

News Front Page



- Africa
- Americas
- Asia-Pacific
- Europe
- Middle East
- South Asia
- UK
- Business
- Health
- Science & Environment
- Technology
- Entertainment
- Also in the news

Video and Audio

Programmes

- Have Your Say
- In Pictures
- Country Profiles
- Special Reports

Related BBC sites

- Sport
- Weather
- On This Day
- Editors' Blog
- BBC World Service

Languages

# Mexicans' drug trade fears grow

By James Painter  
BBC Latin America analyst

**Mexicans are increasingly concerned about the impact the country's drugs trade is having on their lives, a BBC World Service poll suggests.**

Some 42% of the 1,266 Mexicans polled in seven cities said they felt less safe than they did a year ago. Fewer than 10% felt safer, while the rest felt about the same.



Few regions in Mexico are free of drug-related violence

Other results from the survey point to growing anxiety about drugs trafficking in their country, which is the main transit point between Colombia - the world's largest supplier of cocaine - and the world's biggest market, the US.

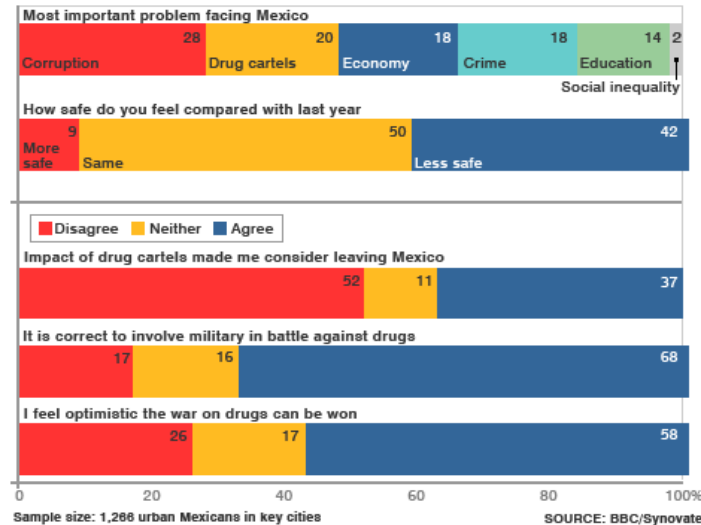
- Thirty-seven per cent of those surveyed said the influence of the drugs cartels had made them think of leaving Mexico
- Drug trafficking was considered the second most important concern in their lives after corruption
- Drugs came above worries about the economy, general crime, education and social inequality.

There has been a sharp rise in drugs-related violence since President Felipe Calderon took office in December 2006.

He has deployed more than 40,000 soldiers in several parts of the country in an attempt to curb the power of the cartels, which trade mostly in cocaine, but also in marijuana and heroin.

He says the violence is proof that his crackdown is working.

### WORLD SERVICE POLL: MEXICO DRUG TRADE



### SEE ALSO

- Mexico seizes \$26m in 'drug cash' 19 Sep 08 | Americas
- Mexican gunmen kill drug patients 15 Aug 08 | Americas
- Mexican fury grows at kidnappings 11 Aug 08 | Americas
- Mexican navy seizes cocaine sub 18 Jul 08 | Americas
- Mexico-US states hold crime talks 29 May 08 | Americas
- Mexico extends army's drugs fight 28 May 08 | Americas
- Gunmen kill top Mexican policemen 11 May 08 | Americas
- Country profile: Mexico 02 Sep 08 | Country profiles

### RELATED BBC LINKS

- BBC Mundo
- BBC Mundo Narco Mexico

### RELATED INTERNET LINKS

- Mexican presidency (in Spanish)

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

### TOP AMERICAS STORIES

- US lifts lid on WikiLeaks probe
- Iran scientist heads home
- Argentina legalises gay marriage

📡 | News feeds

### MOST POPULAR STORIES NOW

SHARED READ WATCHED/LISTENED

- Sessions steps aside from Russia probe
- Groom raped stranger on wedding day
- BBC News
- BBC News
- BBC News
- BBC News
- BBC News
- BBC News
- BBC News
- BBC News
- French candidate Fillon's home raided
- BBC News

Most popular now, in detail

According to the survey results, an apparently contradictory picture emerges of whether Mexicans agree with the government's policy on fighting the drugs war.

- More than half of those surveyed (53%) thought the government was doing better than last year
- A strong majority (68%) agreed with the policy of involving the military in the fight against drug trafficking
- More than half (58%) thought the war on drugs could be won.

However, an overwhelming majority (80%) thought the government should consider seeking other alternatives to end the problem. The respondents were also divided on whether the legalisation of drugs should be considered - 44% said yes, and 46% said no.

### **Violence worsening**

Official figures for the violence show a major escalation since 2007.

So far this year there have already been around 3,000 deaths from drugs-related violence, compared to 2,700 in the whole of last year. Most of the deaths are caused by fighting between rival gangs or clashes with the security forces.

The northern state of Chihuahua, which includes the city of Ciudad Juarez on the Mexican-US border, has been the worst hit.

Other states badly affected are Sinaloa, Baja California, Guerrero and Michoacan.

The northern city of Culiacan in Sinaloa has been the scene of frequent violence, which is usually put down to infighting between the Sinaloa drug cartel and one of its main rivals, the Gulf Cartel.



On one notorious day in July, a group of heavily armed men shot dead 12 people in three separate shoot-outs within a period of eight minutes.

Those polled in Culiacan said they had been badly affected by the drugs violence.

Nearly three in four said they felt less safe than a year ago; about one in every two said they had been affected indirectly and about one in four said they knew someone who had been tempted by the world of drugs trafficking.

There are few regions of Mexico which have not been affected.

- On 16 September, seven civilians were killed and 100 injured as a result of a grenade attack during Independence City celebrations in the western city of Morelia in Michoacan. The state governor blamed drug traffickers
- On 12 September, more than 20 bodies were found dumped about 30 miles (48km) from Mexico City, apparently as a result of a battle between rival drugs gangs
- On 29 August the decapitated bodies of 11 men were found in the state of Yucatan, which had until then largely avoided the violence.

According to figures from the government's public security office, there were a record 443 drug-related murders across the country in July alone.

High levels of drugs-related violence in Latin America are more commonly associated with Colombia than with Mexico.

But analysts say that with the demise of Colombia's Cali and Medellin cartels in the 1990s, it is now Mexican cartels which control, and fight over, the main cocaine routes.

Some observers even say the death rates in parts of Mexico are comparable to those in a war zone.

In Iraq, for example, there were 669 civilian deaths in June according to an NGO, Iraq Body Count. In Afghanistan, Human Rights Watch estimates there were 540 civilian deaths in the first seven months of 2008.

The survey suggests significant numbers of Mexicans across the country have personal experience of the violence.

Of those surveyed, 9% had been directly affected by drugs-related violence, and 32% indirectly affected. Another 16% knew someone who had been tempted to join drugs gangs in order to increase their personal income.

Many of the respondents (42%) attributed the boom in the drug cartels to unemployment and the poor state of the economy.

---

*In total 1,266 Mexicans aged 18-64 from socio-economic group D and above were surveyed by telephone between 28 July and 20 August 2008. The poll was conducted in seven cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Hermosillo, Merida, Queretaro and Culiacan. The polling firm Synovate carried out the interviews for the BBC's Spanish American website, bbcmundo.com.*

 [E-mail this to a friend](#)

 [Printable version](#)

Bookmark with:

[What are these?](#)

[Delicious](#) [Digg](#) [reddit](#) [Facebook](#) [StumbleUpon](#)

#### FEATURES, VIEWS, ANALYSIS



**Ghost town**  
Has China's housing bubble burst?



**The guerilla plant**  
How the world's oldest clove tree defied an empire



**Walking away**  
Why Royal Ballet principal Sergei Polunin quit

**MOST POPULAR NOW** | The most read story in Europe is: [Mona Lisa 'had high cholesterol'](#)

[SKIP TO TOP](#)

[PRODUCTS & SERVICES](#)

[E-mail news](#)

[Mobiles](#)

[Widgets & Alerts](#)

[News feeds](#)

[Podcasts](#)

**B B C**

**Copyright © 2016 BBC.** The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read more.](#)

[Mobile site](#)  
[Advertise With Us](#)  
[Ad Choices](#)

[Terms of Use](#)  
[Privacy](#)  
[Cookies](#)

[About the BBC](#)  
[Accessibility Help](#)  
[Contact the BBC](#)  
[Parental Guidance](#)