



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Mexico - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 18 & Friday 19 June 2015

What are the safest states vis-à-vis drug cartels/gangs violence; do random attacks by drug cartels/gangs occur throughout the country

A report issued in February 2015 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of the preceding year notes:

“Violence remained acute in many areas, however, including Acapulco and parts of the states of Mexico, Jalisco, and Michoacán. The murders often featured extreme brutality designed to maximize the psychological impact on civilians, authorities, and rival groups. In order to combat the growing perception of insecurity, certain government agencies have agreed to suppress news of violent activity throughout the country; nonetheless, the public appears fully aware of the nation's high rate of violent crime” (Freedom House (27 February 2015) *Freedom in the World 2015 – Mexico*).

In March 2015 a report published by the *Institute for Economics and Peace* states:

“The most peaceful state in Mexico is Hidalgo, followed by Yucatán, Querétaro, Campeche, Tlaxcala, and Chiapas” (Institute for Economics and Peace (March 2015) *Mexico Peace Index 2015: Analyzing the Changing Dynamics of Peace in Mexico*, p.4).

This report also states:

“With a few exceptions, states in the southern and eastern regions of Mexico are more peaceful than the western, central, and northern regions” (ibid, p.10).

A publication issued in April 2015 by *Justice in Mexico* notes:

“...violence has been highly localized, has been sporadic, and has frequently shifted from one geographic area to another in recent years” (Justice in Mexico (28 April 2015) *Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2014*, p.12).

This report also notes that:

“The states that were hardest hit by violence after 2008 include the six Mexican border states—Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas—as well as the Pacific states of Sinaloa, Nayarit, Michoacán, and Guerrero. However, violence began to diminish in certain areas in 2011 and 2012, particularly as the number of homicides fell in key states in northern Mexico, including Baja California, Sonora, and Chihuahua” (ibid, p.16).

The *Financial Times* in May 2015 notes the:

“...fragility of Mexico's progress in its efforts to combat violent crime” (Financial Times (8 May 2015) *A deadly new enemy in Mexico's drugs war*).

Newsweek in May 2015 in an opinion piece points out that:

“Although the Mexican government claims that its security strategy is working, levels of violence in the states of Tamaulipas, Guerrero, Michoacán, the eponymous state of Mexico, Chihuahua, Jalisco and Sinaloa suggest otherwise” (*Newsweek* (20 May 2015) *Mexican Drug War: Peña Nieto Desperately Needs a Plan*).

In May 2015 *Voice of America* notes:

“Michoacan and Jalisco have endured some of the worst violence in a Mexican drug war that began to escalate in 2006, when the government deployed troops to combat cartels. Tens of thousands of people nationwide have died in clashes between drug gangs and security forces in nearly the past decade” (*Voice of America* (23 May 2015) *Scores Killed in Western Mexico Gunfight*).

A report issued in May 2015 by *The Guardian* notes:

“...the violence linked to organized criminal activity around the country that has killed an estimated 100,000 people since the drug wars began in 2006” (*The Guardian* (23 May 2015) *Mexican officials: 43 killed in major offensive against drug cartel*).

In June 2015 a book review in the *Los Angeles Times* includes noting that:

“...the cartel wars continue, with some areas quiet (Ciudad Juárez) while others (Michoacán, Tamaulipas) continue to roil” (*Los Angeles Times* (4 June 2015) *Review, 'A Narco History' explores Mexico's drug violence — and U.S. culpability*).

In June 2015 *United Press International* notes:

“There have been more than 21 political assassinations throughout Mexico since October, including the death of mayoral candidate Aid   Nava, who was found decapitated in March. The political killings are assumed to be carried out by the influential and powerful drug cartels that have strained security forces, frightened the electorate and carved some parts of Mexico into places where cartels have more control than government” (*United Press International* (7 June 2015) *Mexico holding midterm elections following months of violence*).

This document also notes:

“...four most dangerous states, Michoacan, Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas...” (*ibid*).

European Union News in June 2015 states:

“The focus of the violence has shifted over the years, but as things stand, the western and southern states – including Guerrero – are bearing the brunt of it” (*European Union News* (9 June 2015) *Hope for change as people mobilise against violence in Mexico's mid-term elections*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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