

# Spillover Events Archive 2013

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**Event: Gun Battle****Date: October 11, 2013****Location: Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico****Description:** A gun battle has been reported in Nuevo Laredo along the Mex-02 Highway, connecting Nuevo Laredo with Reynosa. These events typically last a maximum of two to three hours.**Recommendation:** FreightWatch is recommending that all shipments in the area near the inspection site at KM26 on Mex-02 Highway be delayed until the gunfire subsides.

FreightWatch also recommends that any shipments departing from the area remain in their respective yards until the confrontation ends.

**Evento: Balacera****Date: 11 de Octubre, 2013****Lugar: Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico****Discripcion:** Balacera reportada en Nuevo Laredo. El incidente ocurre sobre la carretera Mex-02, conectando Nuevo Laredo con Reynosa. Estos eventos típicamente no duran más de un par de horas.**Recomendación:** FreightWatch recomienda que los embarques entrando a Nuevo Laredo se detengan en la Garita del KM26. Se recomienda que los embarques programados para salir se queden en sus patios hasta que se reestablezca el orden.<http://www.freightwatchintl.com/intelligencecenter/securitynews/gun-battle-nuevo-laredo>**Event: Gun Battle in Reynosa****Date: October 8, 2013****Location: Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico****Description:** A gun battle was reported in Reynosa in the State of Tamaulipas occurring at approximately 12:30 PM. The incident took place near the industrial park at the entrance of the city, a high risk area, that sits closely to the main highway leading into the city from Monterrey, Nuevo Leon.**Recommendation:** FreightWatch recommends shipments avoid the area until the situation subsides. The gun battles have resulted in road closures causing shipments in the area to stage for a prolonged time, increasing the risk to the cargo. FreightWatch recommends using covert tracking devices and active monitoring for all shipment traveling in high risk areas.**Evento: Balacera en Reynosa, Tamaulipas****Fecha: 8 de Octubre, 2013****Ubicación: Reynosa, Tamaulipas, México****Descripción:** Balacera reportada en Reynosa, Tamaulipas alrededor de las 12:30 PM. El incidente ocurrió en la carretera Monterrey-Reynosa, cerca del parque industrial, en la entrada de la ciudad que es considerada un área de alto riesgo.

**Recomendación:** FreightWatch recomienda que los transportistas eviten el área hasta que ceda la situación. Balaceras provocan cierres de calles que conducen a que los camiones estén parados por tiempos prolongados, aumentando el riesgo. FreightWatch recomienda usar dispositivos de rastreo encubiertos y seguimiento para todos los envíos en zonas de alto riesgo.

<http://www.freightwatchintl.com/intelligencecenter/securitynews/gun-battle-reynosa>

### **Six get lengthy prison terms for kidnapping that missed target**

9/10/2013 - McALLEN — Six men are to spend between 17 and 22 years in prison for their roles in the kidnapping for ransom of a college student last year.

Wearing a green-and-brown-striped Polo shirt, Roman “El Chacho” Rivera Guillén, the mastermind of the kidnapping, openly cried and his relatives in attendance sobbed as he pleaded with U.S. District Judge Randy Crane for a lighter sentence.

“You kidnapped an innocent member of our community. No one wants people like you out in the community,” Crane said as he sentenced Rivera Guillén to 22 1/2 years in prison.

“We need to send out a strong message that we will not tolerate this, and I believe that the length of your sentence will do that.”

In addition to Rivera Guillén, Crane sentenced Jose Molina to 17 1/2 years, Alfonso Villasana to 12 years, Israel Flores to 17 1/2 years, Julio Cesar Fernandez to 19 1/2 and Bernardino Sanchez to 17 1/2 years in prison.

The six men were arrested in November by the FBI and McAllen police for the kidnapping of a 19-year-old college student. Soon after their arrest, the men pleaded guilty to their roles and have been in jail awaiting sentencing.

The kidnapping took place on Nov. 6 after an unknown individual in Mexico called Rivera Guillén asking him to kidnap a man who owed a drug debt. Rivera Guillén contacted Flores, who recruited the other men and carried out the kidnapping at an apartment in the 700 block of East Jackson Ave. However, the victim turned out not to be the intended target, court records show.

The victim was a college student who was studying when the gunmen kicked the door, bound him and took him. After realizing that they had the wrong man, the gunmen still demanded \$700,000 from the victim’s family, who were not able to come up with the money. The teen was released soon after.

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article\\_5f05019a-19c5-11e3-a3d0-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article_5f05019a-19c5-11e3-a3d0-0019bb30f31a.html)

**Event: Increased Criminal Activity**

**Date:** September 6, 2013

**Location:** Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico

**Description:** Recent reports inform of ongoing criminal activities in the area of Ciudad Victoria in the State of Tamaulipas. Road blocks have reportedly been set up along the outskirts of the city by members of an unknown criminal organization, at this time it is known that those involved were heavily armed in street clothing.

This type of event is not uncommon and demonstrates the rapid risk change continually seen in Mexico's transportation network. Incidents like this increase the risk to the supply chain industry as localized cargo theft rings are known to utilize this tactic to facilitate theft. Under the current conditions, FreightWatch considers this area a **HIGH RISK ZONE FOR THEFT** for the next 24 hours.

**Recommendation:** FreightWatch recommends all non-essential shipments be postponed for at least 24 hours in this region. FreightWatch also recommends that all drivers be trained to respond to these types of situations to minimize the risk to employees. Covert tracking and monitoring shipments is an essential security protocol in Mexico.

<http://www.freightwatchintl.com/intelligencecenter/securitynews/increased-criminal-activity-mexico>

### **Mexico boosts security on northeast border after cartel boss arrest**

**8/18/2013 - (Reuters) - Mexican authorities have increased security along the country's northeastern border with the United States after arresting the suspected leader of the Gulf Cartel, one of the oldest drug trafficking groups in Mexico, a spokesman said on Sunday.**

The Mexican army on Saturday captured Mario Ramirez Trevino in Reynosa in Tamaulipas state, across the border from McAllen, Texas, Interior Ministry spokesman Eduardo Sanchez said at a press conference without providing further details. Ramirez was also wanted by the United States for trafficking cocaine and marijuana through the border crossings at Reynosa and McAllen and Matamoros and Brownsville, Texas.

He is suspected of ordering attacks that killed police and security forces in the area, the spokesman said. "The government has reinforced the security strategy with the aim of neutralizing any eventual actions by other criminal organizations with a presence in this region," Sanchez said, appearing to refer to the brutal Zetas gang.

The Zetas, which began by providing protection to the Gulf Cartel's operations, broke with the organization in 2010, unleashing a wave of violence in Tamaulipas and neighboring

Nuevo Leon state. The Zetas also operate in Tamaulipas, but their main base is in Nuevo Laredo, where much of Mexico's legitimate business crosses into the United States.

Sanchez spoke of organizations "that could seek to reposition and expand their area of influence, which could possibly increase levels of violence in the region." In July, the government arrested Miguel "Z-40" Trevino Morales, leader of the Zetas, in the first big blow to organized crime since President Enrique Pena Nieto took office in December.

But in spite of the arrests, the violence has not let up and more than 6,000 people have died since December in clashes between cartels and security forces. About 70,000 people died while President Felipe Calderon was in power between 2006 and 2012. Calderon began the army-led campaign against the cartels.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/18/us-mexico-arrest-idUSBRE97H0E120130818>

### **Murder trial witnesses, prosecutor describe abduction at restaurant**

8/13/2013 - A Brownsville man was kidnapped to answer to a drug and money debt to people — possibly the Gulf Cartel — in Mexico, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

But instead, 22-year-old Reyes Bocanegra was shot once in the back of the head during an incident inside his white Tahoe, Assistant District Attorney Gustavo "Gus" Garza told the jury during opening arguments in the trial against a Laredo man.

Abraham Parra, 24, is on trial and charged with kidnapping and murder for the July 2012 death of Bocanegra. Eight other men, including then-15-year-old Jorge Alberto Castro, who Garza and defense attorney Nat C. Perez said they expect to take the stand this week, also are charged in the case and are awaiting trial.

On Tuesday, employees and customers in Bocanegra's restaurant, Mariscos Playa Azul, testified to what they saw, heard and smelled during the kidnapping. The U.S. Border Patrol agent who found Bocanegra slumped over in the back of his SUV on a road north of Rancho Viejo also briefly took the stand.

But it was Garza's opening statements that revealed more details of kidnapping and killing of Bocanegra than previously released by investigators.

"We are going to look at a bad side of Cameron County with criminal activity at its worst," Garza told the jury, adding that the evidence would show Bocanegra was involved with drug dealings and was in the middle of a break in communications and trust. "Dope was lost."

He said people in Mexico — possibly the Gulf Cartel — were engaged in an effort to regain several kilograms of cocaine and “thousands and thousands of dollars.”

During opening arguments, defense attorney Perez said there was a discrepancy as to whether both drugs and money were missing or if it was only money missing. As Perez said he understands it, the evidence indicates that upwards to \$200,000 was missing.

Perez also described Castro, who will be put on trial as an adult, as the government’s “star witness.” Perez asked the jury to compare the teenager’s testimony to video recorded statements, saying jurors will see that Castro’s demeanor and comments are different in both.

But Garza said evidence will show that both Parra and the youth took a bus from Laredo to the downtown Brownsville bus station and were picked up by brothers Leonardo and Carlos Vasquez on July 17, 2012, two days before Bocanegra was kidnapped and murdered.

After getting money from a trucking company and checking into a hotel, Garza said, the duo were picked up by the Vasquez brothers on July 19, 2012, and went to the King’s Buffet, where the rest of the suspects arrived.

“They feasted on Chinese food, and they worked out all the details,” Garza said, adding that the group went to the parking lot and handed out weapons.

From there, the suspects used three cars and drove to Lopez Supermarket, which was adjacent to Mariscos Playa Azul, Garza said.

Security camera footage from the restaurant was shown and Parra, according to testimony, can be seen — without a gun — tying up a waitress and cook with help from one other person while three other people tie up and hold customers out front of the restaurant at gun point. Later in the video, the man identified as Parra leads Bocanegra out the back door, followed by the other suspects.

Initially, the security footage was damaged, but Garza said police replaced two wires to get the camera working again.

After Bocanegra was in his Tahoe, Garza said, a struggle or “violent conflict” began immediately. A Border Patrol agent testified that when he found Bocanegra’s body, the right rear window was busted out at some point. There was no glass at the scene.

Garza said the men had trouble controlling Bocanegra, who was quite large, and someone with a gun began pistol whipping him. According to Garza’s statement, one of the men dropped the gun and Parra picked it up.

At some point, Garza said Bocanegra nearly threw one of the suspects out of the SUV and was about to get away, and that’s when someone shot Bocanegra in the back of the head.

“They leave the Tahoe with a dead man in the backseat,” Garza said. The trial continues Wednesday morning.

[http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/article\\_02a443b4-0478-11e3-9781-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/article_02a443b4-0478-11e3-9781-001a4bcf6878.html)

### **Immigrant smugglers for Zetas sentenced to prison**

8/2/2013 - A San Antonio woman who led a cell that smuggled as many as 200 people into the U.S. for the Zetas cartel has been sentenced to just more than five years in prison while her brother was sentenced to four years.

The San Antonio Express-News ( <http://bit.ly/13ohCsl>) reports 26-year-old April Gaitan and 29-year-old Armando Gaitan were sentenced Wednesday after pleading guilty to conspiracy charges for their role in the ring that smuggled immigrants from Mexico and Central America through Nuevo Laredo and Villa Hidalgo, Mexico.

Officials say the ring charged immigrants \$2,500 each and hid them in houses and motels, first along the border and then in houses in San Antonio, Austin and in rural locations. Homeland security officials dismantled the ring of at least 28 smugglers in September.

[http://www.themonitor.com/news/state/article\\_2a67b361-ba9d-505e-910a-3a8f396b65c7.html](http://www.themonitor.com/news/state/article_2a67b361-ba9d-505e-910a-3a8f396b65c7.html)

### **Ex-soldier gets life sentence for cartel murder**

7/27/2013 - A West Texas judge has sentenced a former Fort Bliss soldier to life in prison after he pleaded guilty to murdering a man in a cartel-ordered hit.

Michael Jackson Apodaca admitted to shooting Jose Daniel Gonzalez-Galeana. The 22-year-old agreed to the plea and parole eligibility after serving 30 years of his sentence, the El Paso Times reports (<http://bit.ly/169RiT7>). As part of his plea agreement, Apodaca testified against co-defendant Juan Gerardo Gracia Jr., who ultimately was acquitted by a jury.

In his testimony, Apodaca said Gracia's brother-in-law and alleged Juarez cartel member Ruben Rodriguez-Dorado planned the murder and agreed to pay him and Gracia \$5,000 each for the killing Gonzalez-Galeana, whom they believed had turned into a federal informant. Rodriguez-Dorado pleaded guilty and was sentenced to life in prison.

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/texas/article\\_6e874477-a532-5a30-bacc-02ed4d72c61f.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/texas/article_6e874477-a532-5a30-bacc-02ed4d72c61f.html)

## **More bodies of immigrants found near Texas border**

7/23/2013 - FALFURRIAS, Texas - Deputy Rolando Gutierrez knew he'd be breaking up domestic disputes and handing out speeding tickets as part of his duties when he joined the Brooks County Sheriff's Office two years ago.

He didn't expect all the bodies. Several times a week, Gutierrez is called out on a "Code 500" - the department's call sign for a dead body found in the county. The bodies are believed to be immigrants crossing into the USA illegally from the nearby border with Mexico who are either killed and left behind by smugglers or die in the withering heat.

Their numbers are rising at a startling rate. Deputies picked up 129 bodies last year, a nearly 100% jump from 2011 and the most ever recorded in the county, according to sheriff's office statistics. Brooks County contributed to nearly one-third of all the bodies recovered across the entire 2,000-mile U.S. border with Mexico last year. This year, deputies have found 39 bodies and are on pace to surpass last year's tally, given that most of the cadavers show up in the hot months of July, August and September. There are more immigrants dying in Brooks County than in any other place in Texas.

"We've been busier than ever this year," Gutierrez said. "A lot of people don't know what's happening out here. There doesn't seem to be an end to it."

The bodies of Brooks County point to a disturbing trend: more people dying as they try to enter the USA illegally even as the overall number of illegal immigrants declines. Last year, U.S. Border Patrol agents apprehended 365,000 people trying to cross illegally into the USA, significantly down from a peak of 1.7 million in 2000, according to the Border Patrol.

Last fiscal year, border agents counted 476 bodies of undocumented immigrants, up from 380 in 2000. Since October, agents have tallied 380 bodies.

The immigration bill recently passed by the Senate calls for an influx of 20,000 agents at the border, along with more drones, helicopters and technology to try to staunch the flow of illegal crossings even further. The Border Patrol has already doubled the number of agents on staff, from 10,000 in 2004 to 20,700 today. The House is reviewing the Senate bill.

An influx of agents and technology could potentially push immigrants into more treacherous terrain, leading to more deaths, said Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, chair of the government department at the University of Texas-Brownsville, who has researched border issues. Increasingly, human smuggling has been taken over by Mexican drug syndicates, most notably the Zetas and Gulf cartels, which force smugglers through the most arid, dangerous stretches of South Texas, she said.

The rise in the death count even as more agents were added to the border shows that increased manpower is not the answer, Correa-Cabrera said.

"They're arresting the people who cross but not the people who are allowing them to cross," she said. "Falfurrias right now is like a giant cemetery."

Immigrants illegally cross into southern Texas around the McAllen area, then smugglers drive them up SR 281 until they near a highway checkpoint about 17 miles south of Falfurrias, Gutierrez said. From there, they fan out on foot and cross through vast private ranches full of oak trees, shrubs, sand dunes and thorn-covered mesquite trees - treacherous terrain for even the fittest individuals, he said.

The immigrants often wear several layers of black clothing - warm-up pants under jeans and sweaters under long-sleeved shirts - so they don't get sliced up while fleeing agents through the thorn-filled brush, Gutierrez said. Those extra layers of clothing often lead to bodies overheating and dehydrating in temperatures that climb into the 100s by 11 a.m., he said. Authorities often find bodies stripped down to their underwear because the victims tried desperately to peel off the extra layers before succumbing to the heat. Some bodies are neatly buried under shade trees, to keep the remains away from turkey vultures and javelina, Gutierrez said. Others are dragged into the middle of dirt roads to be more easily found by passersby.

On a recent morning, Gutierrez got a call for a Code 500 in the Las Dos Palomas Ranch, a 15,000-acre ranch west of town where visitors pay to hunt white-tailed deer and wild turkey. En route, he picked up Roel Villarreal, one of four Brooks County justices of the peace charged with leading the inquest and declaring time and cause of death.

The body was about 4 miles from the main highway, sprawled in a clearing surrounded by oak trees and dried shrubs. The victim was dressed in jeans and a black sweater. The skull was visible and intact except for a missing bottom jawbone. Gutierrez guessed it was a female from the size-5½ hiking boots, but he couldn't be sure. The person had been dead for about a week and a half.

Gutierrez took pictures and searched the surrounding area for clues. In the victim's pockets were a comb, roll of toilet paper and a handkerchief. No ID. The body was carefully placed in a black body bag and transported to a funeral home. It then went 80 miles south to a funeral home in Mission, Texas, where officials and anthropologists tried to identify the remains by matching them to missing person lists or running DNA samples.

Under a tree about 75 feet away from the body, Gutierrez found the bottom jawbone, along with a lock of black hair. Both were carefully placed with the remains for DNA testing. Time of death was noted: "1:45 p.m." Cause of death: "Exposure to the elements."

Gutierrez said he's become accustomed to the bodies, but some stick with him longer than others. Such as a young man, maybe 19, found last year on another ranch. He had stripped down to his underwear, folded his clothes neatly next to him and curled up to die under a mesquite tree 15 yards from a freshwater pond. Or the brother and sister from El Salvador left behind by a band of



smugglers. When the sister collapsed, the brother stayed with her, urging her to keep going. She died, and he jogged to a main highway to flag down a deputy.

"Sometimes they have lists of names with them, and we could contact a relative," Gutierrez said. "Sometimes they don't have anything."

Chief Deputy Benny Martinez said his deputies don't talk much about the bodies, but he sees on their faces how they take their toll. The sheer number of them - some deputies process two or three in a day - wreaks havoc on his department, Martinez said.

More agents on the border would help, but they wouldn't stop immigrants from enduring harder and tougher terrain to get into the USA, he said. He'd much rather see them simply drive up SR 281.

"For them to die, just to try to better themselves, that's not the way to go," Martinez said. "Not in this country."

<http://www.wbir.com/news/article/281557/16/More-bodies-of-immigrants-found-near-Texas-border>

### **Official: Americans in trouble in Mexico have help**

7/22/2013 - A recent travel warning for Mexico labels neighboring Tamaulipas as one of the most dangerous states south of the border.

Although some 20 million Americans travel safely to Mexico each year, the drug war has made travel and business more complicated.

Janice Jacobs, a high-ranking State Department official who visited the border this weekend, told Action 4 News that the travel warning is meant to inform visitors.

"We're not telling them you can't go," Jacobs said. "All we want, is for them to have is the best information about the risks involved."

According to a [July 12th travel warning](#) for Mexico, some 12 states are safe.

But neighboring Tamaulipas leads Mexico in kidnappings.

The populous state just south of the Rio Grande Valley has also seen a 92.5 percent increase in murders since last year.

Unfortunately, some Americans get caught in the middle.

Jacobs told Action 4 News that the American Consulate in Matamoros and others across Mexico are there to help.

Although exact figures are not available, the number of Americans who have gone missing or have been kidnapped in Mexico has increased.

Jacobs said consulates offer a number of services to families.

"We do a lot of checks ourselves to see if we can locate the person," Jacobs said. "We'll call the

police station, check with the prisons, check with the hospitals. We even check with the morgues."

Although consulate staff cannot act as a lawyer or give legal advice, Jacobs said they serve as a "go between" for families and Mexican authorities.

In many cases, consulate staff can provide referrals and even visit Americans in Mexican prisons to check on their welfare.

As for the missing or kidnapping, consulate staff act as a liaison with Mexican police and in some cases, bring in the FBI.

"We understand completely the difficult situation that the families are in and we try very hard to deal with them and make sure that they have the most up to date information possible," Jacobs said.

The State Department encourages those traveling to Mexico to [register their travels](#) on their website.

The department has also created a [mobile app](#) and [social media accounts](#) to keep visitors to Mexico and other countries informed.

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=924728#.UfFMp237b4Q>

## **Brutal Drug Cartels Still Being Ignored in Washington's Illegal Immigration Debate**

7/16/2013 - Monday, the leader of the brutal Mexican Zeta Cartel Miguel Angel Trevino Morales was arrested and taken into custody. Morales was best known for punishing his enemies by boiling them [alive in oil](#). He was captured in Nuevo Laredo, a border city right across from Laredo, Texas.

Trevino Morales, known as "Z-40," was captured by Mexican Marines in Nuevo Laredo, the Mexican media reported. The U.S. official who confirmed the media reports was not authorized to speak to the press and asked not to be identified.

Trevino's capture removes the leader of a corps of special forces defectors who splintered off into their own cartel and spread across Mexico, expanding from drug dealing into extortion and human trafficking.

Along the way, the Zetas authored some of the worst atrocities of Mexico's drug war, slaughtering dozens, leaving their bodies on display and gaining a reputation as perhaps the most terrifying of the country's numerous ruthless cartels.

Why does this matter? Despite what the Obama administration and Congress continually says about the border being "more secure than ever," cartel violence is spilling over our borders and running rampant in states across America.

Take for example what happened [last week](#) when an innocent Texas man, with no relation to the drug trade, was kidnapped by Gulf cartel members, taken back to Mexico thanks to a porous border and executed.

The partial unsealing of a criminal complaint by the U.S. Attorney's Office reveals a Mexican man legally living in the U.S. was kidnapped on U.S. soil by the Mexican Gulf cartel, illegally brought across the U.S. southern border back into Mexico, and allegedly executed.

Roel Garza of Texas was arrested on July 7, 2013 and stands accused of participation in the kidnapping which authorities say was retaliation by the Mexican Gulf cartel for the theft of more than 100 kilograms of cocaine from the cartel. The victim, however, was not involved in any way with the stolen drugs.

"The victim was a permanent resident of the U.S. with no criminal record and had no involvement in the theft or sale of cocaine. The victim has not been heard from or seen since this event," explained the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Just a few months ago, the [Associated Press](#) released an alarming report about cartels operating on American streets, within American gangs and in the American prison system.

Mexican drug cartels whose operatives once rarely ventured beyond the U.S. border are dispatching some of their most trusted agents to live and work deep inside the United States — an emboldened presence that experts believe is meant to tighten their grip on the world's most lucrative narcotics market and maximize profits.

If left unchecked, authorities say, the cartels' move into the American interior could render the syndicates harder than ever to dislodge and pave the way for them to expand into other criminal enterprises such as prostitution, kidnapping-and-extortion rackets and money laundering.

But a wide-ranging Associated Press review of federal court cases and government drug-enforcement data, plus interviews with many top law enforcement officials, indicate the groups have begun deploying agents from their inner circles to the U.S. Cartel operatives are suspected of running drug-distribution networks in at least nine non-border states, often in middle-class suburbs in the Midwest, South and Northeast.

"It's probably the most serious threat the United States has faced from organized crime," said Jack Riley, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration's Chicago office.

During an interview on Fox News Tuesday, former Immigration and Naturalization Service Agent Michael Culter reiterated this reality.

"We know that hundreds of cities across America have been infected by Mexican cartels" Cutler said.

[For months](#) President of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Union Chris Crane has been begging Congress to address the issue of interior enforcement to deal with the dangerous cartel problem. His requests have been repeatedly ignored by lawmakers working on immigration legislation.

"We aren't even scratching the surface on the criminal illegal alien problem in the United States," Crane said. "That part [cartels] is absent from this discussion as are many parts of this....we know that the drug cartels, that the lieutenants and the troops, the soldiers, they're all within the interior of United States and they're all conducting business as are many other criminal elements and criminal individuals. There are people coming here for this to be a land of opportunity and there are people coming here because the United States for them is a target of opportunity and we believe there is a very disproportionate number of criminals coming into the United States. That conversation is almost completely absent from this entire public conversation about what's happening....It's just another part of this debate that gives us this concern that this is all about politics and not about really fixing the problems that we face within our broken immigration system and providing for what is best for everyone is best for America to include and most importantly, public safety."

A recent [Rasmussen Report](#) shows the majority of Americans are more concerned about cartel violence than they are about illegal immigration. The majority also want the military to patrol and do exercises on the border, something hardly being discussed seriously on Capitol Hill.

Voters remain more concerned about Mexican drug violence coming to this country than they are about illegal immigration, and most favor use of the U.S. military on the border to prevent it.

A new Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that just 34% of Likely U.S. Voters are more concerned about illegal immigration. Fifty-seven percent (57%) worry more about drug violence.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) believe the U.S. military should be used along the border to protect American citizens if the drug violence continues to escalate along the Mexican border. Only 16% disagree, but another 15% are not sure.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of U.S. voters think it is at least somewhat likely that this drug violence will spill over into the United States. Twenty percent (20%) feel that's unlikely. This includes 36% who think the violence is Very Likely to come here and just two percent (2%) who say it's Not At All Likely.

As the House starts work on an immigration overhaul tied to border security, representatives should keep in mind that they owe the American people action in order to protect their safety. Cartel violence is a serious issue that must be addressed, not ignored.

<http://townhall.com/tipsheet/katiepavlich/2013/07/16/drug-cartels-still-being-ignored-in-the-immigration-debate-n1641992>

## **Zetas leader captured in precision operation**

7/16/2013 - MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's most brutal drug cartel leader built a business empire stretching from the Southwest United States to Central America, but [Miguel Angel Trevino Morales](#)' final days of freedom were spent lying low in the hinterlands of Tamaulipas state, traveling only at night over back roads as Mexican marines closed in on his trail.

The last of the Zetas drug cartel's old-guard leaders saw fate swoop in on him in the pre-dawn hours Monday when a military Black Hawk helicopter flew low over his pickup truck, then almost touching the ground, faced down the vehicle with its guns, [Mexico Federal Security](#) spokesman [Eduardo Sanchez](#) said.

The vehicle stopped, and three men emerged. Two hit the ground while the third tried to run. All were captured by marine ground forces who had been watching the movements of 40-year-old Trevino Morales, Sanchez told [The Associated Press](#) Tuesday. Not a single shot was fired.

Time was clearly running out for the cartel leader better known — and feared — by his nickname, "Z-40," a play on police radio code for a commander. Mexico's navy, which has brought down a number of top drug lords, "found out that he had been traveling in the early morning hours on dirt roads. They had been corralling him in little by little," Sanchez said.

Trevino Morales had \$2 million in cash and eight rifles with him when marines caught him outside the border city of Nuevo Laredo, long the Zetas' base of operations. He was taken to Mexico City for questioning, but unlike the days of former President [Felipe Calderon](#), there was no perp walk by a handcuffed suspect or piles of cash and guns put on display for the TV cameras.

Instead, the government released a single video of a rumpled-looking, un-handcuffed Trevino Morales walking through prosecutors' headquarters, saying it wanted to avoid glamorizing drug traffickers or risk rights violations that could lead to a dismissal of charges. Authorities didn't even refer to his nickname, Z-40.

The Zetas are Mexico's most violent, if not richest, cartel, with the largest turf. A New York indictment against Trevino Morales estimates he received \$10 million per month in income from cocaine sales alone, not to mention the money brought in by the cartel's myriad other illicit

activities, including kidnapping, extortion, migrant trafficking, weapons trafficking, even theft of oil from state pipelines.

His arrest was particularly pleasing for the United States. Trevino Morales allegedly orchestrated a series of killings on the U.S. side of the border, including several by a group of young U.S. citizens who gunned down their victims on the streets of Laredo. His gang was also believed to be responsible for the slayings of U.S. ICE Agent Jaime Zapata in 2011 and American citizen [David Hartley](#) in 2010 on Falcon Lake, which straddles the U.S.-Mexico border.

President [Barack Obama](#) praised the Mexican government and vowed to continue supporting the country's fight against drug traffickers.

"I think what it shows is that the new administration of President [Pena Nieto](#) is serious about continuing the efforts to break up these transnational drug operations," Obama said in an interview with Univision Tuesday.

"We have to continue doing our part here in the United States to reduce demand, reduce the flow of guns and cash down south," Obama added. "That's the kind of cooperation that I think President Pena Nieto is looking for."

Trevino Morales is "one of the most significant Mexican cartel leaders to be apprehended in several years," the [U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration](#) said. "His ruthless leadership has now come to an end."

The Zetas have kidnapped or held tens of thousands of migrants, often demanding ransoms of \$3,000 each. Federal officials say the Zetas stole and smuggled at least \$46 million worth of Mexican oil to U.S. refineries. Trevino Morales channeled about \$16 million to his brother in the United States to buy, train and race horses.

Trevino Morales' methods, like those of Zetas leaders before him, led to a "Zetanization" of how cartels do their fighting, said [George Grayson](#), an expert on the group and a professor of government at the College of William & Mary.

"Inflicting fear into the heart of your target is an extremely efficient way to get what you want," Grayson said. "That genie is out of the box."

Trevino Morales was being held for questioning along with a bodyguard and accountant captured in Monday's raid. Sanchez said government forces "have been able to obtain information on the possible movements of his other accomplices," and phones or computers carried by traffickers often provide such information, even if the suspects themselves don't talk.

U.S. Congressman [Henry Cuellar](#), who represents Laredo, Texas, and was briefed on the arrest by U.S. and Mexican officials, noted: "The U.S. was very involved in this."

"The U.S. has been helping in trying to track him for a while. There have been some close calls," Cuellar said. "Here you have U.S. intelligence combined with the (Mexican) marines implementing it."

While Trevino Morales is wanted on several counts in the U.S., it was unclear whether Mexico would try him first at home or extradite him. He will probably be held at a top security prison near Mexico City, where no escapes have occurred.

It was a surprising end for a capo so violent he soaked rivals in diesel fuel and burned them alive in 55-gallon drums. Many had thought he would go down with guns blazing, but Sanchez said the precision raid apparently caught him by surprise.

For the group most terrorized by Trevino Morales, Central American migrants who were kidnapped, beaten and extorted by the tens of thousands, the arrest "will certainly be a relief," said the Rev. [Alejandro Solalinde](#). The Roman Catholic priest runs a migrant shelter in the state of Oaxaca and has spent much of the last decade living under death threats from the Zetas.

"This was a blow, but it's only skin deep," Solalinde said. "The Zetas operate in almost 20 states of Mexico. They have a lot of public servants on their payroll, a lot of police."

Solalinde said that in southern Mexico, the Zetas have used their ties in Honduras and Guatemala, where they also ship cocaine and grow opium, to recruit street gang members to kidnap and kill Central American migrants in Mexico.

The Zetas forcibly recruit some migrants, kill those who won't join and increasingly kidnap young girls, who are forced into prostitution at Zeta-run bars or are made to distribute Zeta drugs.

"We're talking about human trafficking, organ trafficking, kidnappings, forced recruitment, everything," Solalinde said.

The Zetas have run their enormous turf with almost unbelievable brutality since the founders, a corps of special forces defectors who went to work for drug traffickers, splintered off into their own cartel in 2010 and metastasized across Mexico.

The Zetas were responsible for some of the worst atrocities of Mexico's drug war, including the slaughter of 72 Central and South American migrants in the northern town of San Fernando in 2010, authorities said.

The following year, federal officials announced the discovery of 193 bodies buried in San Fernando, most of them migrants kidnapped off buses and killed by the Zetas, some because they refused to work as drug mules. Sanchez said Trevino Morales is charged with ordering those crimes.



In 2011, a woman who angered the Zetas by blogging about crime and violence on a Nuevo Laredo website was found decapitated, her head placed atop a computer keyboard, with a message warning fellow bloggers about speaking out.

Experts say the arrest is unlikely to diminish the violence in the short term.

"The international experience ... demonstrates that there is a danger of greater atomization, and extremely violent armed conflict, if the hundreds of legal businesses that the Zetas run are not frozen or seized," said organized crime analyst Edgardo Buscaglia. He noted the many firms set up by the cartel "are where the Zetas real financial power is located."

The Zetas operate in 16 different lines of business, both legal and illegal, he said, including pirated goods, importing contraband consumer goods and weapons trafficking. The Zetas reportedly use their turf in Cancun to smuggle Cuban migrants into Mexico, and their bases in northern Mexico to steal oil from government pipelines and sell it to refineries.

Sanchez said officials were on alert for possible flare-ups of violence following the arrest, and it was unclear who could be in line to replace him.

The Zetas remain active in Nuevo Laredo, the nearby border state of Coahuila, the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz, as well as parts of north central Mexico and Central America, although Trevino Morales' arrest means the gang has become "a franchise operation, not a vertical organization," Grayson said.

One possible successor is Trevino Morales' younger brother, Omar, a former low-ranking turf boss who's seen as a far weaker figure. There are some reports that Omar is also suffering from a chronic illness that would weaken his chances of taking over.

In the past, the arrest or death of top Mexican capos have led some cartels, like the Beltran Leyva gang, to splinter into smaller, vicious warring gangs with small patches of turf. Others, like the Arellano Felix cartel, have largely been subsumed by the usual winner in these disputes, the Sinaloa cartel.

Any debilitation of the Zetas could strengthen the country's most-wanted man, Sinaloa cartel head Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, who has overseen a vicious turf war with the Zetas from suspected hideouts in rugged western Mexico.

One thing is certain: The Zetas' success has spawned imitators.

"Today, there are probably people calling themselves Zetas who don't necessarily have any real link to the organization," Sanchez said.

<http://www.chron.com/news/crime/article/Capture-of-Zetas-leader-unlikely-to-quell-violence-4667460.php>



## **Abbott talks border violence, Mission incident during McAllen campaign stop**

7/15/2013 - McALLEN — Citing a hail of gunfire from Mexico, which reportedly prompted Texas Rangers to throw tear gas across the river to protect Border Patrol agents, state Attorney General Greg Abbott said Mission has become the latest site of border violence.

Abbott, in part, hit strongly on national and border security in his speech and a subsequent media interview during a campaign stop Monday in McAllen. He announced his run for governor Sunday, following Gov. Rick Perry's declaration a week earlier that he wouldn't seek re-election.

- [In McAllen, Abbott woos Valley, Hispanic vote](#)

"It was just last week when there was an outbreak of gunfire between (the Department of Public Safety) across the border, down the road in Mission," Abbott said in his speech. "That's just the latest instance."

On Thursday, DPS announced officers responded to an incident involving tear gas in South Texas, but said in a news release it would not disclose the location for "security purposes."

The incident Abbott said took place in Mission, alleging it involved cartel members, happened early Thursday afternoon, according to the DPS release.

"We need to make sure that people in the Valley, people anywhere in the state of Texas are going to be kept safe from these dangers," Abbott said in a media interview, adding the federal government is failing to secure the border.

DPS said Texas Rangers in a boat on the Rio Grande responded to a call from the U.S. Border Patrol reporting shots fired. When the Rangers arrived, DPS said they saw Border Patrol agents had taken cover in their own boat, while pointing to people on the Mexican side believed to be responsible for the gunfire.

Rangers then launched tear gas rounds in the direction of those individuals in Mexico, who reportedly vacated the area, DPS said.

Abbott called Mexican drug cartels a growing danger plaguing the state and said he'd create a plan to protect Texans.

Specifically, he said even if it means spending more, he'd make efforts to prevent spillover by bringing more manpower to the border to push back cartels, utilize the latest technology, improve communication among the multiple law enforcement agencies here and crack down on a "growing trend" of corruption, something he said he's already been involved in as Texas attorney general.

“On pure national security, there is one story — just one of many along these lines — about members of Hezbollah who were arrested in San Antonio who have been smuggled through our southern border,” he said.

Media did not ask him to elaborate on the case, but a May report from the *San Antonio Express-News* names a former U.S. Army linguist once connected to Hezbollah who was on trial. He was accused of failing to disclose his membership in the Amal militia and Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1980s when applying for U.S. citizenship and for a security clearance with the Defense Department for a contracting job, the *Express-News* reported.

The reports on the case from the publication make no mention of Mexico and state he is not charged specifically with espionage or terrorism.

[http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/article\\_499fb98a-edbf-11e2-8eb7-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/article_499fb98a-edbf-11e2-8eb7-001a4bcf6878.html)

### **Gunfire reported near American Consulate in Nuevo Laredo**

7/15/2013 - U.S. officials have issued an alert following reports of gunfire in the same neighborhood as the American Consulate in Nuevo Laredo.

It all happened in the Colonia Jardin in Nuevo Laredo around 3 p.m. Monday.

The American Consulate in Nuevo Laredo issued an alert via Twitter stating there were reports of isolated gunfire in the neighborhood.

Located in central Nuevo Laredo, the Colonia Jardin is home to the consulate and two hospitals.

Consulate officials are asking American citizens to exercise caution in the area.

The reports of gunfire come days after the U.S. State Department updated its travel warning for Mexico.

The July 12th warning states that Tamaulipas is among the most dangerous states due to drug cartel violence south of the border.

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=921780#.UebItW37b4Q>

### **New Travel Warning: Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon Dangerous**

7/12/2013 - American officials have updated a travel warning to Mexico stating that neighboring Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon are among the least secure states in Mexico.

The U.S. State Department issued the [updated travel warning](#) on Friday afternoon.

Officials offered general advice asking visitors to Mexico to use airlines as preferred travel and to stay in tourist areas.

According to the alert, those traveling by roads are asked generally to stick to toll roads when available and drive during daylight hours.

### **State By State Breakdown**

But the State Department also issued a state-by-state breakdown for all of Mexico measuring drug cartel violence threats.

Out of the 31 states and Federal District, the State Department considers 12 of them safe enough to where no advisory is needed.

Those 12 safe states are listed as: Baja California Sur, Campeche, Distrito Federal, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Tlaxcala and Yucatan.

But the two states closest to the Rio Grande Valley are listed among the most dangerous.

### **Tamaulipas**

State Department officials reported that Tamaulipas is among the most dangerous states in Mexico.

According to the alert, Tamaulipas has the highest rates of kidnapping south of the border. The alert revealed that gunmen unsuccessfully tried to kidnap an American government official in Matamoros in February.

State Department officials reported that there has also been a 92.5 percent increase in murders since last year.

The warning also noted that Tamaulipas highways are not secure and prone to carjackings and robberies at cartel checkpoints.

Some American citizens have been killed by not complying with the demands of gunmen.

### **Nuevo Leon**

A number of Valley residents also visit Monterrey, the largest city in northeast Mexico.

State Department officials reported that Monterrey and Nuevo Leon have seen an increase in drug cartel violence, particularly over the past six months.

According to the alert, visitors to the area are asked to defer travel to rural areas of Nuevo Leon but exercise caution in Monterrey and the surrounding metropolitan area.

But the alert stated that gun battles and other violence has taken place in Monterrey, particularly at casinos and adult entertainment establishments.

State Department officials reported that American citizens have been kidnapped and killed in Monterrey, even after families paid the ransom.

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Travel Warning

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Mexico

July 12, 2013

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens about the security situation in Mexico. General information on the overall security situation is

provided immediately below. For information on security conditions in specific regions of Mexico, which can vary, travelers should reference the state-by-state assessments further below.

This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning for Mexico dated November 20, 2012 to consolidate and update information about the security situation and to advise the public of additional restrictions on the travel of U.S. government (USG) personnel.

#### General Conditions:

Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year for study, tourism, and business, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day. More than 20 million U.S. citizens visited Mexico in 2012. The Mexican government makes a considerable effort to protect U.S. citizens and other visitors to major tourist destinations, and there is no evidence that Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) have targeted U.S. visitors and residents based on their nationality. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime that is reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes.

Nevertheless, U.S. travelers should be aware that the Mexican government has been engaged in an extensive effort to counter TCOs which engage in narcotics trafficking and other unlawful activities throughout Mexico. The TCOs themselves are engaged in a violent struggle to control drug trafficking routes and other criminal activity. Crime and violence are serious problems and can occur anywhere. U.S. citizens have fallen victim to criminal activity, including homicide, gun battles, kidnapping, carjacking and highway robbery. While most of those killed in narcotics-related violence have been members of TCOs, innocent persons have also been killed. The number of U.S. citizens reported to the Department of State as murdered in Mexico was 113 in 2011 and 71 in 2012.

Gun battles between rival TCOs or with Mexican authorities have taken place in towns and cities in many parts of Mexico, especially in the border region. Gun battles have occurred in broad daylight on streets and in other public venues, such as restaurants and clubs. During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area. TCOs have used stolen cars, buses and trucks to create roadblocks on major thoroughfares, preventing the military and police from responding to criminal activity. The location and timing of future armed engagements is unpredictable. We recommend that you defer travel to the areas indicated in this Travel Warning and exercise extreme caution when traveling throughout the northern border region.

The number of kidnappings and disappearances throughout Mexico is of particular concern. Both local and expatriate communities have been victimized. In addition, local police have been implicated in some of these incidents. We strongly advise you to lower your profile and avoid displaying any evidence of wealth that might draw attention. Carjacking and highway robbery are serious problems in many parts of the border region, and U.S. citizens have been murdered in such incidents. Most victims who complied with carjackers at these checkpoints have reported that they were not physically harmed.

Carjackers have shot at vehicles that fail to stop at checkpoints. Incidents have occurred during the day and at night, and carjackers have used a variety of techniques, including bumping/moving vehicles to force them to stop and running vehicles off the road at high speeds. There are some indications that criminals have particularly targeted newer and larger vehicles, especially dark-colored SUVs. However, victims driving a variety of vehicles, from late model SUVs to old sedans have also been targeted. While violent incidents have occurred at all hours of the day and night on both modern toll highways ("cuotas") and on secondary roads, they have occurred most frequently at night and on isolated roads. To reduce risk, if absolutely necessary to travel by road, we strongly urge you to travel between cities throughout Mexico only during daylight hours, to avoid isolated roads, and to use toll roads whenever possible. The Mexican government has deployed federal police and military personnel throughout the country as part of its efforts to combat the TCOs. U.S. citizens traveling on Mexican roads and highways may encounter government checkpoints, which are often staffed by military personnel or law enforcement personnel. TCOs have erected their own unauthorized checkpoints, at times wearing police and military uniforms, and killed or abducted motorists who have failed to stop at them. You should cooperate at all checkpoints.

The U.S. Mission in Mexico imposes restrictions on U.S. government employees' (U.S. citizens working at the Embassy and the nine consulates throughout Mexico) travel that have been in place since July 15, 2010. USG employees and their families are not permitted to drive for personal reasons from the U.S.-Mexico border to or from the interior of Mexico or Central America. Personal travel by vehicle is permitted between Hermosillo and Nogales but is restricted to daylight hours and the Highway 15 toll road ("cuota"). USG personnel and their families are prohibited from personal travel to all areas to which it is advised to "defer non-essential travel". When travel for official purposes is essential, it is conducted with extensive security precautions. USG personnel and their families are allowed to travel for personal reasons to the areas where no advisory is in effect or where the advisory is to exercise caution. While the general public is not forbidden from visiting places categorized under "defer non-essential travel," USG personnel will not be able to respond quickly to an emergency situation in those areas due to security precautions that must be taken by USG personnel to travel to those areas.

For more information on road safety and crime along Mexico's roadways, see the Department of State's Country Specific Information.

State-by-State Assessment:

Below is a state-by-state assessment of security conditions throughout Mexico. The accompanying map will help in identifying individual locations. Travelers should be mindful that even if no advisories are in effect for a given state, crime and violence can occur anywhere. For general information about travel and other conditions in Mexico, see our Country Specific Information.

Aguascalientes: You should exercise caution when traveling to the areas of the state that

border the state of Zacatecas, as TCO activity in that region continues. There is no advisory in effect for daytime travel to the areas of the state that do not border Zacatecas; however, intercity travel at night is not recommended.

Baja California (north): Tijuana, Ensenada and Mexicali are major cities/travel destinations in the state of Baja California - see map to identify their exact locations: You should exercise caution in the northern state of Baja California, particularly at night. There were 278 homicides in Tijuana from January to June 2013. Mexicali's murder rate has climbed from 14.3 per 100,000 in 2011 to 15.8 per 100,000 in 2012. In the majority of these cases, the killings appeared to be targeted TCO assassinations. Turf battles between criminal groups resulted in some assassinations in areas of Tijuana and Mexicali frequented by U.S. citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours.

Baja California (South): Cabo San Lucas and La Paz are major cities/travel destinations in the state of Southern Baja California - see map to identify its exact location: No advisory is in effect.

Campeche: No advisory is in effect.

Chiapas: San Cristobal de las Casas is a major city/travel destination in Chiapas -see map to identify its exact location: No advisory is in effect.

Chihuahua: Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua City, and Copper Canyon are major cities/travel destinations in Chihuahua - see map to identify their exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Chihuahua. In Ciudad Juarez, personal travel by USG employees outside the northeast portion of the city (the area near the Consulate General) is restricted. Although homicides have decreased markedly—from a high of 3,100 homicides in 2010 to 749 in 2012—Ciudad Juarez still has one of the highest homicide rates in Mexico. Crime and violence remain serious problems throughout the state of Chihuahua, particularly in the southern portion of the state and in the Sierra Mountains, including Copper Canyon. U.S. citizens do not, however, appear to be targeted based on their nationality.

Coahuila: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Coahuila. The State of Coahuila continues to experience high rates of violent crimes and narcotics-related murders. TCOs continue to compete for territory and coveted border crossings to the United States. The cities of Torreón, Saltillo, Piedras Negras, and Ciudad Acuña have seen an increase of violent crimes within the last six months, including murder, kidnapping, and armed carjacking. Of particular safety concern are casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments, which USG personnel are not permitted to frequent.

Colima: Manzanillo is a major city/travel destination in Colima - see map to identify its exact location: You should defer non-essential travel to the areas of the state of Colima that border the state of Michoacán, including the city of Tecoman. You should also exercise caution when travelling to other parts of the state, including Colima City and Manzanillo.

The security situation along the Michoacan border continues to be the most unstable in the state with gun battles occurring between rival criminal groups and with Mexican authorities. Homicides throughout the state rose sharply from 113 in 2011 to 179 in 2012, according to official Mexican government sources.

**Durango:** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Durango, except the city of Durango where you should exercise caution. Cartel violence and highway lawlessness are a continuing security concern. Several areas in the state continue to experience high rates of violence and remain volatile and unpredictable. The Mexican government deployed troops in March 2013 to quell TCO violence in the La Laguna area, which is comprised of the cities of Gomez Palacio and Lerdo in the state of Durango and the city of Torreon in the state of Coahuila. Of particular safety concern are casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments, which USG personnel are not permitted to frequent. USG personnel may not travel outside the city of Durango and must abide by a curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. within a secured venue.

**Estado de Mexico:** Toluca and Teotihuacan are major travel destinations in Estado de Mexico - see map to identify exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to the municipalities of Coacalco, Ecatepec, Nezahualcoyotl, La Paz, Valle del Chalco, Solidaridad, Chalco, and Ixtapaluca, which are eastern portions of the greater Mexico City metropolitan area, located just to the east of the Federal District of Mexico and Benito Juarez airport, unless traveling directly through the areas on major thoroughfares. These areas have seen high rates of crime and insecurity. You should also defer non-essential travel on any roads between Santa Marta in the southeast portion of the state and Huitzilac in the state of Morelos, including the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park and surrounding areas.

**Guanajuato:** San Miguel de Allende and Leon are major cities/travel destinations in Guanajuato - see map to identify their exact locations: No advisory is in effect.

**Guerrero:** Acapulco, Ixtapa, Taxco and Zihuatanejo are major cities/travel destinations in Guerrero - see map to identify their exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to the northwestern and southern portions of the state (the area west and south of the town of Arcelia on the border with Estado de Mexico in the north and the town of Tlapa near the border with Oaxaca), except for the cities of Acapulco, Zihuatanejo, and Ixtapa. In those cities, you should exercise caution and stay within tourist areas. You should also exercise caution and travel only during daylight hours on toll highway ("cuota") 95D between Mexico City and Acapulco and highway 200 between Acapulco and Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa. In Acapulco, defer non-essential travel to areas further than 2 blocks inland of the Costera Miguel Aleman Boulevard, which parallels the popular beach areas. Lodging for USG personnel is limited to the "Hotel Zone" of Acapulco, beginning from the Hotel Avalon Excalibur Acapulco in the north and going south through Puerto Marquez including the Playa Diamante area. Any activity outside the Hotel Zone for USG personnel is limited to the coastal area from La Quebrada to the beginning of the Hotel Zone and only during daylight hours. In general, the popular tourist area of Diamante, just south of the

city, has been less affected by violence. Flying into the coastal cities in southern Guerrero remains the preferred method of travel. You should defer non-essential travel by land between Acapulco and Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa, travel to Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa only by air, and exercise caution while in Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa. If travelling by automobile between Mexico City and Acapulco you should exercise caution and travel only during daylight hours on toll highway ("cuota") 95D, staying on the toll road towards the Playa Diamante area and avoiding the highway running through the city of Acapulco. You should also exercise caution in the northern region of Guerrero (the area north of the town of Arcelia on the border with Estado de Mexico in the north and the town of Tlapa near the border with Oaxaca). The state of Guerrero has seen an increase in violence among rival criminal organizations. Acapulco's murder rates increased dramatically since 2009; in response, in 2011 the Government of Mexico sent additional military and federal police to the state to assist State security forces in implementing ongoing operation "Guerrero Seguro" (Secure Guerrero) that focuses on combating organized crime and returning security to the environs of popular tourist areas. Self-defense groups operate independently of the government in the Costa Chica region of eastern Guerrero. Armed members of these groups frequently maintain roadblocks, and although not considered hostile to foreigners or tourists, are suspicious of outsiders and should be considered volatile and unpredictable. Hidalgo: No advisory is in effect.

Jalisco: Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, and Lake Chapala are major cities/travel destinations in Jalisco - see map to identify their exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to areas of the state that borders the state of Michoacán. The security situation along the Michoacán and Zacatecas borders continues to be unstable and gun battles between criminal groups and authorities occur. Concerns include roadblocks placed by individuals posing as police or military personnel and recent gun battles between rival TCOs involving automatic weapons. You should exercise caution in rural areas and when using secondary highways, particularly along the northern border of the state. Except for the areas of the state that border Michoacán, there is no advisory in effect for daytime travel within major population centers or major highways in the state of Jalisco. Intercity travel at night is not recommended. There is no recommendation against travel to Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta. There is also no recommendation against travel on principal highways in Jalisco between Guadalajara including the portions that cross in to the southern portions of the state of Nayarit.

Mexico City (also known as the Federal District): No advisory is in effect. See also the discussion in the section on Estado de Mexico for areas within the greater Mexico City metropolitan area.

Michoacán: Morelia is a major city/travel destination in Michoacán - see map to identify exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Michoacán except the cities of Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas where you should exercise caution. Flying into Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas is the recommended method of travel. Attacks on Mexican



government officials, law enforcement and military personnel, and other incidents of TCO-related violence, have occurred throughout Michoacán. In the northwestern portion of the state, self-defense groups operate independently of the government. Armed members of the groups frequently maintain roadblocks, and although not considered hostile to foreigners or tourists, are suspicious of outsiders and should be considered volatile and unpredictable. Groups in Michoacan are reputed to be linked to TCOs.

Morelos: Cuernavaca is a major city/travel destination in Morelos - see attached map to identify their exact locations: You should exercise caution in the state of Morelos due to the unpredictable nature of TCO violence. You should also defer non-essential travel on any roads between Huitzilac in the northwest corner of the state and Santa Marta in the state of Mexico, including the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park and surrounding areas. On August 24, 2012 two USG employees were injured after being fired upon by Federal Police officers on an isolated road north of Tres Marias, Morelos. Numerous incidents of narcotics-related violence have also occurred in the city of Cuernavaca.

Nayarit: You should defer non-essential travel to areas of the state of Nayarit that border the states of Sinaloa or Durango, as well as all rural areas and secondary highways. You should exercise caution when traveling to the cities of Tepic, Xalisco, or San Blas. There is no recommendation against travel to the Vallarta-Nayarit area in the southern portion of the state also known as the Riviera Nayarit or to principal highways in the southern portion of the state used to travel from Guadalajara to Puerto Vallarta.

Nuevo Leon: Monterrey is a major city/travel destination in Nuevo Leon - see map to identify its exact location: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Nuevo Leon, except the metropolitan area of Monterrey where you should exercise caution. The level of violence and insecurity in Monterrey has remained high in the last six months. Sporadic gun battles and attacks on casinos and adult entertainment establishments continue, as do placements of "narco banners" on bridges. TCOs have kidnapped and in some cases murdered American citizens, even when ransom demands are met. TCOs continue to attack local government facilities, prisons and police stations, and engaged in public shootouts with the military and between themselves. TCOs have used vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices against military and law enforcement units as well as incendiary devices against several types of businesses. Pedestrians and innocent bystanders have been killed in these incidents. Local police and private patrols have limited capacity to deter criminal elements or respond effectively to security incidents. As a result of a Department of State assessment of the overall security situation, the Consulate General in Monterrey is a partially unaccompanied post with no minor dependents of USG personnel permitted. USG personnel serving at the U.S. Consulate General in Monterrey may not frequent casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments. USG personnel may not travel outside the San Pedro Garza Garcia municipal boundaries between midnight and 6 a.m., except for travel to the airport after 5 a.m.

Oaxaca: Oaxaca, Huatulco and Puerto Escondido are major cities/travel destinations in

Oaxaca - see map to identify their exact locations: No advisory is in effect.

Puebla: No advisory is in effect.

Queretaro: No advisory is in effect.

Quintana Roo: Cancun, Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya and Tulum are major cities/travel destinations in Quintana Roo - see attached map to identify their exact locations: No advisory is in effect.

San Luis Potosi: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of San Luis Potosi, except the city of San Luis Potosi where you should exercise caution. The entire stretch of highway 57D in San Luis Potosi and portions of the state east of highway 57D towards Tamaulipas are particularly dangerous. A USG employee was killed and another wounded when they were attacked in their U.S. government vehicle on Highway 57 near Santa Maria del Rio in 2011. Cartel violence and highway lawlessness are a continuing security concern. USG personnel may not frequent casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments. USG personnel may not travel outside the City of San Luis Potosi and must abide by a curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. within a secured venue.

Sinaloa: Mazatlan is a major city/travel destination in Sinaloa - see map to identify its exact location: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Sinaloa except the city of Mazatlan where you should exercise caution, particularly late at night and in the early morning. One of Mexico's most powerful TCOs is based in the state of Sinaloa. With the exception of Ciudad Juarez, since 2006 more homicides have occurred in the state's capital city of Culiacan than in any other city in Mexico. Travel off the toll roads ("cuotas") in remote areas of Sinaloa is especially dangerous and should be avoided. We recommend that any travel in Mazatlan be limited to Zona Dorada and the historic town center, as well as direct routes to/from these locations and the airport.

Sonora: Nogales, Puerto Peñasco, Hermosillo, and San Carlos are major cities/travel destinations in Sonora - see map to identify their exact locations: U.S. citizens visiting Puerto Peñasco should exercise caution and use the Lukeville, Arizona/Sonoyta, Sonora border crossing, in order to limit driving through Mexico. You should defer non-essential travel between the city of Nogales and the cities of Sonoyta and Caborca (which area also includes the smaller cities of Saric, Tubutama, and Altar), defer non-essential travel to the eastern edge of the State of Sonora which borders the State of Chihuahua (all points along that border east of the northern city of Agua Prieta and the southern town of Alamos), and defer non-essential travel within the city of Ciudad Obregon and southward with the exception of travel to Alamos (traveling only during daylight hours and using only the Highway 15 toll road, or "cuota", and Sonora State Road 162). Sonora is a key region in the international drug and human trafficking trades, and can be extremely dangerous for travelers. The region west of Nogales, east of Sonoyta, and from Caborca north, including the towns of Saric, Tubutama and Altar, and the eastern edge of Sonora bordering Chihuahua, are known centers of illegal activity. Travelers throughout Sonora are encouraged to limit travel to main roads during daylight hours.

Tabasco: Villahermosa is a major city/travel destination in Tabasco -see attached map to identify its exact location: No advisory is in effect.

Tamaulipas: Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Tampico are major cities/travel destinations in Tamaulipas - see map to identify their exact locations: You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Tamaulipas. All USG employees are prohibited from personal travel on Tamaulipas highways outside of Matamoros and Nuevo Laredo due to the tenuous security situation. In Matamoros, USG employees are subject to further movement restrictions between midnight and 6 a.m. USG employees may not frequent casinos and adult entertainment establishments. Matamoros, Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Victoria have experienced grenade attacks in the past year, as well as numerous reported gun battles. Nuevo Laredo has seen a marked increase in the number of murders, carjackings, and robberies in the past year. For example, the numbers of murders are up 92.5% over last year. These crimes occur in all parts of the city at all times of the day. The kidnapping rate for Tamaulipas, the highest for all states in Mexico, more than doubled in the past year. In February 2013, four masked and armed individuals attempted to kidnap a USG employee in Matamoros during daylight hours. All travelers should be aware of the risks posed by armed robbery and carjacking on state highways throughout Tamaulipas, particularly on highways and roads outside of urban areas along the northern border. Traveling outside of cities after dark is particularly dangerous. While no highway routes through Tamaulipas are considered safe, many of the crimes reported to the U.S. Consulate General in Matamoros have taken place along the Matamoros-Tampico highway.

Tlaxcala: No advisory is in effect.

Veracruz: You should exercise caution when traveling in the state of Veracruz. The state of Veracruz continues to experience violence among rival criminal organizations. Mexican federal security forces continue to assist state and local security forces in providing security and combating organized crime.

Yucatan: Merida and Chichen Itza are major cities/travel destinations in Yucatan -see map to identify its exact location: No advisory is in effect.

Zacatecas: You should defer non-essential travel within the state of Zacatecas to the area bordering the states of Aguascalientes, Coahuila, Durango, and Jalisco and exercise caution in the interior of the state including the city of Zacatecas. The regions of the state bordering Durango and Coahuila as well as the cities of Fresnillo and Fresnillo-Sombrete and surrounding area are particularly dangerous. The northwestern portion of the state of Zacatecas has become notably dangerous and insecure. Robberies and carjackings are occurring with increased frequency and both local authorities and residents have reported a surge in observed TCO activity. This area is remote, and local authorities are unable to regularly patrol it or quickly respond to incidents that occur there. Gun battles between criminal groups and authorities occur in the area of the state bordering the state of Jalisco. There have also been reports of roadblocks and false checkpoints on highways between the states of Zacatecas and Jalisco. The city of Fresnillo, the area extending northwest from

Fresnillo along Highway 45 (Fresnillo-Sombrete) between Highways 44 and 49, and highway 49 northwards from Fresnillo through Durango and in to Chihuahua are considered dangerous. Extreme caution should be taken when traveling in the remainder of the state. Of particular safety concern are casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments, which USG personnel may not frequent. USG personnel may not travel outside the City of Zacatecas after dark and must abide by a curfew of 1 a.m to 6 a.m. within a secured venue.

#### Further Information

For more detailed information on staying safe in Mexico, please see the State Department's Country Specific Information for Mexico.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the State Department's internet web site, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to enroll with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate with responsibility for that person's location in Mexico. For information on the ten U.S. consular districts in Mexico, complete with links to Embassy and Consulate websites, please consult the Mexico U.S. Consular Districtmap. The numbers provided below for the Embassy and Consulates are available around the clock. The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000. U.S. citizens may also contact the Embassy by e-mail.

#### Consulates (with consular districts):

- Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua): Paseo de la Victoria 3650, tel. (011)(52)(656) 227-3000.
- Guadalajara (Nayarit, Jalisco, Aguas Calientes, and Colima): Progreso 175, telephone (011)(52)(333) 268-2100.
- Hermosillo (Sinaloa and the southern part of the state of Sonora): Avenida Monterrey 141, telephone (011)(52)(662) 289-3500.
- Matamoros (the southern part of Tamaulipas with the exception of the city of Tampico): Avenida Primera 2002, telephone (011)(52)(868) 812-4402.
- Merida (Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo): Calle 60 no. 338-K x 29 y 31, Col. Alcala Martin, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico 97050, telephone (011)(52)(999) 942-5700 or 202-250-3711 (U.S. number).
- Monterrey (Nuevo Leon, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, and the southern part of Coahuila): Avenida Constitucion 411 Poniente, telephone (011)(52)(818) 047-3100.

- Nogales (the northern part of Sonora): Calle San Jose, Nogales, Sonora, telephone (011)(52)(631) 311-8150.
- Nuevo Laredo (the northern part of Coahuila and the northwestern part of Tamaulipas): Calle Allende 3330, col. Jardin, telephone (011)(52)(867) 714-0512.
- Tijuana (Baja California Norte and Baja California Sur): Paseo de Las Culturas s/n Mesa de Otay, telephone (011) (52) (664) 977-2000.

All other Mexican states, the Federal District of Mexico City, and the city of Tampico, Tamaulipas, are part of the Embassy's consular district.

Consular Agencies:

- Acapulco: Hotel Emporio, Costera Miguel Aleman 121 – Suite 14, telephone (011)(52)(744) 481-0100 or (011)(52)(744) 484-0300.
- Cancún: Blvd. Kukulcan Km 13 ZH Torre La Europea, Despacho 301 Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico C.P. 77500; telephone (011)(52)(998) 883-0272.
- Cozumel: Plaza Villa Mar en el Centro, Plaza Principal, (Parque Juárez between Melgar and 5th Ave.) 2nd floor, locales #8 and 9, telephone (011)(52)(987) 872-4574 or, 202-459-4661 (a U.S. number).
- Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo: Hotel Fontan, Blvd. Ixtapa, telephone (011)(52)(755) 553-2100.
- Los Cabos: Las Tiendas de Palmilla Local B221, Carretera Transpeninsular Km. 27.5, San José del Cabo, BCS, Mexico 23406 Telephone: (624) 143-3566 Fax: (624) 143-6750.
- Mazatlán: Playa Gaviotas #202, Zona Dorada, telephone (011)(52)(669) 916-5889.
- Oaxaca: Macedonio Alcalá no. 407, interior 20, telephone (011)(52)(951) 514-3054, (011) (52)(951) 516-2853.
- Piedras Negras: Abasolo #211, Zona Centro, Piedras Negras, Coah., Tel. (011)(52)(878) 782-5586.
- Playa del Carmen: "The Palapa," Calle 1 Sur, between Avenida 15 and Avenida 20, telephone (011)(52)(984) 873-0303 or 202-370-6708(a U.S. number).
- Puerto Vallarta: Paradise Plaza, Paseo de los Cocoteros #1, Local #4, Interior #17, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, telephone (011)(52)(322) 222-0069.
- San Luis Potosí: Edificio "Las Terrazas", Avenida Venustiano Carranza 2076-41, Col. Polanco, telephone: (011)(52)(444) 811-7802/7803.
- San Miguel de Allende: Centro Comercial La Luciernaga, Libramiento Manuel Zavala (Pepe KBZON), telephone (011)(52)(415) 152-2357.

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=921016#.UeJ-m37b4Q>

## **Travel Warning**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**Bureau of Consular Affairs**

**Mexico**

**July 12, 2013**

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens about the security situation in Mexico. General information on the overall security situation is provided immediately below. For information on security conditions in specific regions of Mexico, which can vary, travelers should reference the state-by-state assessments further below.

This Travel Warning supersedes the Travel Warning for Mexico dated November 20, 2012 to consolidate and update information about the security situation and to advise the public of additional restrictions on the travel of U.S. government (USG) personnel.

**General Conditions:**

Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year for study, tourism, and business, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day. More than 20 million U.S. citizens visited Mexico in 2012. The Mexican government makes a considerable effort to protect U.S. citizens and other visitors to major tourist destinations, and there is no evidence that Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) have targeted U.S. visitors and residents based on their nationality. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime that is reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes.

Nevertheless, U.S. travelers should be aware that the Mexican government has been engaged in an extensive effort to counter TCOs which engage in narcotics trafficking and other unlawful activities throughout Mexico. The TCOs themselves are engaged in a violent struggle to control drug trafficking routes and other criminal activity. Crime and violence are serious problems and can occur anywhere. U.S. citizens have fallen victim to criminal activity, including homicide, gun battles, kidnapping, carjacking and highway robbery. While most of those killed in narcotics-related violence have been members of TCOs, innocent persons have also been killed. The number of U.S. citizens reported to the Department of State as murdered in Mexico was 113 in 2011 and 71 in 2012.

Gun battles between rival TCOs or with Mexican authorities have taken place in towns and cities in many parts of Mexico, especially in the border region. Gun battles have occurred in broad daylight on streets and in other public venues, such as restaurants and clubs. During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area. TCOs have used stolen cars, buses and trucks to create roadblocks on major thoroughfares, preventing the military and police from responding to criminal activity. The location and timing of future armed engagements is unpredictable. We recommend that you defer travel to the areas indicated in this Travel Warning and exercise extreme caution when traveling throughout the northern border region.

The number of kidnappings and disappearances throughout Mexico is of particular concern. Both local and expatriate communities have been victimized. In addition, local police have been implicated in some of these incidents. We strongly advise you to lower your profile and avoid displaying any evidence of wealth that might draw attention.

Carjacking and highway robbery are serious problems in many parts of the border region, and U.S. citizens have been murdered in such incidents. Most victims who complied with carjackers at these checkpoints have reported that they were not physically harmed. Carjackers have shot at vehicles that fail to stop at checkpoints. Incidents have occurred during the day and at night, and carjackers have used a variety of techniques, including bumping/moving vehicles to force them to stop and running vehicles off the road at high speeds. There are some indications that criminals have particularly targeted newer and larger vehicles, especially dark-colored SUVs. However, victims driving a variety of vehicles, from late model SUVs to old sedans have also been targeted. While violent incidents have occurred at all hours of the day and night on both modern toll highways ("cuotas") and on secondary roads, they have occurred most frequently at night and on isolated roads. To reduce risk, if absolutely necessary to travel by road, we strongly urge you to travel between cities throughout Mexico only during daylight hours, to avoid isolated roads, and to use toll roads whenever possible. The Mexican government has deployed federal police and military personnel throughout the country as part of its efforts to combat the TCOs. U.S. citizens traveling on Mexican roads and highways may encounter government checkpoints, which are often staffed by military personnel or law enforcement personnel. TCOs have erected their own unauthorized checkpoints, at times wearing police and military uniforms, and killed or abducted motorists who have failed to stop at them. You should cooperate at all checkpoints.

The U.S. Mission in Mexico imposes restrictions on U.S. government employees' (U.S. citizens working at the Embassy and the nine consulates throughout Mexico) travel that have been in place since July 15, 2010. USG employees and their families are not permitted to drive for personal reasons from the U.S.-Mexico border to or from the interior of Mexico or Central America. Personal travel by vehicle is permitted between Hermosillo and Nogales but is restricted to daylight hours and the Highway 15 toll road ("cuota"). USG personnel and their families are prohibited from personal travel to all areas to which it is advised to "defer non-essential travel". When travel for official purposes is essential, it is conducted with extensive security precautions. USG personnel and their families are allowed to travel for personal reasons to the areas where no advisory is in effect or where the advisory is to exercise caution. While the general public is not forbidden from visiting places categorized under "defer non-essential travel," USG personnel will not be able to respond quickly to an emergency situation in those areas due to security precautions that must be taken by USG personnel to travel to those areas.

For more information on road safety and crime along Mexico's roadways, see the Department of State's [Country Specific Information](#).

### **State-by-State Assessment:**

Below is a state-by-state assessment of security conditions throughout Mexico. The accompanying map will help in identifying individual locations. Travelers should be mindful that even if no advisories are in effect for a given state, crime and violence can

occur anywhere. For general information about travel and other conditions in Mexico, see our [Country Specific Information](#).

**Aguascalientes:** You should exercise caution when traveling to the areas of the state that border the state of Zacatecas, as TCO activity in that region continues. There is no advisory in effect for daytime travel to the areas of the state that do not border Zacatecas; however, intercity travel at night is not recommended.

**Baja California (north): Tijuana, Ensenada and Mexicali are major cities/travel destinations in the state of Baja California - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):**

You should exercise caution in the northern state of Baja California, particularly at night. There were 278 homicides in Tijuana from January to June 2013. Mexicali's murder rate has climbed from 14.3 per 100,000 in 2011 to 15.8 per 100,000 in 2012. In the majority of these cases, the killings appeared to be targeted TCO assassinations. Turf battles between criminal groups resulted in some assassinations in areas of Tijuana and Mexicali frequented by U.S. citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours.

**Baja California (South): Cabo San Lucas and La Paz are major cities/travel destinations in the state of Southern Baja California - [see map to identify its exact location](#):** No advisory is in effect.

**Campeche:** No advisory is in effect.

**Chiapas: San Cristobal de las Casas is a major city/travel destination in Chiapas - [see map to identify its exact location](#):** No advisory is in effect.

**Chihuahua: Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua City, and Copper Canyon are major cities/travel destinations in Chihuahua - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Chihuahua. In Ciudad Juarez, personal travel by USG employees outside the northeast portion of the city (the area near the Consulate General) is restricted. Although homicides have decreased markedly—from a high of 3,100 homicides in 2010 to 749 in 2012—Ciudad Juarez still has one of the highest homicide rates in Mexico. Crime and violence remain serious problems throughout the state of Chihuahua, particularly in the southern portion of the state and in the Sierra Mountains, including Copper Canyon. U.S. citizens do not, however, appear to be targeted based on their nationality.

**Coahuila:** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Coahuila. The State of Coahuila continues to experience high rates of violent crimes and narcotics-related murders. TCOs continue to compete for territory and coveted border crossings to the United States. The cities of Torreón, Saltillo, Piedras Negras, and Ciudad Acuña have seen an increase of violent crimes within the last six months, including murder, kidnapping, and armed carjacking. Of particular safety concern are casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments, which USG personnel are not permitted to frequent.

**Colima: Manzanillo is a major city/travel destination in Colima - [see map to identify its](#)**



[exact location](#): You should defer non-essential travel to the areas of the state of Colima that border the state of Michoacán, including the city of Tecomán. You should also exercise caution when travelling to other parts of the state, including Colima City and Manzanillo. The security situation along the Michoacan border continues to be the most unstable in the state with gun battles occurring between rival criminal groups and with Mexican authorities. Homicides throughout the state rose sharply from 113 in 2011 to 179 in 2012, according to official Mexican government sources.

**Durango:** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Durango, except the city of Durango where you should exercise caution. Cartel violence and highway lawlessness are a continuing security concern. Several areas in the state continue to experience high rates of violence and remain volatile and unpredictable. The Mexican government deployed troops in March 2013 to quell TCO violence in the La Laguna area, which is comprised of the cities of Gomez Palacio and Lerdo in the state of Durango and the city of Torreon in the state of Coahuila. Of particular safety concern are casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments, which USG personnel are not permitted to frequent. USG personnel may not travel outside the city of Durango and must abide by a curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. within a secured venue.

**Estado de Mexico: Toluca and Teotihuacan are major travel destinations in Estado de Mexico - [see map to identify exact](#)** locations: You should defer non-essential travel to the municipalities of Coacalco, Ecatepec, Nezahualcoyotl, La Paz, Valle del Chalco, Solidaridad, Chalco, and Ixtapaluca, which are eastern portions of the greater Mexico City metropolitan area, located just to the east of the Federal District of Mexico and Benito Juarez airport, unless traveling directly through the areas on major thoroughfares. These areas have seen high rates of crime and insecurity. You should also defer non-essential travel on any roads between Santa Marta in the southeast portion of the state and Huitzilac in the state of Morelos, including the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park and surrounding areas.

**Guanajuato: San Miguel de Allende and Leon are major cities/travel destinations in Guanajuato - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):** No advisory is in effect.

**Guerrero: Acapulco, Ixtapa, Taxco and Zihuatanejo are major cities/travel destinations in Guerrero - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):** You should defer non-essential travel to the northwestern and southern portions of the state (the area west and south of the town of Arcelia on the border with Estado de Mexico in the north and the town of Tlapa near the border with Oaxaca), except for the cities of Acapulco, Zihuatanejo, and Ixtapa. In those cities, you should exercise caution and stay within tourist areas. You should also exercise caution and travel only during daylight hours on toll highway ("cuota") 95D between Mexico City and Acapulco and highway 200 between Acapulco and Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa. In Acapulco, defer non-essential travel to areas further than 2 blocks inland of the Costera Miguel Aleman Boulevard, which parallels the popular beach areas. Lodging for USG personnel is limited to the "Hotel Zone" of Acapulco, beginning from the Hotel Avalon Excalibur Acapulco in the north and going south through Puerto Marquez

including the Playa Diamante area. Any activity outside the Hotel Zone for USG personnel is limited to the coastal area from La Quebrada to the beginning of the Hotel Zone and only during daylight hours. In general, the popular tourist area of Diamante, just south of the city, has been less affected by violence. Flying into the coastal cities in southern Guerrero remains the preferred method of travel. You should defer non-essential travel by land between Acapulco and Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa, travel to Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa only by air, and exercise caution while in Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa. If travelling by automobile between Mexico City and Acapulco you should exercise caution and travel only during daylight hours on toll highway ("cuota") 95D, staying on the toll road towards the Playa Diamante area and avoiding the highway running through the city of Acapulco. You should also exercise caution in the northern region of Guerrero (the area north of the town of Arcelia on the border with Estado de Mexico in the north and the town of Tlapa near the border with Oaxaca). The state of Guerrero has seen an increase in violence among rival criminal organizations. Acapulco's murder rates increased dramatically since 2009; in response, in 2011 the Government of Mexico sent additional military and federal police to the state to assist State security forces in implementing ongoing operation "Guerrero Seguro" (Secure Guerrero) that focuses on combating organized crime and returning security to the environs of popular tourist areas. Self-defense groups operate independently of the government in the Costa Chica region of eastern Guerrero. Armed members of these groups frequently maintain roadblocks, and although not considered hostile to foreigners or tourists, are suspicious of outsiders and should be considered volatile and unpredictable.

**Hidalgo:** No advisory is in effect.

**Jalisco:** Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, and Lake Chapala are major cities/travel destinations in Jalisco - [see map to identify their exact locations](#): You should defer non-essential travel to areas of the state that borders the state of Michoacán. The security situation along the Michoacán and Zacatecas borders continues to be unstable and gun battles between criminal groups and authorities occur. Concerns include roadblocks placed by individuals posing as police or military personnel and recent gun battles between rival TCOs involving automatic weapons. You should exercise caution in rural areas and when using secondary highways, particularly along the northern border of the state. Except for the areas of the state that border Michoacán, there is no advisory in effect for daytime travel within major population centers or major highways in the state of Jalisco. Intercity travel at night is not recommended. There is no recommendation against travel to Guadalajara and Puerto Vallarta. There is also no recommendation against travel on principal highways in Jalisco between Guadalajara including the portions that cross in to the southern portions of the state of Nayarit.

**Mexico City (also known as the Federal District):** No advisory is in effect. See also the discussion in the section on Estado de Mexico for areas within the greater Mexico City metropolitan area.

**Michoacán:** Morelia is a major city/travel destination in Michoacán - [see map to](#)

[identify exact locations](#): You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Michoacán except the cities of Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas where you should exercise caution. Flying into Morelia and Lázaro Cardenas is the recommended method of travel. Attacks on Mexican government officials, law enforcement and military personnel, and other incidents of TCO-related violence, have occurred throughout Michoacán. In the northwestern portion of the state, self-defense groups operate independently of the government. Armed members of the groups frequently maintain roadblocks, and although not considered hostile to foreigners or tourists, are suspicious of outsiders and should be considered volatile and unpredictable. Groups in Michoacan are reputed to be linked to TCOs.

**Morelos: Cuernavaca is a major city/travel destination in Morelos** - [see attached map to identify their exact locations](#): You should exercise caution in the state of Morelos due to the unpredictable nature of TCO violence. You should also defer non-essential travel on any roads between Huitzilac in the northwest corner of the state and Santa Marta in the state of Mexico, including the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park and surrounding areas. On August 24, 2012 two USG employees were injured after being fired upon by Federal Police officers on an isolated road north of Tres Marias, Morelos. Numerous incidents of narcotics-related violence have also occurred in the city of Cuernavaca.

**Nayarit**: You should defer non-essential travel to areas of the state of Nayarit that border the states of Sinaloa or Durango, as well as all rural areas and secondary highways. You should exercise caution when traveling to the cities of Tepic, Xalisco, or San Blas. There is no recommendation against travel to the Vallarta-Nayarit area in the southern portion of the state also known as the Riviera Nayarit or to principal highways in the southern portion of the state used to travel from Guadalajara to Puerto Vallarta.

**Nuevo Leon: Monterrey is a major city/travel destination in Nuevo Leon**- [see map to identify its exact location](#): You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Nuevo Leon, except the metropolitan area of Monterrey where you should exercise caution. Although the level of TCO violence and general insecurity in Monterrey has decreased within the last 12 months, sporadic gun battles continue to occur in the greater Monterrey area. Adult entertainment establishments and casinos continue to be targets of TCO activity. TCOs have kidnapped, and in some cases murdered American citizens, even when ransom demands are met. TCOs have been known to attack local government facilities, prisons and police stations, and are engaged in public shootouts with the military and between themselves. TCOs have used vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices against military and law enforcement units as well as incendiary devices against several types of businesses. Pedestrians and innocent bystanders have been killed in these incidents. Local police and private patrols have limited capacity to deter criminal elements or respond effectively to security incidents. As a result of a Department of State assessment of the overall security situation, the Consulate General in Monterrey is a partially unaccompanied post with no minor dependents of USG personnel permitted. USG personnel serving at the U.S. Consulate General in Monterrey may not frequent casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling

establishments. USG personnel may not travel outside the San Pedro Garza Garcia municipal boundaries between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m., except for travel to the airport after 5 a.m.

**Oaxaca: Oaxaca, Huatulco and Puerto Escondido are major cities/travel destinations in Oaxaca - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):** No advisory is in effect.

**Puebla:** No advisory is in effect.

**Queretaro:** No advisory is in effect.

**Quintana Roo: Cancun, Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Riviera Maya and Tulum are major cities/travel destinations in Quintana Roo - [see attached map to identify their exact locations](#):** No advisory is in effect.

**San Luis Potosi:** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of San Luis Potosi, except the city of San Luis Potosi where you should exercise caution. The entire stretch of highway 57D in San Luis Potosi and portions of the state east of highway 57D towards Tamaulipas are particularly dangerous. A USG employee was killed and another wounded when they were attacked in their U.S. government vehicle on Highway 57 near Santa Maria del Rio in 2011. Cartel violence and highway lawlessness are a continuing security concern. USG personnel may not frequent casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments. USG personnel may not travel outside the City of San Luis Potosi and must abide by a curfew of 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. within a secured venue.

**Sinaloa: Mazatlan is a major city/travel destination in Sinaloa - [see map to identify its exact location](#):** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Sinaloa except the city of Mazatlan where you should exercise caution, particularly late at night and in the early morning. One of Mexico's most powerful TCOs is based in the state of Sinaloa. With the exception of Ciudad Juarez, since 2006 more homicides have occurred in the state's capital city of Culiacan than in any other city in Mexico. Travel off the toll roads ("cuotas") in remote areas of Sinaloa is especially dangerous and should be avoided. We recommend that any travel in Mazatlan be limited to Zona Dorada and the historic town center, as well as direct routes to/from these locations and the airport.

**Sonora: Nogales, Puerto Peñasco, Hermosillo, and San Carlos are major cities/travel destinations in Sonora - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):** U.S. citizens visiting Puerto Peñasco should exercise caution and use the Lukeville, Arizona/Sonoyta, Sonora border crossing, in order to limit driving through Mexico. You should defer non-essential travel between the city of Nogales and the cities of Sonoyta and Caborca (which area also includes the smaller cities of Saric, Tubutama, and Altar), defer non-essential travel to the eastern edge of the State of Sonora which borders the State of Chihuahua (all points along that border east of the northern city of Agua Prieta and the southern town of Alamos), and defer non-essential travel within the city of Ciudad Obregon and southward with the exception of travel to Alamos (traveling only during daylight hours and using only the Highway 15 toll road, or "cuota", and Sonora State Road 162). Sonora is a key region in the international drug and human trafficking trades, and can be extremely dangerous for

travelers. The region west of Nogales, east of Sonoyta, and from Caborca north, including the towns of Saric, Tubutama and Altar, and the eastern edge of Sonora bordering Chihuahua, are known centers of illegal activity. Travelers throughout Sonora are encouraged to limit travel to main roads during daylight hours.

**Tabasco: Villahermosa is a major city/travel destination in Tabasco -see attached map to identify its exact location:** No advisory is in effect.

**Tamaulipas: Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Tampico are major cities/travel destinations in Tamaulipas - [see map to identify their exact locations](#):** You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Tamaulipas. All USG employees are prohibited from personal travel on Tamaulipas highways outside of Matamoros and Nuevo Laredo due to the tenuous security situation. In Matamoros, USG employees are subject to further movement restrictions between midnight and 6 a.m. USG employees may not frequent casinos and adult entertainment establishments. Matamoros, Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Victoria have experienced grenade attacks in the past year, as well as numerous reported gun battles. Nuevo Laredo has seen a marked increase in the number of murders, carjackings, and robberies in the past year. For example, the numbers of murders are up 92.5% over last year. These crimes occur in all parts of the city at all times of the day. The kidnapping rate for Tamaulipas, the highest for all states in Mexico, more than doubled in the past year. In February 2013, four masked and armed individuals attempted to kidnap a USG employee in Matamoros during daylight hours. All travelers should be aware of the risks posed by armed robbery and carjacking on state highways throughout Tamaulipas, particularly on highways and roads outside of urban areas along the northern border. Traveling outside of cities after dark is particularly dangerous. While no highway routes through Tamaulipas are considered safe, many of the crimes reported to the U.S. Consulate General in Matamoros have taken place along the Matamoros-Tampico highway.

**Tlaxcala:** No advisory is in effect.

**Veracruz:** You should exercise caution when traveling in the state of Veracruz. The state of Veracruz continues to experience violence among rival criminal organizations. Mexican federal security forces continue to assist state and local security forces in providing security and combating organized crime.

**Yucatan: Merida and Chichen Itza are major cities/travel destinations in Yucatan -[see map to identify its exact location](#):** No advisory is in effect.

**Zacatecas:** You should defer non-essential travel within the state of Zacatecas to the area bordering the states of Aguascalientes, Coahuila, Durango, and Jalisco and exercise caution in the interior of the state including the city of Zacatecas. The regions of the state bordering Durango and Coahuila as well as the cities of Fresnillo and Fresnillo-Sombrete and surrounding area are particularly dangerous. The northwestern portion of the state of Zacatecas has become notably dangerous and insecure. Robberies and carjackings are occurring with increased frequency and both local authorities and residents have reported a surge in observed TCO activity. This area is remote, and local authorities are unable to

regularly patrol it or quickly respond to incidents that occur there. Gun battles between criminal groups and authorities occur in the area of the state bordering the state of Jalisco. There have also been reports of roadblocks and false checkpoints on highways between the states of Zacatecas and Jalisco. The city of Fresnillo, the area extending northwest from Fresnillo along Highway 45 (Fresnillo-Sombrete) between Highways 44 and 49, and highway 49 northwards from Fresnillo through Durango and in to Chihuahua are considered dangerous. Extreme caution should be taken when traveling in the remainder of the state. Of particular safety concern are casinos, sportsbooks, or other gambling establishments and adult entertainment establishments, which USG personnel may not frequent. USG personnel may not travel outside the City of Zacatecas after dark and must abide by a curfew of 1 a.m to 6 a.m. within a secured venue.

### **Further Information**

For more detailed information on staying safe in Mexico, please see the State Department's [Country Specific Information](#) for Mexico.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the [State Department's internet web site](#), where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), and [Travel Alerts](#) can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of [Consular Affairs page on Facebook](#) as well. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). U.S. citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to enroll with the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#). For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate with responsibility for that person's location in Mexico. For information on the ten U.S. consular districts in Mexico, complete with links to Embassy and Consulate websites, please consult the Mexico U.S. Consular District [map](#). The numbers provided below for the Embassy and Consulates are available around the clock. The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000. U.S. citizens may also contact the Embassy by [e-mail](#).

### **Consulates (with consular districts):**

- Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua): Paseo de la Victoria 3650, tel. (011)(52)(656) 227-3000.
- Guadalajara (Nayarit, Jalisco, Aguas Calientes, and Colima): Progreso 175, telephone (011)(52)(333) 268-2100.
- Hermosillo (Sinaloa and the southern part of the state of Sonora): Avenida Monterrey 141, telephone (011)(52)(662) 289-3500.
- Matamoros (the southern part of Tamaulipas with the exception of the city of Tampico): Avenida Primera 2002, telephone (011)(52)(868) 812-4402.



- Merida (Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo): Calle 60 no. 338-K x 29 y 31, Col. Alcala Martin, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico 97050, telephone (011)(52)(999) 942-5700 or 202-250-3711 (U.S. number).
- Monterrey (Nuevo Leon, Durango, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, and the southern part of Coahuila): Avenida Constitucion 411 Poniente, telephone (011)(52)(818) 047-3100.
- Nogales (the northern part of Sonora): Calle San Jose, Nogales, Sonora, telephone (011)(52)(631) 311-8150.
- Nuevo Laredo (the northern part of Coahuila and the northwestern part of Tamaulipas): Calle Allende 3330, col. Jardin, telephone (011)(52)(867) 714-0512.
- Tijuana (Baja California Norte and Baja California Sur): Paseo de Las Culturas s/n Mesa de Otay, telephone (011) (52) (664) 977-2000.

All other Mexican states, the Federal District of Mexico City, and the city of Tampico, Tamaulipas, are part of the Embassy's consular district.

### **Consular Agencies:**

- Acapulco: Hotel Emporio, Costera Miguel Aleman 121 – Suite 14, telephone (011)(52)(744) 481-0100 or (011)(52)(744) 484-0300.
- Cancún: Blvd. Kukulcan Km 13 ZH Torre La Europea, Despacho 301 Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico C.P. 77500; telephone (011)(52)(998) 883-0272.
- Cozumel: Plaza Villa Mar en el Centro, Plaza Principal, (Parque Juárez between Melgar and 5th Ave.) 2nd floor, locales #8 and 9, telephone (011)(52)(987) 872-4574 or, 202-459-4661 (a U.S. number).
- Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo: Hotel Fontan, Blvd. Ixtapa, telephone (011)(52)(755) 553-2100.
- Los Cabos: Las Tiendas de Palmilla Local B221, Carretera Transpeninsular Km. 27.5, San José del Cabo, BCS, Mexico 23406 Telephone: (624) 143-3566 Fax: (624) 143-6750.
- Mazatlán: Playa Gaviotas #202, Zona Dorada, telephone (011)(52)(669) 916-5889.
- Oaxaca: Macedonio Alcalá no. 407, interior 20, telephone (011)(52)(951) 514-3054, (011) (52)(951) 516-2853.
- Piedras Negras: Abasolo #211, Zona Centro, Piedras Negras, Coah., Tel. (011)(52)(878) 782-5586.
- Playa del Carmen: "The Palapa," Calle 1 Sur, between Avenida 15 and Avenida 20, telephone (011)(52)(984) 873-0303 or 202-370-6708(a U.S. number).
- Puerto Vallarta: Paradise Plaza, Paseo de los Cocoteros #1, Local #4, Interior #17, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, telephone (011)(52)(322) 222-0069.
- San Luis Potosí: Edificio "Las Terrazas", Avenida Venustiano Carranza 2076-41, Col. Polanco, telephone: (011)(52)(444) 811-7802/7803.
- San Miguel de Allende: Centro Comercial La Luciernaga, Libramiento Manuel Zavala (Pepe KBZON), telephone (011)(52)(415) 152-2357.
- [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_6033.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_6033.html)

### **Authorities: 3 men arrested in retaliation killing**

7/09/2013 - McALLEN, Texas (AP) — Federal prosecutors say three men have been arrested for the retaliation killing of a South Texas man thought to have stolen cocaine from the Gulf Cartel.

Authorities on Tuesday said 25-year-old Roel Garza was arrested Monday while 26-year-old [Orlando Hernandez](#) and 24-year-old [Jose Lorenzo Davila](#) were arrested last week. All three are from Rio Grande City in Starr County.

The men erroneously believed the victim, who wasn't identified, had stolen more than 200 pounds of cocaine. He was driving to a relative's home in May 2011 when three vehicles converged. The Mission man was bound, gagged and taken into Mexico where he was killed. He was killed even after the kidnappers realized they had the wrong man.

Prosecutors did not reveal the charges pending against the defendants.

<http://www.chron.com/default/article/Authorities-3-men-arrested-in-retaliation-killing-4654540.php>

### **Ruthless Mexican drug cartel recruiting in U.S.; Los Zetas looks to prisons, street gangs**

7/7/2013 - A Mexican drug cartel known for kidnapping random civilians and beheading its rivals has expanded its operations into the U.S.

The gang known as Los Zetas is recruiting U.S. prison and street gangs, and non-Mexicans, for its drug trafficking and support operations in Mexico and the U.S.

An FBI intelligence bulletin notes that “multiple sources” reported the shift in Los Zetas recruiting. The cartel sought to maintain a highly disciplined and structured hierarchy by recruiting members with specialized training, such as former military and law enforcement officers.

“The FBI judges with high confidence that Los Zetas will continue to increase its recruitment efforts and establish pacts with non-military trained, nontraditional associates to maintain their drug-trafficking and support operations, which may increase violence along the Southwest border posing a threat to U.S. national security,” the bulletin says.

The expansion of Los Zetas operations across the southwestern border has long been a concern of U.S. authorities. Trained as an elite band of Mexican anti-drug commandos, Los Zetas evolved into mercenaries for the infamous Gulf Cartel, unleashing a wave of brutality in Mexico’s drug wars.

Bolstered by an influx of assassins, bandits, thieves and thugs, as well as corrupt federal, state and local police officers, the gang has evolved into a well-financed and heavily armed drug-smuggling force of its own.



Known for mounting the severed heads of its rivals on poles or hanging their dismembered bodies from bridges in cities throughout Mexico, Los Zetas easily has become the most feared criminal gang in Mexico.

“The Zetas are determined to gain the reputation of being the most sadistic, cruel and beastly organization that ever existed,” said George W. Grayson, a professor of government at the College of William & Mary and a specialist on Mexican drug gangs. “Many of Mexico’s existing drug cartels will kill their enemies, but not go out of their way to do it. The Zetas look forward to inflicting fear on their targets. They won’t just cut off your ear; they’ll cut off your head and think nothing of it.”

### **Weapons, cars, horses**

The FBI intelligence bulletin quotes what it describes as “corroborated collaborative” sources “with excellent access” to show that Los Zetas has increased its effort to recruit and contract with U.S. gangs for daily drug trafficking activities in the United States.

The bulletin says the FBI had “moderate confidence” that Los Zetas likely will pose a higher national security threat to the U.S., based on “demonstrated capabilities for violence, their recent killings of U.S. citizens, increased kidnappings of U.S. citizens on both sides of the border, and their continued participation in the U.S. drug trade.”

According to the FBI, Los Zetas:

- Made contact with the Texas Mexican Mafia prison gang and tasked its members to collect debts, carry out hits and traffic drugs into and through Laredo, Texas.
- Tried to recruit U.S. gang members in Houston to join Los Zetas’ war against the Gulf Cartel on both sides of the border.
- Was buying AK-47 semi-automatic assault rifles from the Tango Blast, a Houston-based street gang.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jul/7/ruthless-mexican-drug-cartel-recruiting-in-the-us/>

### **Cartel Operatives Are Everywhere In America**

June 25, 2013: The army is continuing to take the lead in on-going operations in Michoacan state. In early May, 1,000 federal police were deployed to Michoacan to combat drug cartel violence and to reassure frightened communities. On May 20<sup>th</sup> the government reinforced the police with 2,000 soldiers and 2,000 marines. The increasing number of community defense units also spurred the government to act in force because the government tends to consider these groups vigilantes. State and federal officials acknowledge that many villages in Michoacan are threatened and local police are either unreliable or completely outgunned. In mid-May, before the military reinforcements, the government touted the fact that the Michoacan operation was a trial run of the new emphasis on police being used to combat drug cartel violence and organized crime. The government gave the overall

command to an army general. The general's mandate included exercising sole command of not only Mexican military units but federal, state, and local police forces in the operational area. The driving concept behind this command structure was to give the senior security commander the authority to use the security force best suited for a particular mission. If heavily-armed gunmen were encountered, they would be met with soldiers. If the mission involved neighborhood patrol or inspecting vehicles, state or local police officers would probably get the job.

The government has portrayed the new command as a window on the future. When he was campaigning for office last in 2012, current president Pena was highly critical of former president Calderon's reliance on the military to fight the Cartel War. Pena kept hammering away at stopping crime and criminals. Pena had a political goal: he wanted to frame the Cartel War as a law enforcement problem. Candidate Pena continually made the point that combat soldiers are not trained to investigate crimes and do not know how to look for or handle evidence (chain of custody). Pena agreed that soldiers can provide security but when combating the drug cartels they should be the force of last resort. Pena's critique tended to ignore the fact that Calderon had indeed used the military as a last resort, but favorable media rarely mentioned this fact. Pena also ignored the fact that Calderon's government had put in place several judicial and police reform programs designed to produce trustworthy, honest, and competent police forces capable of replacing the military as the lead agency in the Cartel War. Pena made the creation of a national gendarmerie (paramilitary police force) a major campaign issue. Officers in his proposed gendarme force would be trained as police. However, the gendarmes would also be able to operate in "formed police units" – that is, the gendarmes could deploy as a mobile constabulary capable of conducting military-type area security operations, counter-terror patrols, and small-scale counter-insurgency operations.

Mexico may well create a gendarmerie but it now appears that Pena is acknowledging reality. The crisis in Michoacan state cannot wait. Three cartels, the Knights Templar, La Familia, and the Jalisco New Generation are engaged in a large-scale turf war. The cartels have also fought with several of the community militias (comunitarios, local volunteer defense groups). The situation in the state's Tierra Caliente region (border area with Guerrero state) is particularly bad. The current operation is the first major military operation under the Pena administration. It appears that until the gendarmes arrive the military will continue to be the lead agency in the Cartel War. (Austin Bay)

June 23, 2013: The Texas Department of Public Safety confirmed that Benicio Lopez, a U.S. citizen arrested on June 13<sup>th</sup> in San Juan, Texas, is a senior member of the Gulf cartel. Lopez was born in Houston and grew up in the Texas town of Roma (on the Rio Grande River and the U.S.-Mexico border). Lopez began working his way up the Gulf cartel's command chain when he ran the cartel cell's in the Riberena district of the border city of Reynosa (Tamaulipas state). Reynosa is just south of the city of McAllen, Texas. Lopez later took control of Ciudad Miguel Aleman, which is directly across the Rio Grande River

from Roma, Texas. Lopez uses the nom de guerre Commandante Veneno (Commander Venom).

June 19, 2013: Security personnel in the resort town of Playa del Carmen (Quintana Roo state) arrested a man who is on the FBI's Ten most Wanted List.

June 13, 2013: Police arrested 12 people believed to be involved in the murder of 11 women in the city of Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua state) last year. The twelve will face murder and human trafficking charges. Police alleged that several of the individuals arrested were drug dealers and pimps.

June 11, 2013: Security forces freed over 270 people who were working as forced-laborers at a vegetable packing facility near the town of Toliman (Jalisco state). State prosecutors said the people were being held in slave-like conditions. Five facility managers are under arrest for human trafficking. Police reported that they became aware of the facility when a worker escaped.

June 10, 2013: Mexican security officials and U.S. police believe that the Sinaloa cartel has operatives in 75 U.S. cities. The figure is credible. In March 2013, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) released its annual state security estimate, Threat Overview 2013. That report listed Mexican narcotics trafficking organizations as the biggest security threat confronting Texas. The DPS said that six of Mexico's eight most powerful cartels operate in Texas: the Sinaloa, Beltran-Leyva, Los Zetas, Gulf, Juarez, and La Familia (Michoacana). Los Zetas and La Familia have the most wide-spread, active, and entrenched operations. The cartels have de facto operational areas. Beltran-Leyva operates along the Texas Gulf Coast. Sinaloa and Juarez operate in western Texas. Gulf, Los Zetas, and La Familia operate in central and eastern Texas, with the Interstate 35 corridor as the central spine of operations. IH-35 runs from Laredo, Texas to Canada and it is sometimes called the NAFTA interstate. Like legitimate trucking companies, the cartels develop regional hubs. Dallas and Fort Worth are in the IH-35 corridor and Texas police and sheriffs departments say that the Dallas-Fort Worth area has become a cartel smuggling and operational hub. San Antonio, at the junction of IH-35 and IH-10, is also a hub. Several years ago the FBI and DEA reported that Mexican cartels were developing partnerships with local gangs in the U.S. and that Southern California and Texas were not the only locales. The cartels were establishing relationships with gangs in Chicago and in the eastern U.S. The cartels have established partnership operations with gangs in every major Texas city. Local gangs outside of the big cities can still be a major link in a cartel's international supply chain. In late April and early May, police in Central Texas (along the IH-35 corridor between San Antonio and Dallas) arrested regional gang members with direct connections to Los Zetas cartel. Police identified individuals arrested in the April operation as members of the Mexican Mafia and Tango Blasts gangs. One of the individuals arrested had 13 kilos of cocaine and \$1 million in cash. (Austin Bay)

June 9, 2013: Mexico City police are continuing to investigate the May 26<sup>th</sup> mass abduction from a Zona Rosa club. Investigators now believe that the kidnapping of 12 people is

related to a gang war going on in the Mexico City neighborhood of Tepito. The gang war is being waged by the Tepis and Union gangs. Both gangs are based in Tepito. Video footage from street cameras examined by investigators show the abductees being led into several small cars two at a time. The kidnappers do not wear masks and they do not appear to be carrying weapons. The video undermines the statement of an alleged witness who claimed heavily armed men put the abductees in an SUV. Police believe the abductees knew their kidnappers.

Gunmen attacked a prison in the city of La Union (Guerrero state, western Mexico). The gunmen killed two guards, wounded another, and then freed nine prisoners. One prisoner, who was not among those freed in the prison break, was wounded in the assault.

June 8, 2013: A poll of Mexican companies revealed that 42 percent of the companies said that security had improved in the last year. Another 42 percent said that the security situation had not changed in the last year, while 13 percent reported that the security situation had gotten worse. Several companies which said the situation had deteriorated cited increased corruption as the cause for deteriorating security. Only two percent of the companies reported that they had shifted corporate operations from Mexico to another country because of the poor security situation. In responding to a question about corruption, 36 percent said that extortion was increasingly a problem. The business group said that only 16 percent cited extortion as a problem when it conducted the poll in 2011.

June 6, 2013: Soldiers freed 165 kidnap victims who were imprisoned in a house in the town of Gustavo Diaz Ordaz (Mexico-Texas border, across from McAllen, Texas). Most (150) were Central Americans and said they were on their way to the U.S. Of the others 14 people were Mexicans and one was from India.

June 5, 2013 Mexico City police have arrested three suspects in the May 26<sup>th</sup> mass kidnapping incident, where 12 people were taken from a night club. Two waiters from the club were arrested. The third suspect is a woman who police believe is involved in the crime. The crime initially stymied police investigators. Then a man who claims he witnessed the kidnappings told police that masked, heavily armed men entered the bar. At gunpoint they forced the 12 abductees to leave the bar and climb into SUVs waiting in the street. The informant said he was in the bar but avoided the kidnappers and ran.

Investigators said they are examining video taken by 12 surveillance cameras located on the streets near the club. The club is located near Paseo del Reforma, one of the city's main avenues, Police now believe that two Mexico City drug gangs may be involved in the crime. Several of the abductees live in Mexico City's Tepito barrio, which is an impoverished area where criminal gangs have a lot of power. Investigators have determined that the fathers of two of the kidnapped men are currently in prison. The imprisoned men are senior members of gangs which are based in Tepito. The mass kidnapping concerns the national government, for many obvious reasons. A daylight mass kidnapping in the national capital is a bold criminal act. It is also another attack on Mexico's tourist industry. The kidnapping happened in Zona Rosa, an entertainment district and one of the country's premier

shopping districts.

June 4, 2013: China's president visited Mexico as part of a visit to several western hemispheric nations. Mexico's president visited China in April. The two countries are discussing trade and investments. China is already Mexico's second largest trading partner. The U.S. is first. Mexico's trade gap with China is enormous. Mexico sold China \$5.7 billion in goods and services. China sold Mexico \$57 billion. Mexico wants China to increase its investments in the country.

June 3, 2013: Security personnel in Guerrero state discovered the bodies of three missing left-wing political activists. Five other activists remain missing. The group disappeared on May 30<sup>th</sup> after participating in a protest to support local farmers. Two of the recovered bodies were riddled with bullet wounds. The third activist was probably beaten to death. One of the dead was a senior member of Guerrero state's Democratic Revolution Party (PRD). Investigators said they are not certain that the murders had a political motive. Two drug cartels are fighting a turf war in the area and the political activists may have been caught in the crossfire.

May 26, 2013: Police reported that gunmen kidnapped 12 people in a bar in Mexico City's chic Zona Rosa district. The kidnappings occurred in daylight before noon. Seven men and five women were abducted. Police said they have found no definite motives for the kidnappings.

<http://www.strategypage.com/%5Cqnd%5Cmexico%5Carticles%5C20130625.aspx>

### **U.S. agents make Mexican drug, money laundering arrests in Texas**

Jun 20 2013 - MCALLEN, Texas (Reuters) - Federal agents arrested 25 people on Thursday in a drug and money laundering probe targeting a prison gang with ties to a Mexican drug cartel that allegedly smuggled drugs across south Texas.

The FBI and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said the four-year probe into the Texas Mexican Mafia netted 25 members and associates of the prison gang during operations primarily in Laredo, Texas, the busiest land port along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Two indictments in the case charge the gang's Laredo chapter with heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine trafficking, as well as money laundering.

Agents say the drugs were moved through south Texas and were distributed in San Antonio, Austin and Corpus Christi. Cash from the drug trafficking was then sent to the gang's associates in Mexico, which were not identified by authorities.

"These arrests today should send a clear message to the Texas Mexican Mafia, and other suspected criminal organizations, that law enforcement will not tolerate their alleged violent acts and trafficking of dangerous drugs in our community," Armando Fernandez, special agent in charge of the FBI's San Antonio Division, said in a news release from the U.S. Attorney's office in Houston.

Federal and state authorities have said Mexican drug cartels like the Zetas — founded in the late 1990s by Mexican paramilitary deserters in Nuevo Laredo, across the Rio Grande from Laredo — regularly use gangs like the Texas Mexican Mafia to carry out its drug trafficking activities in the United States.

The Texas Mexican Mafia boasts 6,000 members and is described by the Texas Department of Public Safety as one of the fiercest, most organized gangs operating in the state.

<http://www.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=USBRE95K02U20130621>

## **Drug cartels' mafia-type extortion methods cross U.S.-Mexico border**

**By Michael Webster: Syndicated Investigative Reporter.**

6/14/2013 - According to a DEA operative in the L.A. area who insists on remaining anonymous told the U.S. Border Fire Report that businesses along the dangerous U.S. Mexican border from Texas to California have been the victims of [extortion](#) attempts and threats. He further indicated that he believes that a good number of minority owned businesses in the Los Angeles area are also victims of extortion and that [Mexican Drug Cartels](#) and L.A. gangs and others are responsible. “He said that many of the victims especially those without papers are fearful of reporting the crime to authorities as they fear retaliation”.

Recently in the Los Angeles area grand jury indictments have come down charging hundreds of gang members of notorious L. A. street gangs with wide ranging criminal charges including extortion and 88 of those have been named in a wide-ranging federal RICO racketeering indictment.

According to a 222-page indictment returned by a federal grand jury recently, members and associates of the Avenues street gang are part of a criminal enterprise that engaged in a host of criminal acts, including murders, attempted murders, narcotics trafficking, robberies, extortions, money laundering and witness intimidation.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/mexican-drug-cartels-mafia-type-extortion-crosses-the-border-into-usa>

## **Man involved in cartel related murder arrested**

6/14/2013 - A man involved in a cartel related murder back in 2010 is now behind bars. San Juan Police arrested Benicio Lopez yesterday at an apartment complex in Mission. Lopez eluded police for years and possibly hid in Mexico, but a few months ago San Juan police were on his trail.

Lopez was formally charged today in connection to the May 2010 murder of Roberto Hinojosa.

Police said Hinojosa was shot to death after several men stormed his home in San Juan. Four men were arrested at the time and are serving time for the murder. Yesterday, police tracked Lopez from a house at the Cimarron County Club to an apartment complex in McAllen. Police searched the home at the county club and arrested a woman for possession of a controlled substance. Lopez's bond is set at \$1.3 million.  
<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=910060#.UeWFyG0yhaF>

### **Missing Marine feared dead**

6/05/2013 - McALLEN — More than three weeks after a former U.S. Marine and his relatives went missing in Mexico, authorities in Tamaulipas say they have little hope of finding the men alive. Armed gunmen kidnapped Armando Torres III along with his father Armando Torres II and his uncle Salvador Torres on May 14 from the family's ranch near the Los Indios International Bridge, the FBI said Monday. The men have not been heard from since. A Tamaulipas attorney general's office official said the agency dispatched investigators to the family's ranch called "La Barranca." There, the investigators searched the grounds and spoke with individuals close to the Torres family. The attorney general's office official said investigators doubt the Torres men will be found alive, though they continue to pursue leads in the case. The official requested anonymity, citing safety concerns. A Tamaulipas state police official also said that, based on the circumstances of the case and the players involved, investigators believe that the three Torres family members will not be found alive and a body may never be found. Unauthorized to speak with the media, the official requested anonymity. The area where the ranch is located lies along a known drug corridor where drug traffickers on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande cross drugs into the U.S. along various riverside properties in an effort to avoid U.S. law enforcement. Torres III's sister, Cristina Torres, said FBI agents told her family that Mexican authorities have not been cooperating "as they should." She said her family has not given up hope her brother will be found alive. "We are doing all we can to get my brother back," she said. "We will continue to do all we can." FBI spokesman Erik Vasys said he would not "confirm or deny" anything regarding Armando Torres III's kidnapping. "In all kidnapping cases, we remain optimistic until we find evidence that indicates otherwise," Vasys said.

Torres III's uncle, Eduardo Torres, reported the kidnapping to Hidalgo County sheriff's deputies May 15, saying he received a phone call from his niece that his nephew had been kidnapped in Mexico and he went to La Barranca, the incident report says.

The Tamaulipas attorney general's office launched its probe into the missing Torres men after receiving an email from the FBI asking for help in the kidnapping investigation. The agency is tasked with most criminal investigations in the state.

Relatives told Cristina Torres that Tamaulipas attorney general's officials sealed off the ranch with yellow tape after learning of the kidnapping and have been keeping watch over the property, she said.

Investigators learned that Torres' grandfather, the late Don Armando Torres, had sold part of his ranch two years ago to a man named Jesus Pecina-Chaires. After Pecina-Chaires went to prison in March in the U.S. on an illegal re-entry conviction, a dispute about the land began with Armando Torres II, the Marine's father.

Investigators have not been able to identify the gunmen who took the Torres family, the Tamaulipas attorney general's office official said.

Pecina-Chaires is serving a 10-month sentence at the CI Reeves federal prison in Pecos, Texas, for an illegal re-entry charge, federal prison and court records show. Pecina-Chaires has a history of illegal re-entry charges going back to 2005, federal court records show.

Cristina Torres told The Monitor that she received a call from her cousin minutes after the gunmen raced away.

"She saw a white truck with people in it and they just went to the house and got my brother and my dad and my uncle and just put them in the truck and took off," Torres, 24, said in a telephone interview Monday. "They took a lot of their belongings and they took the cars, as well."

Torres III's aunt, Patricia Torres, said she believes whoever was involved in the land dispute has ties to Mexican organized crime.

"This is because (of) the property," Patricia Torres told the Associated Press. "But the persons that had the property were involved, I believe, with the cartel because they were the ones that picked them up."

Torres III is a Marine veteran who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is part of the Individual Ready Reserve, a category of soldiers made up of former active duty and reservists who do not actively drill, but may be called to another tour of active duty, the FBI said in a statement.

His status as a veteran helped stir national interest in the kidnapping this week after the FBI posted a plea to public the for help on the agency website. A Facebook page was created with the help of the Marine's sister and is called, "Get Our Brother Back." It had drawn more than 6,000 members by Tuesday evening.

I'm going to use the one below because it talks about the prisoner being found in a house in TX but the link that i have here isn't working, can you send me the proper link please..



[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/valley/article\\_3382fb4a-cd93-11e2-99b2-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/valley/article_3382fb4a-cd93-11e2-99b2-0019bb30f31a.html)

## **Valley Officials Monitor Cartel Activity in Other Parts of the Country**

5/15/2013 - HIDALGO COUNTY - Mexican Cartel activity across the United States is being traced back to the Rio Grande Valley, local law enforcement officials said. San Juan Police Sgt. Rolando Garcia said he spends part of his day researching cartel activity that might have ties to the Valley. "We are always concerned as to what's going on out of state," San Juan Police Chief Juan Gonzalez said.

Garcia and Gonzalez said cartel operatives often enter the country through the Valley. "We're trying to get some information as to how they were able to avoid capture in this area and how we can better our resources and our law enforcement practices to stop them," Gonzalez said. The comments come in the wake of an investigation into a drug ring linked to the Gulf cartel and the Valley.

Court records show that the ringleader, Idalia Ramos Rangel, may be hiding in Matamoros. Ramos is accused of sending hundreds of pounds of cocaine from Matamoros to places as far away as Illinois. Most of the narcotics, though, were destined for Arkansas. "What you're doing here is impacting the communities in East Texas, West Texas to all of those states that see a lot of the Mexican drug cartels," Gonzalez said. Garcia said he reads countless news stories on cartel activity in other parts of the country.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/valley-officials-monitor-cartel-activity-in-other-parts-of-the-country/>

## **Brownsville Man Linked to Smuggling Ring**

5/15/2013 - CAMERON COUNTY - Authorities believe a man linked to a large-scale, drug-smuggling operation may be from Brownsville. Manuel Garza, 31, is accused of being part of a group that smuggled cocaine from Matamoros to as far away as Illinois. Idalia Ramos Rangel, 57, is considered the ringleader. Officials said she is a member of the Gulf cartel.

Federal authorities said Ramos used more than a dozen people, including her son, to smuggle cocaine. Most of the narcotics were destined for Arkansas. Authorities found more than \$10 million worth of cocaine in Arkansas. The massive stash and 10 suspects are linked to Ramos, officials said. Investigators said Ramos, also known as La Tia, is hiding in Matamoros.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/brownsville-man-linked-to-smuggling-ring/>

### **Zetas gun buyer blames abusive relationship**

5/15/2013 - A San Antonio woman ordered by the Zetas to buy the cartel machine guns and semi-automatic rifles was sentenced Wednesday to more than seven years in prison for that crime, and for helping steal more than \$133,000 from customers' accounts when she worked for Wells Fargo.

In a confusing explanation to U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia, [Yadira Mauricio Ybarra](#), 38, claimed she "lashed out" because she was in an abusive relationship and the criminal justice system was of little help when she turned to it for help for herself and her four children. "I wasn't thinking," Ybarra said. "I was very hurt and upset." Ybarra was first arrested in March 2011 in a sting operation in which agents with [Homeland Security Investigations](#) and the [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives](#) sought to identify transporters of firearms for the Zetas.

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/Zetas-gun-buyer-blames-abusive-relationship-4519617.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Zetas-gun-buyer-blames-abusive-relationship-4519617.php)

### **Men sentenced for possessing grenades**

5/15/2013 - McALLEN — Four men were sentenced Wednesday in federal court for possessing a destructive device. Juan Ricardo Martinez-Cardenas, 38, Daniel Blanco, 23, and Jose Lopez-Cerda, 24, were sentenced to 10-year terms in federal prison. A fourth man, Martin Martinez-Medina, 18, was sentenced to 62 months. All four are Mexican nationals who entered the U.S. illegally and are expected to face deportation hearings following their sentences, according to a statement from Angela Dodge, spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas.

Last November, Martinez-Cardenas was stopped in his Ford Explorer by Roma police. He consented to a search, and officers found four 40 mm grenades, an improvised grenade launcher, four AK-47-type rifles and corresponding magazines loaded with 2,791 rounds of ammunition in the vehicle, according to a probable cause affidavit. Further investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Border Patrol and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives determined the three other men had also played a role in the transportation of the weapons, Dodge said.

Blanco was arrested Nov. 27 by HSI and the other two were arrested Nov. 30. All four men pleaded guilty March 5, 2013. They have all been in federal custody without bond since their arrests. Chief U.S. District Judge Ricardo H. Hinojosa handed down the maximum

sentence allowed by statute to Martinez-Cardenas, Blanco and Lopez-Cerda. Martinez-Medina was given a lighter sentence because he'd endured threats from Martinez-Cardenas, Dodge said. Court testimony revealed Martinez-Cardenas threatened Martinez-Medina after the 18-year-old refused to buy beer.

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article\\_5657ef56-bdd3-11e2-aec6-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article_5657ef56-bdd3-11e2-aec6-001a4bcf6878.html)

### **Feds: Two women linked to cartel 'Momma'**

5/15/2013 - Two Brownsville women suspected to be connected to a drug smuggling operation in Arkansas that officials say is run by the "Big Momma" of the Gulf Cartel are awaiting extradition to that state. Court documents show Denice Duran Martinez, 34, and Yadira Anahy Martinez, 36, were arrested Tuesday in Brownsville on arrest warrants issued out of Arkansas. The two are indicted on a charge of conspiracy with intent to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine.

They remain in custody of U.S. marshals pending their extradition. Documents indicate the women are linked to Idalia Ramos Rangel, 57, identified by authorities as a high-ranking female member of the Gulf Cartel, who allegedly facilitated the shipments of drugs to Arkansas and other parts of the United States. Authorities said Ramos Rangel, known as "La Tia" or "Big Momma," remains at large and is believed to be hiding in Matamoros.

According to the documents, Denice Duran Martinez and Yadira Anahy Martinez are suspected of helping the "Ramos Rangel DTO" by arranging and coordinating shipments of cocaine from Mexico to Texas and then to Arkansas. It's also alleged they and others assisted the operation by collecting proceeds from the drug shipments, creating bank accounts to deposit and withdraw the money and transporting the bulk cash proceeds to Mexico, the court documents state. Homeland Security Investigations Brownsville Division is leading the investigation.

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article\\_6fba773e-bdd3-11e2-9c96-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article_6fba773e-bdd3-11e2-9c96-0019bb30f31a.html)

### **Mexico arrests 2 men in Malcolm X grandson's death**

5/13/2013 - MEXICO CITY (AP) — Two waiters at a Mexico City bar will face homicide and robbery charges in the beating death of [Malcolm X](#)'s grandson [Malcolm Shabazz](#), authorities said Monday. Prosecutors said police were seeking at least two other people believed to have participated in the attack on Shabazz, who was beaten early Thursday in a dispute over a \$1,200 bar bill. Prosecutor [Rodolfo Fernando Rios](#) said bar employees [David](#)

[Hernandez Cruz](#) and [Manuel Alejandro Perez de Jesus](#) would be charged with aggravated robbery and homicide.

Rios said there was no indication of a racial motivation in the attack on Shabazz, 28, who was assaulted after he drank with a friend at the Palace bar on Garibaldi Plaza, a downtown square famous for open-air performances by strolling mariachi musicians. [Miguel Suarez](#), a friend of Shabazz, told [The Associated Press](#) last week that the fight broke out after the owner of the bar demanded that the two men pay 15,000 pesos for the time they spent drinking at the bar. He said he found Shabazz outside the bar and took him to a hospital where he died. Many of the bars around Garibaldi Plaza are notorious for exorbitant overcharging of customers, particularly foreigners, often on the pretext that customers must pay for time spent talking with female employees.

Rios said the initial investigation indicated Shabazz and Suarez were lured to the bar by two women. An autopsy found that Shabazz died of blows to the head, face and torso. Rios said Shabazz's body had not been claimed by relatives or the [U.S. Embassy](#). He said Mexican authorities were dealing with transporting it back to the U.S. Much like his grandfather, Shabazz spent his youth in and out of trouble. At 12, he set a fire in his grandmother's apartment, a blaze that resulted in the death of Malcolm X's widow. After four years in juvenile detention, Shabazz was later sent back to prison on attempted robbery and assault charges.

In recent years, Shabazz seemed to be seeking redemption, saying he was writing a memoir and traveling the world speaking out against youth violence. Before his trip to Mexico, he reached out to a group of Mexican construction workers in the U.S. and then visited in Mexico with a leader who had been deported.

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/world/article/Mexico-arrests-2-men-in-Malcolm-X-grandson-s-death-4511493.php>

### **Mexico violence pushes two companies to relocate**

5/5/2013 - (AP) -- MORELIA, Mexico (AP) -- The economic development secretary of the western Mexican state of Michoacan said two major firms have decided to relocate their distribution centers to escape violence.

Ricardo Martinez said yogurt giant Dannon and pharmaceutical company Grupo Casa Saba have moved to Queretaro and Jalisco states respectively.

Another company, the PepsiCo subsidiary Sabritas, was the target of fire bombings in Michoacan last year, apparently by a drug cartel.

Martinez said on Friday that Sabritas will continue to invest in the state.

Martinez also said he is concerned that insecurity is causing a brain drain in Michoacan,

long the scene of drug violence and now conflicts involving vigilantes and striking students. His announcement came as U.S. President Barack Obama met in Mexico with President Enrique Pena Nieto to emphasize economic growth over security issues.

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=893782#.UYzy18qwBaE>

### **Sheriff: Cartels Resorting to Scare Tactics**

4/28/2013 - HIDALGO COUNTY - An increase in the confiscation of drug loads may be driving cartels to resort to scare tactics, officials said. Hidalgo County Sheriff Lupe Trevino said the Rio Grande Valley's law enforcement community has received threats about poison-laced drug loads. Trevino said the cartels may be trying to intimidate law enforcement in the wake of record drug seizures in the Valley.

"Drug-trafficking organizations in Mexico (say they) are going to taint or contaminate the outside of the packaging of marijuana loads ... so American law enforcement can be harmed," Trevino said. "Our deputies, when they are handling the evidence, are required to wear latex gloves (and) surgical masks," Trevino said. Still, Trevino said it's highly unlikely the cartels will taint the products that bring the most money. He said none of the packages in the county's evidence lockers have been found to be tainted.

"I think the Mexican drug organizations are becoming desperate in their rhetoric and their tactics," Trevino said. Trevino said law enforcement agencies throughout the Valley are having more success combating human and drug trafficking. He said the threat may be just a tactic to scare officers.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/sheriff-cartels-resorting-to-scare-tactics/>

### **Narco singer Chuy Quintanilla found slain north of Mission**

4/24/2013 - Authorities are investigating the shooting death of narcocorrido singer whose body was found in an orchard north of Mission. It all happened at a grapefruit orchard off Bryan Road north of FM 1925 at 6:15 a.m. Thursday. Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office deputies were called out to the area to investigate a body found. Sheriff Lupe Treviño told Action 4 News that the body found was that of singer [Chuy Quintanilla](#).

#### Crime Scene

Workers found Quintanilla's body in a pool of blood next to a tan Chevrolet Tahoe. Sheriff Treviño said Quintanilla had two bullet wounds to the head.

Deputies believe that Quintanilla was killed in the orchard and left to die next to the singer's SUV. Hidalgo County Justice of the Peace Luis Garza pronounced Quintanilla dead and ordered an autopsy to learn more about his death. Investigators are taking tire prints in the area to get an idea of what vehicle the suspects were driving.

### Family Members

Family members of the slain singer were at the crime scene and told Action 4 News that Quintanilla lived in Palmview. The family members said they last heard from him on Wednesday evening and were not able to reach him on his cell phone Wednesday night. Family members headed to the crime scene after they heard a body was found and saw his SUV in the orchard. Quintanilla's musical career spanned decades but included singing "corridos" or "musical narratives" describing the exploits of Gulf Cartel leaders.

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=889770#.UXluk8rkdBA>

### **Officials: Cartels Continue Recruiting Teens**

4/12/2013 - BROWNSVILLE - South Texas authorities say Mexican drug cartels will continue to recruit teens to smuggle illegal immigrants and drugs through the region. Jim Wells and Brooks counties District Attorney Carlos Garcia said the cartels are becoming more sophisticated.

"To become successful in their line of work, or their line of business, they must be organized," Garcia said.

He said authorities need to find new ways to deal with young delinquents.

"If we can build an organized-criminal-activity case, then we end up bumping it up one more level," Garcia said.

Garcia said officials must focus on organized criminal activity and not just individual cases. Garcia said law enforcement and prosecutors are not always on the same page. But they are working to change that, he said.

"The networking, and being able to share information that we're each developing in our jurisdictions, is really going to be the key to the future of developing these cases better," Garcia said.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/officials-cartels-continue-recruiting-teens/>

### **Nine bodies found inside SUV near Ciudad Victoria on Easter Sunday**

4/1/2013 - Authorities are investigating a gruesome discovery made south of the border just outside Ciudad Victoria on Easter Sunday.

The Tamaulipas Attorney General's Office (PGJE) confirmed the bodies of nine men were found inside an SUV abandoned along the highway.

Investigators reported the 2012 GMC Yukon was found at the Kilometer 7.5 marker of the Ciudad Victoria-Soto La Marina around 10 p.m. Easter Sunday.

The SUV was found in a rural community named Ejido Santa Clara just outside Ciudad Victoria.

The names of the nine slain men were not immediately available but PGJE officials said the majority of them had been dismembered.

PGJE officials said the bodies were sent to a forensic lab for identification and autopsies.

The license plates to the SUV were registered to a couple from Midland, Texas.

Action 4 News spoke to the owners who said they sold the SUV and it was stolen before the new owner had a chance to transfer the title.

Ciudad Victoria is the capital of Tamaulipas and is located about 200 miles or about a four hours south of Brownsville.

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**COMUNICADO DE LA PROCURADURIA GENERAL DE JUSTICIA DEL ESTADO**

Publicado el 01 de abril de 2013

CD. VICTORIA, Tamaulipas.- La Procuraduría General de Justicia y la Secretaría de Seguridad Pública del Estado comunican que el domingo 31 de marzo, a las 22:00 horas, recibieron reporte sobre la localización de nueve cuerpos sin vida en el interior de una camioneta abandonada en el kilómetro 7.5 de la carretera Victoria-Soto la Marina, a la altura del ejido Santa Clara del municipio de Victoria.

Personal de la Procuraduría encargado de integrar la averiguación previa correspondiente, dio fe que en el lugar antes mencionado se encontraba una camioneta GMC tipo Yukón, color gris y placas de circulación 94 HFN 6 del Estado de Texas.

En el interior del vehículo fueron encontrados los restos de nueve personas del sexo masculino, no identificados, la mayoría de ellos desmembrados. Los cuerpos fueron enviados al Servicio Médico Forense para la práctica de las necropsias de ley.

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=879562#.UVsOi1fkdBA>

## **Report reflects massive drug cartel operations in Texas**

3/28/2013 - The numbers are staggering. More than 8.8 million pounds of marijuana, cocaine, heroin and meth have been seized along the Texas border in the past seven years, a recent report by the Texas Department of Public Safety revealed.

The report — released Wednesday — sheds light on how many drug seizures have been made between April 2006 and December 2012. It details what law enforcement authorities across the state face nearly every day.

Recently in Brownsville, police alerted the community to the fact that a theft ring working for a cartel in Mexico was targeting Chevrolet Tahoes and pickup trucks, which are used to further the transnational criminal organization's motive of profit.

“Outside of these counties, the Texas Department of Public Safety seized an additional 24,946 pounds of marijuana, 1,575 pounds of cocaine, 68 pounds of heroin, and 752 pounds of meth in 2012,” the report states.

## **Drug Trafficking**

Cameron and Hidalgo counties are in one of the five major drug corridors in Texas, according to the report. The Gulf Coast corridor covers both counties and north to Houston

and San Antonio, and it includes U.S. Highways 281, 77 and 59, and Interstate Highways 37 and 10.

“These highways provide direct routes to and from Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas-Fort Worth, all of which are major consolidation points for drugs and currency,” the report states.

This week’s Texas Public Safety Threat Overview 2013 report states that the No. 1 threat to the Lone Star state are Mexican cartels that traffic in drugs, humans and extortion, among other crimes. Cartels are able to smuggle large quantities by exploiting legitimate travel and trade, according to the report.

**“In 2011 alone, there were 307 interdictions of commercial vehicles by law enforcement officers in Texas, which resulted in the seizure of approximately 2,250 lbs. of cocaine, 200 lbs. of heroin, 200 pounds of methamphetamine, and 503,000 lbs. of marijuana,” the report states.**

Stolen vehicles are also used by cartels to smuggle drugs, the report states.

Recently in Brownsville, police alerted the community to the fact that a theft ring working for a cartel in Mexico was targeting Chevrolet Tahoes and pickup trucks, which are used to further the transnational criminal organization’s motive of profit.

However, authorities are only able to stop a fraction of narcotics from crossing the Rio Grande and flowing into the United States.

“It’s but a small fraction. That’s only what we get. It’s estimated that 10, maybe 15 percent, are seized,” Hidalgo County Sheriff Lupe Treviño said. And as the drugs flow north, the cash flows south.

“Estimates for the amount of cash that travels from the U.S. to Mexico to fuel the criminal operations of drug cartels range from **\$19 billion to \$39 billion each year**,” the report states. “Since 2006, agencies participating in Operation Border Star have seized \$178,650,831.”

In Cameron County, law enforcement officials have made multiple arrests resulting in seizures of bulk cash. In one instance in late 2012, the county Sheriff’s Department and Homeland Security Investigations seized more than \$700,000 during a controlled cocaine delivery.

The Brownsville Police Department also makes occasional traffic stops that result in the discovery of bulk cash. But according to the DPS threat overview, traffickers are increasingly using dangerous tactics that threaten law enforcement.



“In some cases, officers have been subjected to surveillance and vehicle assault, while officers patrolling the border region have been targeted by shootings, rocking assaults and other dangerous tactics,” the report states.

## **Cloned vehicles**

When President Barack Obama announced his intention to ban assault weapons and high-capacity clips, Brownsville Police Chief Orlando C. Rodriguez said criminals would find new ways to commit crimes, like by duct-taping two clips together.

The DPS report reflects that evolution in a section describing the use of cloned vehicles.

“Mexican cartels use innovative tactics to avoid law enforcement detection as they traffic drugs into and through Texas,” the report states. “One such tactic is the use of cloned vehicles that are equipped and painted to appear as belonging to a company or government agency.”

The report lists a few examples:

January 2012: “An officer stopped the driver of an AT&T cloned vehicle in Hidalgo County. The officer observed indicators of criminal activity, and the subject fled on foot, but was later apprehended. Multiple bundles of marijuana were located in the vehicle, totaling 2,168.4 lbs., in the vehicle storage compartments.”

October 2012: “An officer observed a Laredo ISD bus in McMullen County. He ran the license plate, and it returned as a canceled plate registered to another ISD, and he made a traffic stop on the bus. As he approached the vehicle, the driver fled on foot. A subsequent search revealed that the bus had been completely modified to transport drugs. Mannequin heads were placed to appear as students on the bus. The driver was later apprehended with the assistance of a DPS helicopter, and 2,772 lbs of marijuana were seized.”

“The use of these vehicles, especially those designed to resemble law enforcement vehicles, represents a threat to the public, as well as to the safety of law enforcement officers,” the report states.

Hidalgo County’s sheriff has a lot of experience fighting the drug war and said he isn’t sure the status quo is working.

**“I’ve been doing this for 41 years and I’ve been fighting drugs specifically since 1981. I would be one of those that would have to say — there’s got to be a better way,” Treviño said. “Look at all the billions and billions of dollars that we have infused into the drug war. What has it gotten us?”**

**“We’ve been able to keep our head above the water and we’re treading the water. There’s got to be a better way. I just wish I knew what it is.”**

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article\\_f93b86e0-981e-11e2-ac96-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article_f93b86e0-981e-11e2-ac96-0019bb30f31a.html)

## **Experts: Cartels Exploit Weaknesses in Juvenile Judicial System**

3/28/2013 - EDINBURG - Mexican cartels are exploiting cracks in the American judicial system to get teenagers involved in crimes, experts said. The most recent, high-profile case reached a milestone when Junior Benjamin Rodriguez, 16, was certified to stand trial as an adult. He faces nine counts of murder.

Prosecutors said he was driving a van loaded with illegal immigrants when it crashed killing the nine. The incident happened in April, 2012. Court records show his brother also had been arrested on smuggling charges.

Authorities released him. A Border Patrol agent this week admitted in court that they let some juveniles go free. The federal government does not prosecute juveniles. It's up to the Border Patrol to turn smugglers under 17 to local authorities. That's the only way they can be charged.

Still, Border Patrol doesn't turn many of the smuggling cases to local departments. They often release the young suspects to their parents. The reason is that local departments don't want those cases. Hidalgo County District Attorney Rene Guerra said a lack of time and money means they must focus on the most serious cases.

"Smuggling is serious. The only thing I can say is that we had to set a limit on our intervention with helping the federal government on serious juvenile offenders. Anybody who causes the death of an individual is going to be a serious crime," Guerra said.

Guerra said the courts in Hidalgo County are flooded with juvenile offenders. Cartels know that and that's why they target teens. Rodriguez now faces 99 years for each murder count. The teen was moved from the juvenile detention center to the Hidalgo County jail.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/experts-cartels-exploit-weaknesses-in-juvenile-judicial-system>

## **DPS: Mexican drug cartels No. 1 organized crime threat in Texas**

3/27/2013 - A narcoblockade in a Hidalgo neighborhood is among the items listed in a new report that lists Mexican drug cartels as the number one organized crime threat in Texas. Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) officials released the [2013 Texas Public Safety Threat Overview](#) early Wednesday afternoon.

The report outlines eight areas that the agency identifies as safety threats to the public:

- Crime
- Terrorism

- Motor Vehicle Crashes
- Natural Disasters
- Public Health threats
- Industrial Accidents
- Cyber Threats

Crime takes up 23 pages out of the 76-page report with Mexican drug cartels dominating the that section.

### **Mexican Drug Cartels**

The report names Mexican drug cartels as the number one organized crime threat to the State of Texas.

According to DPS, six of the eight major Mexican drug cartels currently operate in the Lone Star State.

The cartels are using increasingly complex and violent tactics including surveillance, vehicle assaults, shootings and throwing rocks from the Mexican side of the border.

Narcoblockades are a popular tactic south of the border but DPS officials one was used off West Joe Pate Boulevard in Hidalgo back in Hidalgo.

Drug smugglers used a blockade to slow authorities down but investigators were able to seized one 22-pound bundle of cocaine from the scene.

According to the report, some 71 vehicles have plunged into the waters of the Rio Grande River since 2009.

DPS officials ranked prison gangs as the second biggest organized crime threat in Texas.

Tango Blast, Texas Syndicate, Barrio Azteca and the Texas Mexican Mafia were listed at the largest and most connected to Mexican drug cartels.

### **Report Criticized**

But one drug war expert is skeptical about the motives and accuracy of the report.

UTB Government Chair Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera said the report contradicts statistics from the FBI and even DPS itself.

Those previous statistics report that crime has fallen in the United States and that border communities are among the safest.

Correa-Cabrera said the report is "political" and "an attempt to gain more federal funds" but can also be seen as a "double-edged" sword.

**"If the situation is as alarming as the report states, then that would mean that Texas authorities are as incompetent as Mexican authorities to combat organized crime," Correa-Cabrera said. "Therefore the Texas state would be as failed as the Tamaulipas state. And Mexico (through Mexican-origin) organized crime groups would be re-conquering Texas in the current drug war times."**

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=877603>

## **Police: Mexican cartels seek vehicles; urge residents to secure vehicles**

3/21/2013 - Brownsville police warn owners of 2002 to 2006 model Chevy Silverado pickups and Tahoes to secure their vehicles because a cartel in Mexico has high demand for the vehicles. Police spokesman Billy Killebrew said police know of seven such vehicles stolen in the last two weeks alone, but that's only what's been reported.

"The '02 to '06 are being stolen and taken across," Killebrew said. "All of the vehicles stolen don't have alarms. We are investigating the case and have a few leads that we are working on at this time." Mexican cartels use pickup trucks to transport "sicarios" — men — and the Tahoe-type vehicles are often used to smuggle drugs and people, he said.

Police believe several people are working together to steal the vehicles and take them to Mexico, Killebrew said. Police recently found one abandoned by the B&M Bridge. Killebrew said it was likely abandoned because U.S. Border Patrol agents were near or because something didn't quite pan out for the thieves. No one was arrested.

Killebrew said the increase in stolen vehicles is sharp, and no residential area is immune. "It's all happening between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. in all residential areas. There haven't been any thefts from businesses or anything like that," he said. "When people are waking up in the morning, they discover their vehicle is gone and has been taken."

Thieves also are targeting those vehicles because they are easy to steal and aren't as advanced as newer models, he said. People can take precautions to guard against the ring of car thieves, Killebrew added.

"We want to tell the people if they can, have an alarm installed in the vehicle; use The Club, get a kill switch, anything that can stop them from stealing," he said. "These cars they are taking don't have alarms, and they are making entry and stealing them and taking them across." Car thieves particularly dislike The Club, he said.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is aware of the ring and will alert police to vehicles in the southbound lane that appear they might have been broken into, he said. Killebrew said people should call police if they see a suspicious person walking in a neighborhood late at night.

People can call anonymously at (956) 548-7000. For tips about protecting vehicles from theft, people can call Killebrew at (956) 548-7156.

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article\\_42e1c64a-929f-11e2-bba7-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article_42e1c64a-929f-11e2-bba7-001a4bcf6878.html)

### **Mexican women apply for asylum in US, cite threats**

03/16/2013 - The legal adviser to a group of mothers of disappeared women in Juárez is now seeking asylum in the U.S. Lawyer Francisca Galván, legal adviser for the Comité de Madres de Desaparecidas, has been detained at the Otay Detention Center in San Diego, Calif., since Feb. 22, according to her immigration attorney, Guillermo Suarez Medina.

Meanwhile, Karla Castañeda, the mother of one missing girl, who accused Juárez police officers of harassment and threats, is already in the U.S. with her four children. All of them were granted humanitarian parole, Suarez said.

Galván, who recently participated in a protest march from Juárez to Chihuahua City with a group of mothers, said that she received death threats against her and her niece, warning her against continuing with her activism.

According to Suarez, the aggressors called her by phone and stalked her house in Juárez. "She has told me she was afraid of local police; thus she decided to cross by Tijuana and not Juárez," Suarez said. "Now she is waiting for the interview with an immigration officer, who would determine if there is reasonable fear, then to refer her to an immigration judge."

Castañeda, whose daughter Cinthia Jocabeth Castañeda Alvarado disappeared in 2008 at age 13, also fled Juárez in early February after she was harassed and intimidated by local and state police officers, Galván said at that time.

Castañeda took her four children with her and applied for and obtained humanitarian parole in the U.S., Suarez said. Galván's niece was also granted humanitarian parole and they now can apply for asylum, he added.

"For safety reasons, we can't disclose where they are now," Suarez said. Humanitarian parole is used sparingly to bring someone who is otherwise inadmissible into the United States for a temporary period due to a compelling emergency.

[http://www.elpasotimes.com/news/ci\\_22801369/mexican-women-apply-asylum-us-cite-threats](http://www.elpasotimes.com/news/ci_22801369/mexican-women-apply-asylum-us-cite-threats)

### **Advisory remains in effect for travelers in Mexico**

3/11/2013 - Spring Breakers who want to take a dip in the Gulf of Mexico south of the border should be reminded of security concerns when visiting Matamoros, according to a U.S. Department of State Spring Break travel advisory.

“Travelers to the Mexican border should be especially aware of safety and security concerns due to increased violence in recent years between rival drug trafficking gangs competing for control of narcotics smuggling routes,” the advisory states.

But it’s unlikely that American visitors would be caught up in the violence, according to the advisory.

“Travelers should exercise common-sense precautions such as visiting only the well-traveled business and tourism areas of border towns during daylight and early-evening hours,” the advisory states, in reference to Matamoros and Nuevo Progreso.

Both neighboring cities are 30 to 45 minutes away from the popular Spring Break destination, South Padre Island.

With more than 100,000 American teenagers and young adults traveling into Mexico for Spring Break, most enjoy their stay without incident and the U.S. Department of State reminds them to call home and contact their families while in Mexico.

“We encourage all U.S. citizens to phone home periodically to assure family members of your safety and inform them of your whereabouts,” the advisory states. “Remember, whether you travel to Mexico by land, air, or sea, you are entering a foreign country and are subject to the laws and customs regulations of Mexico.”

Those laws include trying to bring a gun or drugs into the country, disturbing their peace, lewd or indecent behavior, littering, driving under the influence, drinking on the street or on public transportation, using public transportation without payment, or making obscene or insulting remarks. All of these offenses are considered criminal activities in Mexico.

“The importation, purchase, possession or use of drugs can incur severe penalties, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is tried, and imprisonment of several years following a conviction,” the advisory states. “All individuals 16 years of age or older are tried as adults.”

The State Department also advises Spring Break party-goers that alcohol consumption and unruly behavior can lead to serious problems.

“Standards of security, safety, and supervision may not reach the levels expected in the United States. This has contributed to the deaths of U.S. citizens in automobile accidents, after falls from balconies or into unmarked ditches, by drowning in the ocean as well as in hotel pools, and in water-sports mishaps, among others,” the advisory states.

Spring Breakers on Mexican beaches should take warning flags on beaches seriously and not enter the water if red or black flags are up.

“Swimming pool drain systems may not comply with U.S. safety standards and swimmers should exercise caution. Do not swim in pools or at beaches without life guards,” the advisory states. “Do not dive into unknown bodies of water, because hidden rocks or shallow depths can cause serious injury or death. If you choose to swim, always exercise extreme caution.”

And finally, Spring Breakers should have their driver’s licenses because in Mexico, the law requires that vehicles be driven by their owners or that the owner be inside the vehicle.

“If not, the car may be seized by Mexican customs and will not be returned under any circumstances. We strongly recommend that you purchase a full coverage insurance policy that will cover the cost of bail,” the advisory states. “Please be aware that if you are involved in an automobile accident, you will be taken into police custody until it is determined who is at fault and whether you have the ability to pay any penalty.”

### **AT A GLANCE**

In case of a serious emergency, travelers in Mexico should immediately contact the closest U.S. Consulate, U.S. Consular Agency, or the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

To reach the U.S. Consulate in Matamoros, call (52) (868) 812-4402.

[http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article\\_5bef12ee-8928-11e2-8a18-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/local/article_5bef12ee-8928-11e2-8a18-001a4bcf6878.html)

### **Exigen justicia hijos de asesinados por agentes de EU**

24 Febrero 2013 - Entre los manifestantes en la garita de San Ysidro, se encuentran los cinco hijos de Valeria Tachiquín, a quien un patrullero mató de nueve balazos calibre 38, disparados a menos de un metro de distancia.

**ESTA ES LA PRIMERA VEZ QUE LOS HIJOS DE VÍCTIMAS DE ABUSOS DE AGENTES FRONTERIZOS Y DE MIGRACIÓN SE PRONUNCIAN PÚBLICAMENTE.**

**San Diego •** Los cinco hijos de una mujer que un patrullero fronterizo estadounidense mató de nueve disparos y los de un mexicano que fue golpeado por una docena de agentes hasta morir demandaron en la garita de San Ysidro que las autoridades ejerzan justicia.

Los cinco hijos menores de Valeria Tachiquín, a quien un patrullero mató de nueve balazos calibre 38, disparados a menos de un metro de distancia, y los de Anastasio Hernández, muerto esposado a golpes y con descargas eléctricas, realizaron la protesta el viernes pasado.

Además, estuvo el hijo de un mexicano, José Gutiérrez, a quien patrulleros fronterizos golpearon tanto que quedó un mes en estado de coma y no fue deportado porque le tuvieron que extraer cinco fragmentos de cráneo.

Igualmente estuvo el hermano menor, de seis años de edad, de un joven mexicano de 19 años, Carlos Lamadrid, a quien patrulleros fronterizos mataron de tres tiros por la espalda cuando intentaba alcanzar la frontera mexicana para evitar que lo arrestaran.

Esta es la primera vez que los hijos de víctimas de abusos de agentes fronterizos y de migración se pronuncian públicamente porque ninguno de esos casos ha sido juzgado ni resuelto.

En la protesta participaron los gemelos Daniela y Daniel Hernández, hijos de Anastasio Hernández y de siete años de edad. El forense de San Diego decretó que la muerte de su padre fue homicidio cuando ambos recién cumplían cuatro años.

Jesús Carlos Lamadrid tomó el micrófono y dijo: "Quiero que me digan por qué mataron a mi hermano, si nada más estaba jugando". Su madre, Guadalupe Guerrero mientras tanto no podía hablar porque se ahogaba en llanto.

Las niñas Rebeca y Ana Lía Alvarado, hijas de Valeria Tachiquín, portaban cruces de madera y un cartel con la fotografía de su mamá, mientras su abuelo, Valentín Tachiquín, contaba en la garita a gritos del uno al nueve los disparos que impactaron a su hija de 32 años.

Estuvo también el hijo de José Gutiérrez en brazos de su madre, Shena Gutiérrez, del estado de Arizona.

Los padres y abuelos de los menores que participaron en la protesta se entrevistarán este martes en Washington con legisladores para pedirles que en el paquete de iniciativas para una reforma migratoria incluyan una que responsabilice a las autoridades cuando cometan abusos de poder.

Christian Ramírez, el coordinador de la Alianza de Comunidades Fronterizas, dijo que es momento de que los patrulleros y oficiales fronterizos se capaciten para evitar abusos y para integrarse como parte importante de las comunidades en la región.

<http://www.milenio.com/cdb/doc/noticias2011/ab7472b5424e044143975e4b2127e52b>

### **Threat of kidnappings increase in Tamaulipas**

2/21/2013 - The [U.S. Consulate General](#) is sending out a reminder to U.S. citizens of the recent kidnapping threat in Tamaulipas. The consulate warns of kidnapping and other criminal activities in the northern areas of the state along the border. They suggest that people travel during daylight hours only and not to display any evidence of wealth. U.S. citizens should follow the [U.S. Department of State's Travel Warning](#) for Mexico. Contact Mexican law enforcement if you fear a U.S. citizen family member has been kidnapped. It is suggested that U.S. citizens traveling to Mexico enroll in the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP).

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=863928#.USf-G1dhj-I>

### **Texas tightens rules on shooting from helicopters**

2/21/2013 - AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Nearly four months after a [Texas state trooper](#) in a helicopter fired on a [pickup truck](#) speeding along the U.S.-Mexico border, killing two



Guatemalan immigrants, state officials said Thursday that troopers are now forbidden from aerial shooting unless they're under fire.

Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steve McCraw announced the policy change while facing questions from lawmakers about the deadly high-speed pursuit near La Joya in October. The truck was mistakenly thought to be carrying a drug load, and DPS says a trooper opened fire to disable the vehicle because it was barreling toward a school zone.

McCraw continued to defend that shooting, even while rolling out new rules that would now forbid it. "I'm convinced that now, from a helicopter platform, that we shouldn't shoot unless being shot at, or someone is being shot at," McCraw said.

According to the revised policy later released by DPS, "a firearms discharge from an aircraft is authorized only when an officer reasonably believes that the suspect has used or is about to use deadly force by use of a deadly weapon against the air crew, ground officers or innocent third parties." A suspect driving aggressively or recklessly does not constitute use of a deadly weapon, the new policy states.

The American Civil Liberties Union quickly applauded the move. "We are relieved that Texas is ending this extreme practice, which no other Southwestern border states have ever allowed," said Terri Burke, executive director of the ACLU of Texas. "We hope that this decision is a step, if only a small one, toward ending the culture of violence that pervades enforcement of border security in Texas."

Criminal prosecutors in Hidalgo County still are investigating the shooting, which caused the truck to crash into a ditch. Two illegal immigrants died, and a third was injured. Authorities said the wounded immigrants were among six hiding under a blanket in the truck's bed.

"I'm a firm believer they did exactly what they thought they needed to do," McCraw said Thursday. The incident began with a chase after Texas Parks and Wildlife game wardens spotted a red pickup near La Joya and the U.S.-Mexico border, about 250 miles south of San Antonio. The wardens requested help, and the DPS helicopter joined midway in the 14-mile, high-speed pursuit of what authorities said they believed was a "typical covered drug load."

In the days following the incident, civil rights groups and the Guatemalan government expressed concerns that DPS essentially was investigating itself because the Texas Rangers, who were leading the investigation, fall under the DPS umbrella. A week after the incident, McCraw said he had asked the FBI and the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division to investigate and would turn over the Texas Rangers' report.

<http://news.yahoo.com/texas-tightens-rules-shooting-helicopters-015051007.html>

## **Home Invasions a Growing Problem in Hidalgo County**

Feb 20, 2013 - EDINBURG - Hidalgo County's top lawman says home invasions are becoming a major problem in the region. Hidalgo County Sheriff Lupe Trevino said his deputies have responded to nine home invasions in two months. He expects that number to keep climbing. "Home invasions have been a real problem for us, and they have always been. It is a priority crime situation for us," Trevino said.

The sheriff said the home invasions have one thing in common. "Of the nine home invasions that we have investigated, eight of them have some sort of nexus to a drug-trafficking organization or a human-traffic organization," he said. He said the criminals often target the wrong residents.

"Sometimes they get flawed intelligence. ... The people that they are looking for might have just moved from their rent houses and somebody else moved in, and they get their door kicked down," Trevino said. "They might get the wrong intersection ... the wrong address. It does happen to innocent people," Trevino said. Most of the times, the criminals take jewelry or televisions.

Trevino said some of the victims don't give investigators all the details about the crimes. **The sheriff blames the raise on home invasions on gangs and drug-trafficking organizations.**

"When we speak of traffic organizations, I am referring to local organizations," Trevino said. "We have had some reports where drug trafficking organizations in Mexico have ordered a home invasion in order to retrieve what they think was there. Those are few and far in between," he said.

The sheriff urges the public to be aware of what happens in their neighborhoods. Trevino said he created a special task force to fight the home invasions.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/home-invasions-a-growing-problem-in-hidalgo-county/>

## **Border Patrol catches fugitive from massive Mexican prison break**

2/19/2013 - Agents on Saturday arrested [Mario Nazario Valadez](#), 31. He was one of 12 immigrants suspected of being in the country illegally who agents found on a ranch near Bracketville, east of Del Rio, according to a news release from Border Patrol.

In September, more than 130 prisoners broke out of a prison near Piedras Negras, downstream from Del Rio. The prison break was believed to have been orchestrated by the Zetas drug cartel, which controls drug trafficking in Piedras Negras and Ciudad Acuña, across the border from Del Rio.

Nazario has served time in the U.S. for drug charges and was in prison for a murder charge in Mexico when he escaped, according to the Border Patrol.

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/Border-Patrol-catches-fugitive-from-massive-4290665.php#ixzz2MXzvMhOl](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Border-Patrol-catches-fugitive-from-massive-4290665.php#ixzz2MXzvMhOl)

### **Increased violence prompts Nuevo Laredo travel warning**

2/09/2013 - The U.S. Consulate is alerting the public about traveling in and out of Nuevo Laredo. They are asking citizens to take precautions due to the recent violence that has erupted in the area. Within a seven day period, there were eight murders and five arson attacks on local residence. On Thursday, several gun battles broke out including grenade explosions near the U.S. Consulate General in Nuevo Laredo.

#### **Safety suggestions from the U.S. Consulate:**

- remain aware of your surroundings
- monitor local news stations for updates
- maintain a high level of vigilance
- take appropriate steps to enhance personal security
- follow instructions of local authorities

<http://www.valleycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=858593#.USTwNWdhj-I>

### **Security Message (February 08, 2013)**

The U.S. Consulate in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico alerts U.S. citizens traveling and residing in the Nuevo Laredo Consular District to an increase in violence related to Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO) in and around Nuevo Laredo. In the past week, there have been at least 8 murders and 5 arson attacks on local residences. On the evening of February 7, 2013, a series of gun battles between TCO elements included three grenade explosions in the vicinity of the U.S. Consulate General in Nuevo Laredo. Mexican law enforcement sources tell us the increased violence is likely the result of rival TCO elements fighting for control of the city and that similar attacks are likely to continue in the near-term.

Danger to innocent bystanders is high, and the U.S. Consulate urges all U.S. citizens to review their personal security plans; remain aware of their surroundings, including local events; and monitor local news stations for updates. Maintain a high level of vigilance, take appropriate steps to enhance your personal security, and follow instructions of local authorities.

In order to receive the most current security information available, the U.S. Consulate in Nuevo Laredo encourages all United States Citizens living in or visiting the Nuevo Laredo Consular district to "Follow Us" on *Twitter*, or "Like Us" on *Facebook*. The Consulate will use *Twitter* and *Facebook* to disseminate regular and time sensitive information related to the security situation in and around Nuevo Laredo.

[http://nuevolaredo.usconsulate.gov/sm\\_20130208.html](http://nuevolaredo.usconsulate.gov/sm_20130208.html)

### **3 Laredoans killed; U.S. officials eye store attack**

2/7/2013 - The FBI and the Tamaulipas attorney general's office are investigating the deaths of four people — three of them U.S. citizens — who were killed Saturday night in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. They were killed when gunmen attacked Super Plus Carmen, the store where the three U.S. citizens worked, in the downtown historical district. At first, a teenager was taken hostage and was wounded in the attack, according to a federal source who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Tamaulipas officials, the [U.S. Consulate](#) in Nuevo Laredo and the FBI identified three of the victims: brothers [Carlos Alvarado García](#), 32, and [Sergio Andrés Alvarado Gómez](#), 30, and their father, [Efraín Alvarado Chávez](#), 64, all U.S. citizens who lived in Laredo. The Tamaulipas attorney general's office didn't identify the fourth victim, a customer who was at the store when it was attacked. The store is a few blocks from Nuevo Laredo city offices, federal authorities said. A U.S. consular official said the U.S. consulate in Nuevo Laredo was informed of the deaths of three U.S. citizens early Sunday.

“We are waiting for more information before we can reveal more details out of respect for the families involved,” an official said. An FBI spokesman, Special Agent Erik Vasys, said the agency heard about the incident Monday. He confirmed the agency is investigating the deaths. A Tamaulipas attorney general's office spokesman said large-caliber weapons were used in the shootings.

“This same weapon has been used in other recent attacks. It's the same pattern of conduct,” the spokesman said. “We are investigating who might have done this.” The spokesman said investigators didn't know the motive behind the attack. News of the deaths brought hundreds of mourners to a local funeral home to visit family members Tuesday.

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/3-Laredoans-killed-U-S-officials-eye-store-4261838.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/3-Laredoans-killed-U-S-officials-eye-store-4261838.php)

### **What is the best regulatory framework for legalized marijuana?**

Thursday, January 31, 2013

*[Gary J. Hale](#), the nonresident fellow in drug policy at the Baker Institute, authors the second of a three-part [Baker Institute Viewpoints](#) series on the regulatory framework for legalized marijuana. Hale is the former chief of intelligence for the Houston Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration. California drug policy expert Tom Heddleston wrote the first entry in the series, “[A bold new path: Moving beyond prohibition in Colorado and Washington.](#)”*

The best manner by which to deal with the issue of legal marijuana is to provide context to the meaning of “legal.” The “legality” of marijuana must be addressed in terms that define the movement of the drug from the source to the street, or in this case, from the land to the lip.

In the case of persons who choose to become wholesalers of the drug, and there will be many, there is a business model that will be followed to commercialize the production, transportation, sale and profits made from marijuana. First, the plant had to be cultivated, then, in some cases moved from its place of origin to market for distribution. As a result, new rules, regulations and/or laws will have to take into account the profits that will be generated from the sale of marijuana. The difference between whether an individual becomes a wholesaler, or is characterized as a personal user, will determine whether the federal government steps in to enforce laws that several states have chosen to liberalize through legislative change, or whether the federal government decides to not enforce the laws at all.

That is to say that while the federal government may look the other way when it comes to the possession and consumption of personal-use quantities, the U.S. attorney general could rightfully order the Drug Enforcement Administration and other federal law enforcement agencies to enforce the Controlled Substances Act when it is found that marijuana wholesalers are attempting to blend their activities with those of individual cultivators or consumers, or to hide behind liberalized state laws. Wholesale marijuana sales would likely not be tolerated by the federal government, despite the spirit of the state laws that are intended to decriminalize the personal-use of small amounts of marijuana.

Serious thought must be given to determining whether wholesale cultivation of marijuana qualifies to enjoy the liberties of legalization. There is a big difference between a person who grows a few plants in his backyard for individual consumption and a person who cultivates a plantation or who imports bales of marijuana from outside the United States for the purpose of generating significant profits.

The states should take the initiative to develop a threshold for personal-use quantities. It must be remembered that federal law supersedes state law in regard to this question and that it is only by the good graces of the U.S. attorney general that the federal government has taken a back seat to state activism in legalizing marijuana.

It is also likely that the U.S. attorney general’s office is waiting to see what Congress does in the wake of state laws legalizing personal use of marijuana before it develops policy at the Department of Justice. Full legalization of the possession and use of user-quantities of marijuana will only be reached if and when the Congress changes marijuana from its current designation as a prohibited substance under Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

Under federal law, Schedule I drugs are the only category of controlled substances that may not be prescribed by a physician. Under [21 U.S.C. § 812b](#), Schedule I drugs must meet three criteria: the drug or other substance has a high potential for abuse; the drug or other

substance has no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States; and that it is not recognized for safe use under medical supervision.

Congress will have to carefully examine whether these criteria, as well as the definitions and application of verbiage such as “high potential for abuse,” and “no currently accepted medical use in treatment” and “lack of accepted safety for the use of the drug” are terms that have become obsolete, or overcome by events — or whether they still apply to marijuana as a drug when alcohol abuse could easily be defined with these same criteria. These definitions are certainly open for discussion by Congress, especially because they can easily be argued by both proponents and opponents of legalization, depending on which side of the debate they may take.

Therefore, the best regulatory framework for the legalization of marijuana is one that clearly differentiates between user-quantities being cultivated and consumed by an individual, as opposed to wholesale commercial cultivation and sales activities being conducted by entrepreneurs that would otherwise be attempting to break federal laws — measures that are not intended to infringe on individual rights, but to preserve the safety and welfare of the public at large.

*[Gary J. Hale](#) is the nonresident fellow in drug policy at the Baker Institute. From 2000 to 2010, he was chief of intelligence in the Houston Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration. From 1990 to 1997, Hale had various assignments in Washington, D.C., including serving as chief of the Heroin Investigations Support Unit, chief of the Dangerous Drugs Intelligence Unit and liaison to the National Security Agency. During this period, he also served a tour of duty at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia. From 1997 to 1998, Hale was assigned as the DEA intelligence chief at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.*

<http://blog.chron.com/bakerblog/2013/01/what-is-the-best-regulatory-framework-for-legalized-marijuana/>

## **Border Security and Migration: A Report from South Texas**

23 Jan 2013 - Since 2011, WOLA staff have carried out research in six different zones of the U.S.-Mexican border, meeting with U.S. law enforcement officials, human rights and humanitarian groups, and journalists, as well as with Mexican officials and representatives of civil society and migrant shelters in Mexico. As part of this ongoing work, the authors spent the week of November 26-30, 2012 in south Texas, looking at security and migration trends along this section of the U.S.-Mexico border. Specifically, we visited Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Mexico.

We found that unlike other sections of the border, the south Texas sections have seen an increase, not a decrease, in apprehensions, particularly of non-Mexican migrants; migrant deaths have dramatically increased; and there are fewer accusations of Border Patrol abuse of migrants. We also found that the Zetas criminal organization’s control over the area may be slipping and drug trafficking appears to have increased, yet these U.S. border towns are safer than they have been in decades. Lastly, in spite of the ongoing violence on the Mexican



side of the border and the failure of the Mexican government to reform local and state police forces, U.S. authorities are increasing repatriating Mexicans through this region, often making migrants easy prey for the criminal groups that operate in these border cities.



**Bucking the migration trend:** One of the biggest changes along the entire U.S.-Mexico border since the mid-2000s has been a sharp reduction in the number of migrants being [apprehended](#) by U.S. law enforcement (and thus, probably, a similarly sharp drop in migrants who are crossing the border). The area we visited, however—especially the southernmost region (the Border Patrol’s Rio Grande Valley Sector)—bucked this trend in 2012: it saw a [sharp increase in the flow of migrants](#) this year. While official 2012 numbers aren’t out yet, the Rio Grande Valley Sector experienced a 60 to 70 percent increase in apprehensions of migrants over 2011, to somewhere around 100,000.

**“Other than Mexicans”:** Virtually all of this growth in migration, officials say, consists of “OTMs,” local authorities’ shorthand for “Other than Mexican”—chiefly, citizens of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. For the first time in any U.S-Mexico border sector, non-Mexicans made up the majority of this year’s [annual total of apprehended migrants](#) in the [Rio Grande Valley](#). The security crisis of Central America’s “Northern Triangle” countries, along with ongoing poverty and lack of employment opportunities, were the reasons most frequently cited by the officials and experts with whom we spoke. It is remarkable that Central Americans are increasingly traveling through this vector instead of trying to cross elsewhere; though it is the shortest distance from Central America, the Mexican state of Tamaulipas is notorious for the frequency and brutality of violence that criminal groups commit against migrants, including the August 2010 massacre of 72 migrants, mostly Central American, in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, just 100 miles from the U.S. border.

**Migrant deaths are way up in south Texas:** Despite the danger on the Mexican side, the Tamaulipas-Texas border still appears to be attractive to migrants. Currently the Rio Grande Valley sector has 52 miles of fence along 317 miles of riverfront border, and the crossing is increasingly deadly. Some migrants drown in their attempt to cross the swift river. An even larger number are dying of dehydration and exposure in the dry scrublands north of the border towns. Once past the border, migrants seek to continue northward—toward Houston, Dallas, and further on—where employment opportunities are greater.

Doing so, though, requires leaving the roads and walking many miles through arid, shadeless terrain in order to avoid Border Patrol and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) checkpoints. Many migrants begin this long walk already dehydrated after days of neglect in a smuggler's "safe house." The bodies of [about 127 migrants](#) were recovered in 2012 in Brooks County (an hour north of the border) alone, nearly double the grim 2011 number and similar to the 150-200 annual deaths [normally recorded in Arizona](#), where the tragedy gets more attention.

**The Zetas' control is strong, but perhaps slipping:** On the U.S. side, when we asked residents when they had last crossed into their sister towns in Mexico, the answer was invariably "years." Very few visitors go to Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, or Matamoros; in fact, a large number of wealthy and upper-middle-class residents of those towns has moved across the border into the U.S. towns, taking their businesses (including prominent shops and restaurants) with them. Nuevo Laredo had seen a spike in drug-related violence in 2005 when the Zetas, who were then acting as the enforcer arm of the Gulf cartel, battled with the Sinaloa cartel for control over the area. The Zetas' split with their former bosses in the Gulf cartel caused violence to rise again, reaching horrific levels in Nuevo Laredo and other border cities in 2010. The bloodshed remained frequent after that, as the Zetas went well beyond drugs to include control over networks of extortion, migrant smuggling (we were told that smugglers must pay whoever controls the border area a toll of about US\$500 per migrant), kidnapping, and other highly predatory activity. The population of these cities has been hit very hard; waves of violence, including shootouts in broad daylight in the center of town, have claimed many innocent lives following the takedowns of top Zetas leaders or internal disputes.

This was the first border region where we were warned beforehand that it was inadvisable to cross the border. This was for our own security but also for that of the non-governmental leaders, like migrant shelter personnel, with whom we'd be seen. However, directors of migrant shelters in all three cities said that things had cooled a bit in recent months, and thus it was safe to pay short visits, which we did in Matamoros. The October killing of Zetas boss Heriberto Lazcano and apparent ascent of Miguel Treviño ("Z-40") have not increased violence in Reynosa and Matamoros, apparently, though overall levels remain extremely high. We heard, though, that violence is worse lately in Nuevo Laredo and further west in Coahuila state.

U.S. law enforcement officials coincided in their estimation that the Zetas' grip over this region was slipping a bit, both due to the group's own divisions and possible inroads from the larger Sinaloa cartel. They saw an increase in drug seizures as evidence of looser control, an indication that different groups were seeking to slip drugs into the United States through routes that had previously been locked down. This is an ominous bit of news; if a vacuum of organized crime control has opened up, violence may flare up again in Northeastern Mexico. These vacuums are rarely filled peacefully.

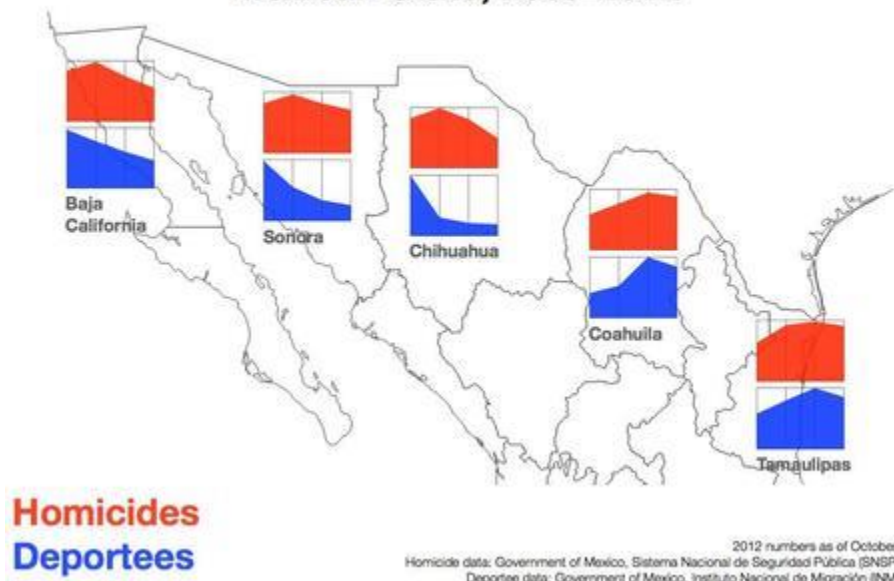
Despite the region's security crisis, **the U.S. government continues to deport apprehended migrants to these Mexican border cities in large numbers.** [Mexican migration authorities](#) have counted more than 58,000 deportees arriving in Matamoros



alone in 2012. In this city, agents of the Grupo Beta—Mexico’s National Migration Institute’s search and rescue unit—told us that rather than rescuing migrants in distress, their main task is now protecting repatriated migrants. In addition to Mexicans detained in the interior of the United States and deported by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the relatively new U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Alien Transfer Exit Program (ATEP) deports some detained migrants “laterally” by sending them to Mexican border towns hundreds of miles from where they were captured in order to break the link between the migrant and his smuggler. Most migrants apprehended in south Texas who end up being deported through ATEP get sent on a near-daily flight 1,000 miles westward to Calexico, California, from which they are sent into the relatively low-crime city of Mexicali, Baja California. However, a smaller but very troubling number of ATEP migrants are still detained elsewhere and [deported into Matamoros](#). As they arrive in this unfamiliar city, these deportees face a high probability of being preyed upon—or even recruited—by the criminals who control illegal activity. That U.S. authorities would be moving migrants from elsewhere along the border and deporting them into high-risk Matamoros is inexplicable.

In fact, a review of data from Mexican security and migration authorities reveals a troubling trend: as border zones become less secure, they receive more deportees. In every Mexican border state that saw an increase in homicides since 2009, deportations from the United States also increased. In Mexican states where homicides declined, deportations also declined.

### Homicide and U.S. Deportation Trends, by Mexican State, 2009-2012



These data don’t indicate something as nefarious as U.S. migration authorities deliberately placing deportees in harm’s way. And we understand that there are many factors that influence the number of deportations per sector, such as the number of ICE removals, ATEP, and apprehensions of migrants by the Border Patrol in each sector. However, the

numbers do indicate that U.S. migration authorities either aren't taking security risks into account when they deport people, or if they are, that they are not even close to keeping up to date on Mexico's shifting patterns of violence.



**Mexico's state and local level security forces remain profoundly unreformed:** Not long after the government of former Mexican President Felipe Calderón deployed the military to this territory to take on the cartels, the municipal police forces of Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Matamoros were all but disbanded. These police were seen as incorrigibly controlled by organized crime, and we universally heard similar complaints about the Tamaulipas state police who continue to patrol these cities. Distrust of these police is very high. Mexico's Federal Police, meanwhile, do not yet have a strong presence in this zone. Of all security forces, the Mexican armed forces (Army and Marines) are the least distrusted. Regardless of political leanings, Mexicans in this zone support the military presence in their border towns due to an utter lack of other options. While they certainly don't back the military unconditionally, they view them as far more likely to protect them. It is the military that confronts the criminal groups in these cities, with shootouts and blockades (*bloqueos*, in which criminals hijack a large vehicle and park it across a busy road to impede military pursuers) a frequent occurrence. In Matamoros, we had to drive around a bus that had been parked across an intersection hours earlier. When we asked U.S. law enforcement officials which Mexican security forces they interacted with most frequently, they uniformly cited the military or the federal Attorney General's office (*Procuraduría General de la República*, PGR).

**Drug trafficking has generally increased:** Laredo, where Interstate 35 begins its route to Dallas and up to Minneapolis, is the United States' busiest land port, with about 7,000 trucks per day crossing into and out of Mexico. This much commercial traffic also means a

lot of drug trafficking, a big reason why the Nuevo Laredo *plaza* is fought over so intensely. Continuing a trend that goes back at least to 2005, U.S. law enforcement continues to increase the amount of drugs it seizes in the Laredo and Rio Grande Valley sectors, though there is some variation by type of drug. The increases mean that agents are getting better at stopping drugs, but they also tell us that the big buildup of U.S. border security measures is not deterring traffickers. Heroin seizures, we were told, are up dramatically in the Laredo sector. Authorities have also begun to encounter large quantities of something new: liquid methamphetamine. In the Rio Grande Valley sector, seizures of marijuana are up from about 400,000 pounds in 2008 to over 1 million pounds in 2011. Drugs like heroin, meth, cocaine, and synthetics, for which even small quantities fetch sky-high profits, are principally trafficked through official border crossings. Marijuana, which is much bulkier, is more frequently smuggled across the Rio Grande in rural areas.

**There is no “spillover” violence:** More drugs have not meant more violence on the U.S. side of the border. The broad consensus among all we interviewed—police chiefs, federal law-enforcement officials, journalists, activists, and the helpful staff of the Laredo Convention and Visitors’ Bureau (creators of the [www.laredoisafe.com](http://www.laredoisafe.com) campaign)—all agreed that the towns on the U.S. side are safer than they have been in decades. Crime statistics bear this out: murder and most other violent crime rates are lower in Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville than in Texas’s principal cities. Residents voiced annoyance with politicians in Austin and Washington, including members of Congress from non-border districts, who portray their towns as a “war zone” in order, in their view, to pursue anti-immigration agendas. They contend that their words discourage tourism and hurt business.

There have been a few incidents of what could be called “border violence” or “spillover violence”: a handful of murders that could be gangland hits, and some “safe houses” hiding dozens of northward-bound migrants, who in some cases may be unable to leave until relatives send extortion payments. The main crime concern in these U.S. border cities is an increase in kidnappings and home invasions; these, however, appear to be the work of U.S.-based, not Mexican, perpetrators. In rural areas, ranchers say that they feel menaced by drug or migrant traffickers crossing their lands, but incidents have been exceedingly infrequent; a more immediate concern is the increasing number of bodies of migrants, dead of dehydration and exposure, appearing on ranchlands.

**Allegations of abuse are less frequent here than in Arizona and California:** Relations between Border Patrol and the local community—including rights advocates and humanitarian groups—were much less confrontational in these sectors than we had seen in Arizona and California. Allegations of migrants abused in detention (assaulted, denied food and water, held in stress positions, having belongings stolen) were much less frequent, though advocates said that these remained a concern. In the Rio Grande Valley sector, Border Patrol even leaves water at the rescue beacons in rural migrant corridors in an effort to reduce dehydration deaths, a practice that Border Patrol’s Tucson, Arizona sector discourages, despite the fact that simple measures like this one could save lives. Most complaints of abuse or improper use of force were leveled not at Border Patrol but at the Texas DPS, which carries out its own border operations and, in late October, fired on a truckload of migrants from a helicopter near McAllen, killing two Guatemalan citizens.

Some interviewees expressed strong dismay about a September incident in which a Border Patrol agent in a boat allegedly responded to rock-throwers by firing on a picnicking family on the Mexico side of the Rio Grande, killing the father. In recent memory, they said, they had not faced such use-of-force issues with Border Patrol in their sector.

[http://www.wola.org/commentary/border\\_security\\_and\\_migration\\_a\\_report\\_from\\_south\\_texas](http://www.wola.org/commentary/border_security_and_migration_a_report_from_south_texas)

## **Zetas and prison gang members enter pleas in Laredo**

By Jason Buch - Updated 1:59 am, Friday, January 11, 2013

A Laredo gun smuggler, who police say ran a cell of the Zetas drug cartel, admitted in federal court Thursday to working with the same arms traffickers who provided the gang with a machine gun used in the killing of a U.S. agent. In November 2010, [Nicolas Sanchez Reyes](#), 50, tried to smuggle 40 weapons into Mexico. But the guns, mostly rifles and machine pistols, were seized near the border.

Prosecutors said the guns came from the Dallas-area weapons buyers who earlier that year had purchased a Draco AK-47 pistol used in the killing of Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agent Jaime Zapata. Zapata, a Laredo-based agent working in Mexico, and ICE Agent Victor Avila were forced off the road in the Mexican state of San Luis Potosí by cartel gunmen in February 2011.

Zapata was killed and Avila was wounded in the confrontation. Sanchez also faces three counts of capital murder in killings that state prosecutors say were ordered by Zetas leaders in Mexico. He has pleaded not guilty to those charges. Sanchez was “working on smuggling arms into Mexico, not in doing hits for the Zetas,” said his attorney, [J. Eduardo Peña](#).

A legal permanent resident and Laredo freight forwarder, Sanchez pleaded guilty Thursday to one count of exporting weapons to Mexico. He faces up to five years in prison. One of his alleged underlings and three members and associates of a U.S. prison gang also pleaded guilty Thursday to kidnapping charges. Police believe Sanchez oversaw the Zetas muscle in the Laredo, the gang's most important smuggling point into the U.S.

The investigation into the kidnapping, homicides and gun-trafficking began with an operation by the [Drug Enforcement Administration](#) in Chicago targeting Zetas who were smuggling drug proceeds. That investigation led to the seizure of more than \$20 million in cash heading south from Chicago, Philadelphia and Dallas and it led agents to Sanchez, who prosecutors say answered to the gang's leadership in Mexico. Millions of dollars were seized in and near San Antonio.

A Laredo police detective testified during a 2011 court hearing that the department was contacted in September 2010 by DEA agents involved in the money smuggling investigation. More than \$1 million of the Zetas' money had gone missing, the detective testified, and agents tapping the gang member's phones had overheard Zetas leaders ordering a Laredo-based cell to find the thief.

The investigation revealed details about three homicides ordered by the Zetas, overseen by Sanchez and carried out by members of the Hermandad Pistoleros Latinos prison gang, the detective said. The wiretaps also led investigators back north. Federal agents traced Sanchez's weapons smuggling to the Zetas' Dallas-based suppliers, [Otilio Osorio](#) and his brother Ranferi.

A month earlier, Otilio Osorio had purchased the machine pistol used in the attack on Zapata, court documents say. Both brothers are serving time in prison. Zapata's family members, in a lawsuit against the federal government, has given a different version of events. They say [Bureau of Alcohol](#), Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agents engaged in a "gun-walking" probe, in which firearms were allowed to enter Mexico in order to uncover their buyers.

Zapata's family drew comparisons to Fast and Furious, an probe by the ATF in Arizona that allowed gunmen to get their hands on a weapon that was used during a shootout that killed Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry in 2010. Four others pleaded guilty Tuesday to charges related to the September 2010 kidnapping attempt that Laredo police broke up after being alerted to it by the DEA.

[Pablo Cerda](#), 36, who prosecutors allege was one of Sanchez's underlings; along with [Ernesto Zaragoza-Solis](#), 29, and [Efrain Garza](#), 31, who were Pistoleros gang members, pleaded guilty to kidnapping conspiracy charges. They face up to five years in prison. Grace Diaz-Martinez, 33, admitted to being an accessory after the fact. Dozens of people have been charged in connection with cash smuggling, including Eduardo "Don Aldo" Treviño, 51, who prosecutors say oversaw from Mexico the transportation of drug proceeds. The investigation also uncovered a small trafficking organization that smuggled cocaine through San Antonio to Florida.

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/Zetas-and-prison-gang-members-enter-pleas-in-4183779.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Zetas-and-prison-gang-members-enter-pleas-in-4183779.php)

## Leader of Zetas smuggling cell pleads guilty

By Guillermo Contreras - Updated 9:44 pm, Thursday, January 10, 2013

A San Antonio woman who led a cell that smuggled up to 200 unauthorized immigrants a month for the Zetas cartel pleaded guilty Thursday, along with her brother and an associate. The cell leader, [April Gaitan](#), 26, [Armando Gaitan](#), 29, and [Sonia Campos-Delgado](#), 34, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges for their role in the ring that smuggled loads of immigrants from Mexico and Central America through Nuevo Laredo and Villa Hidalgo, Mexico.

Homeland security officials dismantled the ring of at least 28 smugglers in September. The officials said the ring charged the immigrants \$2,500 each — part of the hefty “tax” imposed by the Zetas — and hid them in houses and motels, first along the border and then in staging houses in San Antonio, Austin and in rural locations.

Court records said April Gaitan was in regular phone contact with ringleader [Fernando Martinez-Magana](#), 40, about the smuggling activities. He's a fugitive, also known as “Zeta 16,” “Dieciséis” and “Don Fernando” — a member of the Zetas cartel. Homeland security officials said he “controls all alien smuggling” in Nuevo Laredo.

Court records said the organization used stolen pickups to move their loads and scout vehicles to watch for law enforcement and divert police away from load vehicles.

“It was the hallmark of the organization that the load drivers would not stop for law enforcement but would evade capture, sometimes by crashing through fences, forcing the aliens to bail out of the pickup,” court records said.

Court records also said April Gaitan had a leadership role and at one point was caught on tape saying she would call immigration authorities on a rival smuggler to have him deported so the Zetas could kill him. Court records also said Armando Gaitan and Sonia Campos-Delgado acted as scouts on multiple occasions.

Ledgers reflecting the smuggling activities were found both at the home where Armando and April live and at their parents' home, court documents said. A handful of other ring members pleaded guilty late last year, and more guilty pleas are expected soon. Chief U.S. District Judge [Fred Biery](#) set sentencing for later this year, and they all could face up to 20 years in prison.

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/Leader-of-Zetas-smuggling-cell-pleads-guilty-4184066.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Leader-of-Zetas-smuggling-cell-pleads-guilty-4184066.php)

## Shooting Unnerves Residents of Starr County Neighborhood



01/10/2013 - RIO GRANDE CITY - Residents of a neighborhood near the border in Rio Grande City are on edge after a Border Patrol shooting Wednesday night. Illegal immigrants often try to blend in with neighbors in the rows of homes a short distance from the Rio Grande, residents said.

"There used to be very little traffic," Linda Lopez said. Now, recognizing a face is rare, she said. "If somebody came along you knew who they were from this street or the other streets," Lopez said. She wasn't surprised to learn about a shooting less than a block away from her home. Lopez and her neighbors were among the first to see the shooting's aftermath.

"There was a fire truck there. It was parked long ways on the street over here ... there were cars all blocking in something," Lopez said. The cars were blocking an injured immigrant smuggler, officials said. The man had been shot while trying to run over an agent, officials said. Lopez married into the neighborhood. Her husband has lived there for 55 years. The river is less than 500 yards away from her home, she said.

She said illegal activity increased during the past two to three years. Illegal immigrants regularly trek through her neighborhood. "I see the Border Patrol and I see them go by several times a day, even at night when I'm out with my dog. ... That feels good to know they're around," Lopez said.

<http://www.krgv.com/news/shooting-unnerves-residents-of-starr-county-neighborhood/>