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Archaeology

'This is complete nonsense': Scientists rail against 'alien' bodies shown before Mexican congress

News By Owen Jarus published September 14, 2023

Scientists blast claims of two 'alien' bodies that a journalist presented to Mexico's congress.

Comments (6)

One of the "non-human" bodies shown during a press conference with Mexican journalist Jaime Maussan, at the Camino Real hotel, in Mexico City, Mexico on Sept. 13. (Image credit: Daniel Cardenas/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

In a now-viral story, "alien" bodies were unveiled before Mexico's congress Tuesday (Sept. 12). But is there any real science behind this bizarre event?

Not by a long shot, according to scholars, who denounced the claim and affirmed that the bodies are not alien.

Mexico's congress was holding a hearing on unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), a term that is now used to describe UFOs. UAPs have also been the subject of congressional hearings in the United States over the past two years.

During the presentation, a team that included Mexican journalist Jaime Maussan and military medical doctor José de Jesús Zalce Benítez presented two bodies — which appear to be no more than 3.3 feet (1 meter) tall and appear skinny with grayish skin and large heads — in coffin-like boxes before Mexico's congress. They claimed that DNA tests reveal that the remains of these three-fingered beings are not human and that their abdomens hold eggs that may be used in reproduction. The duo also said the bodies came from Peru and that radiocarbon dating shows they date back 1,000 years, National Public Radio reported.

The same bodies made headlines in 2017 and 2018, Maussan told Live Science in an email. At the time, scholars denounced those bodies as consisting of manipulated human body parts. Maussan told Live Science that since that time, more tests have shown that the bodies are not human. He also stressed that he is not saying these bodies are necessarily alien — just that they are not human.

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"We never said they are extraterrestrial," Maussan said, adding that they had found evidence for implants made of the elements osmium and cadmium inside the bodies, "a technology unknown 1,000 years ago." Live Science was unable to reach de Jesús Zalce Benítez at press time.

Mexican journalist Jaime Maussan stands near the two "non-human" beings before a press conference, at the Camino Real hotel, in Mexico City, Mexico on Sept. 13, 2023. The press conference was held a day after the country's first public congressional hearing on unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs).
(Image credit: Daniel Cardenas/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

Scientists blast claims

"Let me tell you that all this is complete nonsense," Rafael Bojalil-Parra, research reinforcement director at Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAD) in Mexico City, told Live Science in an email. "That our Congress gives a forum to this self-proclaimed UFOlogist is a reflection of the anti-scientific mood that prevails in our country today."

There were reports in some media outlets that tests on the bodies were performed at UAD. But Bojalil-Parra said no DNA tests were performed at the university, and while a carbon-14 test was conducted in 2017, a commercial agreement prevents the university from disclosing the results.

Tellingly, if the bodies were aliens, then carbon-14 dating would be useless. "Radiocarbon dating is based on Carbon 14 atoms which are created when the sun's radiation strikes the Earth's upper atmosphere," David Anderson, an assistant professor of anthropology who has written about pseudoarchaeology extensively at Radford University in Virginia, told Live Science in an email. "To radiocarbon date extraterrestrial beings, we would have to know what the rate of production of 14-C was on their home planet, not ours."

[redacted]

Other scientists also denounced the claims. "It is sad to see the well debunked claims of Jaime Maussan returning to the internet," Andrew Nelson, chair of anthropology at Western University in Ontario, told Live Science in an email. The bodies "have been debunked on the basis of anatomy," with studies showing that some of the bodies "are human mummies that had been deliberately manipulated to appear alien," Nelson said. They show, for example, the feet of the "aliens" could have been created by mutilating the foot of a human mummy.

"The feet would have suffered mutilations of digits I and V, in addition to the cutting of the skin and soft tissue of the foot behind the toes, producing a foot with extremely long toes," Rodolfo Salas-Gismondi, a vertebrate paleontologist at the Cayetano Heredia University and the Museum of Natural History in Lima, wrote in a 2017 analysis.

Nelson said that "while Maussan claims to have CT, C-14 and DNA evidence, he has not presented that evidence for peer review by the scientific community." Nelson added that if these remains are in fact 1,000 years old and from Peru, it raises questions as to whether they were looted and how they left the country.

Another scientist said that if the remains are human, those involved with the claims should face legal implications. They "should be arrested and tried for whatever laws might apply for exploiting or desecrating human remains," Ken Feder, an archaeology professor at Central Connecticut State University, told Live Science in an email.

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The hearing in Mexico took place partly because there have been high profile hearings on UAPs in the United States congress noted Jeb Card, an assistant teaching professor of anthropology at Miami University in Ohio. While "no one has yet wheeled out alien bodies in the US Capitol," Card told Live Science in an email, there has been testimony before the U.S. Congress made by former military officials that the American government has biological remains of aliens.

The growing popularity of conspiracy theories helps to explain why stuff like this is occurring, Card said. "The simple reality is that it is now profitable — figuratively and literally — to push narratives that 'elites' are inflicting their will on the broader people through devious, conspiratorial, and at times supernatural means."

Live Science contacted Peru's Ministry of Culture, which did not return requests for comment by the time of publication.

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Owen Jarus is a regular contributor to Live Science who writes about archaeology and humans' past. He has also written for The Independent (UK), The Canadian Press (CP) and The Associated Press (AP), among others. Owen has a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Toronto and a journalism degree from Ryerson University.

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Mr T
I'm with the scientists on this one. I think that Jaime Maussan originally had good intentions investigating UFOs and alien sightings, of which there have been many multiple-witness sightings in south America over the years, but he seems to have fallen into the same trap as many do, putting willingness to believe above science. It's a form of self-delusion,...
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Bolt
It seems dubious, but what independent studies have been performed on the mummy shown yesterday?

They said the mummies & data are available for others to study.

I have yet to find anyone who actually did. So far only scientists who speculate they are made up of parts... Looks like they are just as guilty...
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Nikolai0
I'm with "Mr. T" on this one. Whoever made the mummy dummies for this...whatever it was did a really crummy job of making the fakes. This is what happens when "journalists" attend meetings in 5th world countries. If they don't send something to their editor, they won't get their cookies and milk before bedtime. Seriously...the guy copied toe head...
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Thomas Thompson
Seems strange that scientists who haven't examined the remains, have no x-rays, cat scans, and only speculation that the hands and feet "may have been surgically altered" are so eager to debunk something they know nothing about. Ufologists are certain there have been aliens here for thousands of years, meaning they reproduce here. Being born here would explain the...
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