



Measures to Decrease the Criminal Violence in Mexico

General Assembly 1

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Introduction

Mexican law enforcement and the military have struggled to reduce crime-related violence for years. There were 33,341 drug-related homicides in Mexico in 2018, a 15% increase over the previous year and a record high. Furthermore, in the run-up to Mexico's 2018 presidential elections, Mexican cartels assassinated at least 130 candidates and politicians in an attempt to gain additional control over the government. Criminal Violence in Mexico has seen an alarmingly dangerous increase over the years, and measures to decrease the numbers must be taken.

The initial increase began in the 1980s when the drug traffickers and other crime groups organized themselves through the assigning of regional areas of control. This allowed them to establish networks and trafficking routes, increasing production and distribution. This is when territorial issues between the groups arose. Mexican crime groups started to fight over markets and regions, causing a general rise to Mexico's already present criminal violence.

Definition of Key Terms

Drug Cartel

A Drug cartel is a term used when referring to large and highly sophisticated criminal groups of people or organizations that function with the main purpose and intention of supplying drug trafficking operations. They typically function the same way corporate companies do with divisions for specific assignments such as transportation, security, and money laundering.

Money laundering

In simple terms, Money laundering is the process of making large amounts of money in an illegal manner or through criminal activity such as drug trafficking and terrorist funding. Money laundering has become essential for criminal organizations in order for them to use it effectively. The nature of its requirements often leads to massive cover-ups through smurfing or simply layering the banking with fake stories involving innocents and often provoking violence.

Femicide

Femicide is a hate crime that occurs when a woman is intentionally murdered because they are female.

Cartel

This term is used when referring to an agreement made between a group of people who will each illegally benefit often from the manufacturing or production of a criminal good or activity. Cartel is often used to refer to large drug trafficking organizations in Mexico such as the Gulf cartel.

International narcotics board

Often referred to as the INCB is a quasi-judicial, independent body that monitors the United Nations' implementations of international drug conventions. Established in accordance with the single convention on narcotic drugs in 1961.

General Overview

After the distribution and organization in regional control of Mexican criminal groups, in an attempt to reduce the violence the Mexican government declared war on the criminal organizations in 2006 - when the former President Felipe Calderon launched an initiative in which the cartels would be combated through military force.

President Enrique Pea Nieto revised the Calderon government's strategy in 2012, focusing efforts on improving law enforcement capacity and supporting public safety rather than on violent confrontations.

However, within the Sinaloa Cartel after Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was arrested in 2014, re-arrested in 2016, and finally extradited to the United States in 2017 a power vacuum was created, increasing violence between rival factions seeking new territory and influence. Moreover, despite an initial drop in homicides as a result of Pea Nieto's reforms, Mexico's corruption and crime-related violence persisted. By 2016, drug-related homicides had increased by 22%, with over 20,000 people killed, and in 2017, a mass grave in Veracruz State was discovered, containing the remains of more than 250 victims of crime-related violence. Since 2006, an estimated 150,000 people have died as a result of crime-related violence.



Recognizing widespread claims that the use of military force has increased crime-related violence in Mexico—as well as allegations that the military has committed human rights violations and extrajudicial killings—then-presidential candidate AMLO promised on the campaign trail to revolutionize the fight against cartels and return to a civilian-led police force.

The Merida Initiative was launched in 2007 by the George W. Bush administration and the Calderon government to improve US-Mexico cooperation on security and rule of law issues in Mexico, and support for the initiative has continued under the Trump administration. Mexican cartels, according to the US Drug Enforcement Agency, pose the greatest drug-related threat to the US, supplying heroin, marijuana, methamphetamines, and other drugs. Criminal and drug trafficking organizations threaten to weaken and destabilize Mexico's government, a key regional ally of the United States, as well as harm civilian populations in both countries.

Current Situation

Currently, Mexico is still struggling with the issue of criminal violence, even after the numerous attempts to reduce the events. Many of the implementations have resulted in an overall increase and with the current global pandemic, caused alarming increased stress on hospitals and healthcare systems. Criminal groups in Mexico have actually adapted and enlarged their turfs as a response to the covid-19 pandemic resulting in an overall increase in illegal economic activity.

Criminal organizations in Mexico were quick to capitalize on the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, seizing new opportunities created by lockdowns, distracted states, and vulnerable citizens. Initially, trade disruptions and movement restrictions forced some criminal organizations to scale back their illicit activities. The lull, however, has not lasted. The exchange of illicit goods appears to be returning to normal, while extortion rackets are reappearing. As the region's recent history demonstrates, what's likely to backfire is quick fixes to combat organized crime and official corruption. Instead, governments should direct their limited resources to the most violent regions and vulnerable people, preferably through regional programs to reduce impunity and create alternatives to criminal behaviour.

The threat of rising crime across the region is palpable after months of varying severity lockdowns, with disease transmission still uncontrolled and poised to spike again. For years, Mexico has been plagued by transnational criminal organizations that profit from a lack of economic opportunity and corruption in the state and security forces. During the pandemic, the Jalisco Cartel New Generation has bared its teeth in battles for control of illicit markets such as drug trafficking and "taxing" legal commodities. It has also used the media to demonstrate its paramilitary power. A slew of criminal organizations has claimed to be lifelines for locals, ostensibly to broaden their support base.

Apart from a few notable exceptions, responses to chronic insecurity through the government have failed so far to reduce violence or significantly reduce judicial impunity for serious crimes. As budgets are slashed, state security policy will face even greater challenges.

Governments, on the other hand, can avoid the mistakes of the past when confronted with these challenges. Far from reducing violence, militarized crackdowns have splintered criminal groups, exposing communities to increased intimidation and forced displacement. Instead of launching missions to "kill or capture" criminal leaders, security forces should use the pandemic to protect the most vulnerable and deter extortion. Governments should direct emergency funds toward meeting the needs of those most vulnerable to the pandemic and its consequences, such as spikes in violence. Governments should look beyond traditional law enforcement approaches when allocating COVID-19 relief funds and foreign financing to the most affected regions. They should develop region-specific approaches.

Major Parties Involved

FBN - Federal bureau of Narcotics - now the DEA

The Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) was a federal anti-drug law enforcement agency that was established in 1930 as a successor to the Narcotics Division (1921-1927) and the Prohibition Bureau's Narcotics Division (1927-1930). Although it was not the first federal anti-drug agency in the United States, it was the most important until it was disbanded in 1968, when the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) was formed. After further restructuring in 1973, the BNDD became the present-day Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). They have imposed many laws and regulations, which have affected the criminalization of drugs and certain acts.

Familia Michoacana

A once at its height Mexican drug cartel known for its incredibly brutal tactics of possession. In the past, this cartel has been in Alliance with other cartels such as the Gulf cartel and overall disrupted much peace and committed many violent crimes (can be seen in the Timeline of Key Events), although they are not as large as they used to be, they are still active. In the past, the government has launched many initiatives against this cartel such as when on the 11th of December the Mexican government launched Operation Michoacán against the Familia Michoacana, a joint effort involving the Defense, Navy, and Public Security Secretariats, as well as the Attorney General's Office, despite the military's lack of constitutional authority to intervene.

Sinaloa Cartel

Currently known as the largest and most successful drug trafficking organization in Mexico and the western hemisphere. Due to their large coverage, they have also been responsible for many of the violent crimes and have a large influence on contributing factors.

Gulf Cartel

Another large drug cartel in Mexico, previously allied with other cartels has and continues to contribute to many of the illegal activities and criminal and brutal violence in the region.

Mexican Government

The Mexican Government has been heavily involved in this issue, they have implemented hundreds of missions to combat the cartels and to prioritize public health. Additionally, their choice to militarize the war caused criminal violence in itself. They have also called on the United Nations and other organizations for action and measures to be taken to protect civilians. See appendix 2 on the timeline of the drug war for Mexican governments (and American) detailed involvement.

United States of America

As one of the Nations a huge part of Mexico's drugs are trafficked too, the American Government has worked in collaboration with the Mexican Government but also alone to control the drug flow which has affected the Mexican Cartels heavily as they have had to change their course of action or have taken advantage of each situation cousin more or less violence.

Columbia

When looking at nations involved in the Mexican drug war, Columbia is one of the first to be named. It is estimated that over 90% of the cocaine that has entered the united states of America, was produced in Columbia. The main transit route of this is through Mexico which is where we can see issues arise.

Timeline of Key Events

1930s	The use of Cannabis comes under scrutiny after the formation of the FBN
1937	Marijuana Tax Act passed, criminalizing large group activities and pushing towards requirements for criminal acts.
1939 - 1945	World war II blocks Turkish and European imports of opium, marijuana and heroin (required for morphine production) causing poppy and hemp production in Mexico to increase
1975	600 Kilos of cocaine is seized by the Columbian Authorities after traffickers retaliated which lead to the killing of, 40 people in Medellin in one weekend
1975	Operation Condor starts, the United States provides weapons, manpower, CIA and FBI resources to capture and kill drug lords in parts of South America. Estimated that 60,000 people were murdered.
1981	Rise of Medellin cartel
1982	Pablo Escobar is elected to the Colombian Congress

1982	Mexico renegotiates external debt with an international monetary fund, requiring the public industry to be privatized and devalues the peso.
27th October 1986	President Ronald Raegan signed the Anti-drug Abuse Act of 1986. (see appendix 1)
17th December 1986	Guillermo Cano Isaza - A well-known Columbian Journalist is murdered by Pablo Escobars Medellin Cartel.
2nd July 1988	Two key Cárdenas aides are found shot to death in Mexico City on the eve of the Mexican presidential election between the ruling party's Carlos Salinas de Gortari and the left-wing candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The two were in charge of ensuring that the elections were free and fair. It is widely assumed that Cárdenas won the election and that vote fraud by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was responsible for Salinas' victory.
1988	The government claims that the computers crashed during the vote count, describing it as a "system breakdown." Salinas de Gortari is said to have won with 50.7 percent of the vote, the smallest winning majority since direct elections were introduced in 1917. Years later, former President Miguel de la Madrid admits to the New York Times and in an autobiography that the presidential elections were rigged in order for the PRI to win and that all ballots were burned three years after the election to remove all evidence of the fraud.
1988	Mexico has begun the second phase of its economic reform. It entails financial sector deregulation as well as privatization of national industry, particularly railways, ports, highways, and communications. Banks are privatized, and Campesinos lose their right to claim or retain communal land. These changes have a disproportionate impact on small producers and stimulate growth in the informal sector. "We know that the informal sector employs roughly 60% of the labour force or 'economically active population'" (Watt 162).
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8th April 1989	Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo gets arrested, his nephews then inherit parts of his drug-trafficking empire.

- 17th November 1993 The North American Free Trade Agreement, (NAFTA) is signed into law and passed. This increased legitimate trade across the U.S - Mexico border but also put small agriculturists out of business opening opportunities for criminal groups to seize them.
- 7 September 2006 The Familia Michoacana (organized crime syndicate) throws 5 human heads onto the dance floor of a discotheque.
- 11 December 2006 Mexican Government launches Operation Michoacan against Familia Michoacana.
- 2006 Mexico becomes the second country in the Americas to militarize the drug war.
- 30th November 2008 Guatemalan and Mexican drug cartels clash leaving 18 people dead.
- 17th February 2009 A shootout in Reynosa between the Mexican army and gulf Cartel leads to 12 dead including its highly-ranked leader Hector Manuel Saucedo Gambosa provoking a split in their parliamentary army.
- 14 July 2009 In response to the detention of its leader, Arnoldo Rueda Medina, on July 11, the Familia Michoacana kidnaps, tortures, and kills twelve Mexican Federal police officers in Michoacán. During the investigation into these killings, Julio César Godoy, a member of the Lower House in Congress and the brother of Michoacán's governor, is revealed to be a high-ranking member of the Familia Michoacana.

see full timeline of every single individual violent crime in Appendix 2

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Over time there have been numerous attempts at solving this issue in an attempt to decrease violence or decrease overall criminal activity. A large amount of these attempts have been through the government itself, many missions were launched which have been listed below:

Merida Initiative

On October 22, 2007, the United States and Mexico announced the Merida Initiative (also known as Plan México), a multi-year security cooperation agreement under which the United States will provide financial assistance, equipment, training, and intelligence to Mexico and Central American countries to aid in the fight against drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, and money laundering. In that year,

the United States will give Mexico \$400 million and Central American countries \$65 million.

Operation Nuevo León-Tamaulipas

The Mexican government launched Operation Nuevo León-Tamaulipas in January 2008 to combat the Gulf Cartel and the Zetas Cartel, the latter of which is considered the most dangerous cartel and was founded by former high-ranking officers of the Mexican army's elite troops. The operation captures Beltrán Leyva Cartel drug lord Arturo Beltrán Leyva.

On March 27, 2008, the Mexican government launched Operation Chihuahua, a joint operation to combat the Juárez Cartel and other criminal gangs operating in the state.

Operation Solare

On September 17, 2008, over 200 suspects were apprehended as part of Operation Solare (also known as Project Reckoning), a major transnational anti-drug trafficking operation that spans Mexico, Guatemala, Italy, and the United States.

Additionally, Mexico has made countless urges to United Nations members to increase measures to combat the illegal drug trade and works closely in an attempt to bring more light and aid to this issue.

United Nations

On August 25, 2021, the International Narcotics Control Board's (SINCB) Precursors Control Section held a virtual workshop with Mexican authorities. The Mexican Technical Group for Synthetic Drug Control (GTCDS), an inter-ministerial body made up of the federal Ministries of Communications, Economy, Health, Justice, Public Finance, and Security attended the event.

The meeting provided an opportunity to share best practices in the areas of precursor chemical control and monitoring, which can be used to illicitly manufacture opioids and methamphetamines. It took place against the backdrop of the Mexican government's recent establishment of a list of dual-use chemicals. GTCDS monitors such chemicals, which have licit uses but are also vulnerable to diversion for illicit drug production.

The INCB's International Special Surveillance List, which includes a list of internationally non-scheduled chemicals frequently found in illicit drug manufacture as well as guidelines for fostering and formalising cooperation between governments and private sector industries, was presented to the Mexican government as a complementary tool. This did not solve the issue but provided insight and stability to do so in the future.

Possible Solutions

When it comes to possible solutions to reducing criminal violence in Mexico there are many options, most of which have already been attempted or evaluated.

Below in figure 1.1 a table published by the Wilson centre evaluating the effectiveness of some of the most obvious measures can be seen.

Approach	Strongly effective	Mixed, modest or moderately effective	Non or negatively effective
Place-Based		Hot spots policing, broken window policies, urban renewal, CPTED, neighbor watch, poverty de-concentration	Community oriented-policing
People-Based	Focused deterrence, cognitive therapy	Problem-oriented policing, procedural justice, vocational training, mentoring, school or family-based programs, restorative justice, aftercare programs	Juvenile curfews, electronic monitoring, boot camp, scared straight
Behavior-based	Comprehensive gun violence reduction, drug courts and treatment	Gun enforcement and legislation, gang behavior regulation and prevention	Gun buybacks, drug enforcement, comprehensive gang reduction

Figure 1.1

According to experts, there are four incredibly effective methods measures to curb criminal violence which include -

- Policies that use sanctions and rewards to deter offenders and offending groups from engaging in violence are known as focused deterrence. Nine out of ten of these interventions work, lowering homicide rates from 34% to 63% in areas where they are implemented.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a set of policies that teaches children and teenagers how to control their emotions, impulses, and anger reactions using psychological techniques. Recidivism can be reduced by up to 52 percent simply by teaching previous offenders these techniques.
- Policies aimed at deterring behaviours that encourage the use of guns are known as targeted gun violence reduction. It necessitates that trusted law enforcement agencies send out clear messages that say "stop shooting, stop killing," not "stop all crime" or "leave the gang." Gun buybacks and anti-gun legislation are ineffective in most cases.
- Drug treatment and drug courts are far more effective at reducing violence than aggressive drug enforcement, which tends to exacerbate it. Drug wars encourage violence, whereas drug treatment reduces recidivism among violent criminals with substance abuse problems.

Additionally, focusing on working with the society and people in the area is a great way to predict or be prepared for violent crimes. It is often the people in touch or in the areas of control that know when an act is going to happen or where there is conflict. This can tip agencies and policies off to where protection or guarding is

required. This means that delegates could encourage efforts to gain local allies to develop local intelligence capabilities so that behaviours can be identified rather than just geographical units.

Note to delegates* Remember when writing solutions to stick to your delegations policies which can be found when researching the delegation name along with the issue.

Appendix/Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Anti-Drug Abuse act of 1986
<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/anti-drug-abuse-act-1986#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20House%20of%20Representatives,in%20developing%20 drug%20abuse%20preventionappendix>
- Appendix 2 - Timeline of all violent crimes, government and cartel involvements
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