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Mamá Rosa News: Four Minors Commit Suicide After 'La Gran Familia' Shelter Is Closed Amid Child Abuse Scandal

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By **Maria G. Valdez** | Aug 15 2014, 02:08PM EDT



A youth looks through a barred window inside "La Gran Familia" home. Authorities raided the shelter after many complaints and rescued 452 children from the vermin-infested refuge for abandoned boys and girls, some of whom it believes to have been sexually abused. The refuge was run by Rosa Verduzco, or "Mamá Rosa" as she is known. Reuters

Four children who lived at Rosa Verduzco's shelter, known as "Mamá Rosa" [have taken their lives](#) after suffering from diverse traumas. "Four minors have committed suicide since this happened (the intervention to the hostel)," Julio Hernández Barros, commissioner of the Executive Committee for Victims (CEAV in Spanish), a decentralized agency of the federal government, said. "Most (suicides) took place at the homes where the kids were originally from, and as their own families have reported, it was a result of the psychological damages suffered at the shelter-hostel. We're investigating those cases," Hernández Barros added.

The latest minor who committed suicide was reported yesterday, confirmed María Ampudia, head of the foundation "Y Quién Habla por Mí" (And Who Speaks for Me), who went to the CEAV with several people who lived in the hostel "Mamá Rosa" to denounce the abuse perpetrated by the staff. "We could not get here in time because [one of the kids coming with us committed suicide](#). He hanged himself, an

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11-year-old boy. It is a shame that this young man didn't get the opportunity to recoup. We are sad, mourning," lamented Ampudia.

Abuses denounced by the victims ranged from identity theft, labor abuse, sexual offenses, injuries, and degrading treatment. Some were tattooed with numbers or identifying marks on the shelter, while others were burnt. "One time Jaime (one of Mamá Rosa's assistants) stepped on my head and [started beating me](#), because a friend had allegedly lent me a cell phone to call my mom, but was not true," recalled Dulce Alejandra Lira Nolasco, who lived in the shelter for nine years.

"A girl named Karen began the rumor, and 'La Tatis' started to hit me, also Aurora, one of the teachers. She even hit my friend, so hard that she started bleeding from her nose. We all got beaten up. "El Lenguas" even wanted to abuse me," she said. Authorities opened this pandora box and discovered the heinous conditions in which the kids from the shelter were living in on July 15, 2014, when a federal operation headed by the Attorney General and the Department of Defense of Mexico [rescued 596 people](#).

They were exploited and suffered physical abuse at the hostel La Gran Familia, in Zamora, Michoacán, which has been operating since 1947. Jesús Murillo Karam, from the Attorney General's Office, and the Governor Salvador Jara led a press conference in which they announced the arrest of Mrs. Rosa Verduzco and six others.

"In the search we found dozens of children in a very poor condition (...) let me say that there were rats, bedbugs, fleas," said Murillo Karam. The Governor stated that the intervention of federal authorities came after being informed of the allegations for over a year against the hostel also known as "Mamá Rosa." The examination of Ms. Verduzco found that due to her health, the government could not hold her criminally responsible for the abuse of minors since she suffers from senility disorder. However, criminal proceedings against six people who worked at the hostel have begun.

A man named only as Felipe "N" was in charge of the administration of the hostel and is accused of beating and abusing children. David Rogelio "N," was responsible for monitoring the home and is accused of not allowing victims to escape. Jose Enrique also "N" is [accused of acts of pedophilia](#). Carlos Vicente "N" and Michelangelo "N" are also linked to sexual assault.

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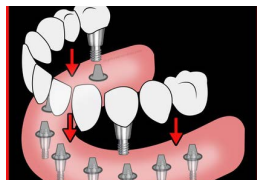
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