr Beltran died immediately of his injuries.

Beltran, 40, known to his friends as 'PJ', was a leading scientist in his field of molecular biology. His research was funded by the Mexican government as well as the biotech industry.

"His family and colleagues at the Institute are in a state of shock," commented Professor Julia Duran. "PJ was an energetic, brilliant scientist. His group have made tremendous progress in the field of maize genetics."

However, a shadow of suspicion has fallen over Beltran since it was revealed that he recently received \$1 million USD from a mystery source.

A senior Government source told this paper that Beltran was being investigated for passing biological material illegally or 'vial-in-pocket', without declaring it at customs.

The Government spokesman said, "All biological material must be declared, for basic safety reasons, whether or not it's a biohazard."

Was Beltran transferring hazardous material - which could have been used to create a biological weapon? Or was he smuggling genetically modified seeds worth millions to the crop industry?



Beltran is believed to have arranged to meet with another scientist at the airport. Witnesses describe seeing Beltran at an airport coffee bar with a man in his late thirties, probably American or Canadian, who is described as being about 190cm tall with short, straight, dark brown hair and brown eyes.

Mexican Federal police are believed to be searching for this unidentified man, who left the airport in a rented car. The rental car was found abandoned at the exit for the toll road to Cuernavaca.

Police will not admit whether he is a suspect or merely a witness.

"It is likely that this man was one of the last people to see Dr. Beltran alive," Detective Martin Lopez told this paper. "Why was he meeting Dr. Beltran? That's what we'd like to know."

But kidnapping and murder are on the rise in Mexico City. Could the scientific angle merely be a red herring?

"It is extremely unusual for one of our plant biotechnologists to find themselves at the heart of any international scientific intrigue," admitted Beltran's colleague, Professor Julia Duran. "But there's a more scary possibility - that it's another case of a kidnapping gone horribly wrong."