



FORUM: Security Council

QUESTION OF: The Issue of Mexican Drug Cartels and their International Impact

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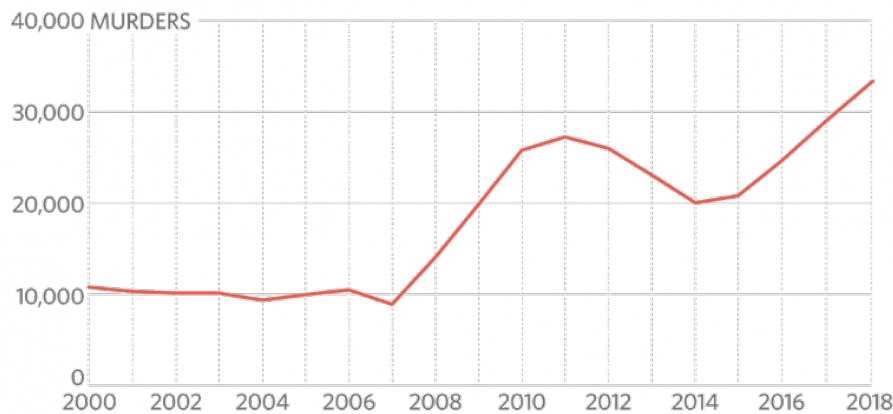
POSITION: President

INTRODUCTION

In the last years homicide rate in Mexico has been higher than ever recorded in modern Mexican history. Violence and corruption has become a part of daily life. The reason for this development is the rise of drug cartels fighting each other over territory and power. Nearly every Mexican village is controlled by highly violent groups, which spread fear across the country.

Mexico: Total Murders by Year

In 2018, the number of murders in Mexico, many of them drug-related, reached its highest level ever.



Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI)

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Total Murders by year in Mexico ¹

But not only do these drug cartels affect Mexico, also in other countries, especially in the United States, do cartels and affiliated street gangs have gained an alarming amount of control.

¹<https://mexiconewsdaily.com/opinion/tracking-mexicos-cartels-in-2019/> / INEGI

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- DTO (=Drug Trafficking Organisation)

Structured organisation dedicated to producing, transporting and distributing drugs often linked to violence

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

From 1929 to 2000 Mexico was governed by one party only, the PRI. The uninterrupted period of power during 71 years enabled criminal groups to establish a network of corruption.

When the governance of the PRI ended in 2000 there were continuous violent actions against the government. However, a strategy to disrupt DTOs was first developed in 2006 after the election of Felipe Calderon as the new president. Security forces were deployed, which led to an increase of violence in Mexico.

The following presidents Enrique Peña Nieto and Andres M. Lopez Obrador continued the fight against violent drug cartels² but no long term solution could be found until today.

The Mexican drug business is estimated to be worth thousands of billions a year. Its main products are heroin and methamphetamines, while cocaine is mainly produced in Columbia and transported through Mexico.

The violence caused by cartels has a damaging effect on the Mexican economy. A research of Harvard University³ showed a decrease of 40% in export growth in municipalities that are highly affected by Drug Cartel violence.

Not only has the Mexican Drug War an impact on Mexico, but also on other countries around the world. Rather than economical issues it is the violence Mexican cartels are bringing especially to the United States. Arizona, Texas and California are struggling with gang violence linked to Mexican Cartels.

It has to be kept in mind that most of the drug cartel's financing comes from American drug consumers⁴. In 2009 former Secretary General Hillary Clinton said "United States bears shared responsibility for the drug-fueled violence sweeping Mexico"⁵

In Guatemala 75% of the Country is controlled by "Los Zetas", a Mexican Drug Cartel, through violence, corruption and infiltration in the countries companies. In Italy Mexican Cartels joined forces with the Sicilian Mafia and therefore enforced Italian criminality.

MAJOR DTO'S INVOLVED

²see "XII: Previous Attempts to solve the Issue"

³see "The Impact of Mexican Drug War on Trade" by Jesús Gorrín, José Morales, Bernardo Ricca; 2019; <https://growthlab.cid.harvard.edu/publications/impact-mexican-drug-war-trade>

⁴<https://web.archive.org/web/20090130015815/http://worldblog.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2008/06/25/1166487.aspx>

⁵see "Drugs, Guns and Reality Check", The Washington Post, July 21, 2009



Map of DTO areas of dominant influence in 2015 ⁶

The following drug cartels are, in 2019, the most significant Mexican DTOs.

Sinaloa Cartel

Cartel with international impact and one of the oldest and most powerful DTOs, was led by Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman

Jalisco New Generation

Splintered from the Sinaloa Cartel in 2010, highly violent

Juarez Cartel

Rival of the Sinaloa Cartel, in control of the border to New Mexico and Texas

Gulf Cartel

Control over Tamaulipas, diminished influence in the past years

Los Zetas

Originally part of the Gulf Cartel, splintered in 2010, control territory along the Gulf of Mexico coast

⁶Source: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Beltran-Leyva Organisation

Formed in 2008 as partner of *Los Zetas* and *Juarez Cartel*, most of the leaders (Beltran-Leyva-brothers) killed or arrested, loyalists still operate throughout Mexico

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

UNODC (=United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

a body of the *United Nations* fighting drugs and crime all over world, it has not taken much action concerning Mexican Drug War

DEA (=Drug Enforcement Administration)

U.S. enforcement agency combating drug trafficking and distribution within the United States and, in the case of the Mexican Drug War, outside the U.S. but affecting it

Mexico

primarily affected by the Drug War

United States

Partly affected by Cartel violence spreading across the U.S.- Mexican-border

United States, Europe, Canada

Consumers of the drugs produced in Mexico and therefore partly responsible for the issue

West Africa

Used as a staging area for shipments into Western Europe by Mexican Cartels

RELEVANT UN TREATIES AND EVENTS

“UN Convention against Corruption”

1 January 2003

“UN Convention against Illicit Traffic on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances”

20 December 1988

ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

There have been various attempts from the Mexican Government to combat the Mexican drug war. The first president fighting actively drug Cartels was Felipe Calderon. From 2006 to 2012 he deployed security forces, which led to increasing violence.

In 2012 Enrique Pena Nieto, the new president of Mexico, claimed to focus on reducing the violence caused by cartels whilst reinforcing military security. A dropping of violence could not be detected.

The third presidential attempt to disrupt drug cartels was made by Andres M. Lopez Obrador (president since 2018). His strategy consists of loosening the drug laws and forming a new national guard.

In the last 20 years the United States have been involved in solving the issue of Mexican drug cartels. A security partnership named *Merida Initiative* between Mexico and the U.S. was launched in 2007 agreeing on the following aims:

- disrupting organised criminal groups
- institutionalising the rule of law while protecting Human Rights
- creating a border
- building strong communities

Besides a program for the safety of journalists in Mexico, the United Nations has not taken much action concerning Mexican Drug War.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The Mexican Drug War is a highly complex issue and has to be fought on various levels. The most obvious solution is a disruption of the Drug Cartels, which was the aim of the Mexican Government for the past 13 years. Arrestments through a reinforcement of military forces have led to a temporary instability of the Cartel. However it also entailed an increase of violence.

Regarding the young people joining street gangs affiliated to Drug Cartels the Mexican Government has to create alternatives such as new jobs. That way people are prevented from joining the drug business due to a lack of money.

Fighting corruption is another crucial aspect in order to put an end to the Drug related violence. Especially Mexican police departments and military have to be completely reliable.

A solution “from the other side” is a decrease of drug demand in Europe and the United States. For achieving this reasons and possible solutions of drug addiction have to be researched.

Furthermore a higher involvement of the United Nations in the issue is of great importance.

QUESTIONS DELEGATES SHOULD CONSIDER

1. How is your country involved in the conflict?
2. Is your country directly or indirectly affected by Mexican drug cartels?
3. Does your country struggle with corruption and/or violent groups?
4. What laws does your country have on drugs?

USEFUL LINKS/SOURCES:

1. UN Homepage

Everything you need to know about the UN, its bodies and its programmes.

<http://www.un.org/en/index.html>

2. UNODC Website

<https://www.unodc.org>

3. Website of the Council of Foreign Relations of the U.S.

reports on the development of the Drug War and its impact on the U.S.

www.cfr.org/

4. Website of the DEA

Gives an inside view on the work of the DEA in Mexico

<https://www.dea.gov>