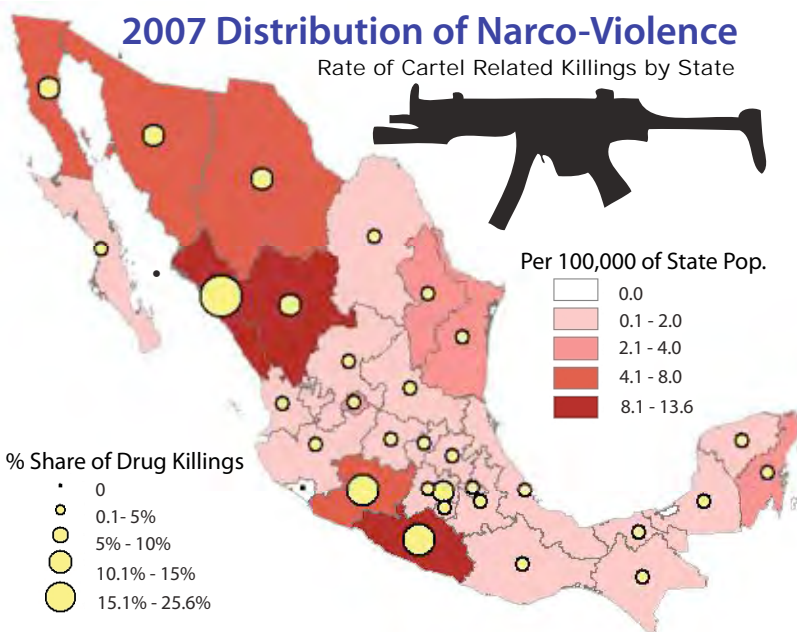
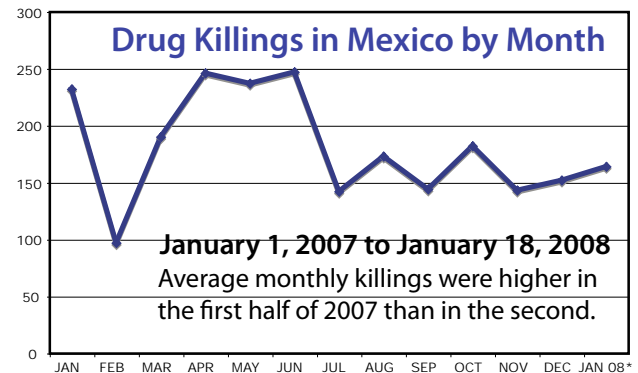


Trans-Border Institute

Fact Sheet: Narco-Trafficking & Violence in Mexico

Narco-Trafficking and Violence in Mexico

Mexico has been afflicted by high levels of drug violence in recent years, with the largest number of drug-related killings concentrated in three states: Michoacán, Guerrero, and Sinaloa. The Mexican government has responded with the arrest and extradition of high-profile cartel leaders and the deployment of federal troops to troubled states. These efforts destabilized major cartels and led to higher levels of violence in early 2007, as competing cartels, rival factions, and government forces clashed with one another. Drug-related killings declined dramatically in mid-2007, possibly owing to a pact among major cartels.

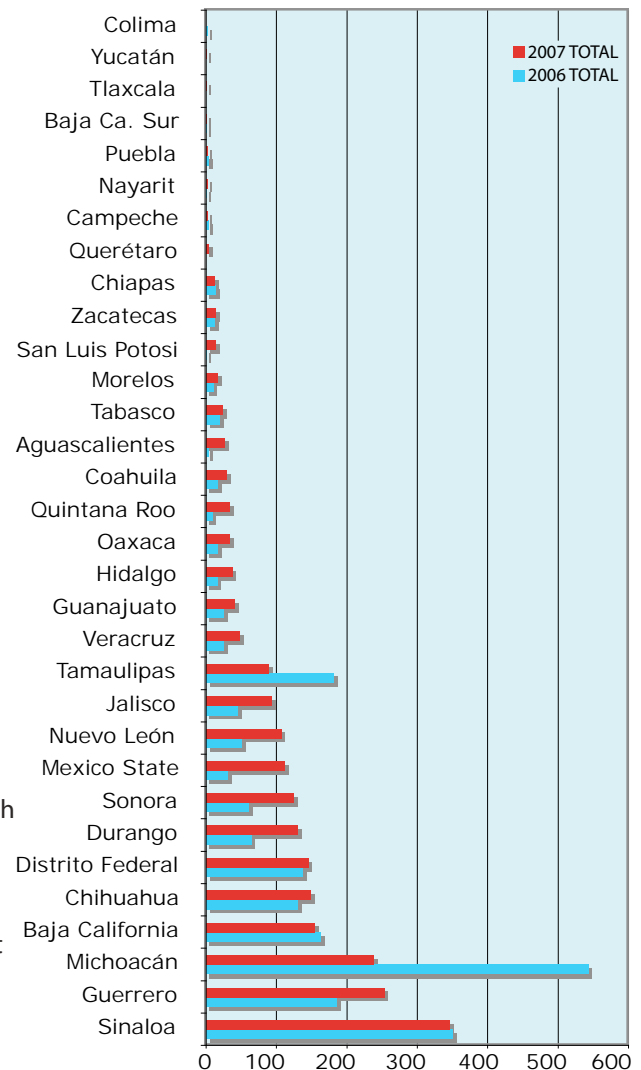


- **Spreading Violence:** Geographically, narco-violence was more evenly distributed across different states in 2007 than in 2006. In 2006 about 80 percent of all cartel-related killings were reported to have taken place in nine states (the border states plus Sinaloa, Guerrero, and Michoacán). However in 2007 that proportion dropped to about 65 percent.

- **A "Spill Over" Effect?** There appeared to be a "spillover" effect from high violence states in 2006 (like Tamaulipas, Michoacán, and Sinaloa) to neighboring states in 2007 (like Nuevo León, Guerrero, and Sinaloa).

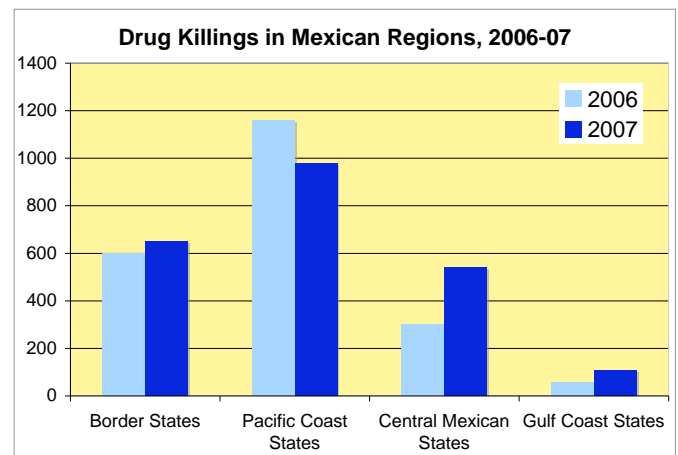
- **Significant Decline in Michoacán:** Michoacán, home state of President Felipe Calderón, reported the highest rate of cartel-related slayings (at 13.56 per 100,000 people) in 2006, but saw a significant decline (to 5.96/100,000 people) in 2007, partially owing to the aggressive federal government response to the crisis in the Central Pacific Coast State.

Drug Killings by State, 2006-07



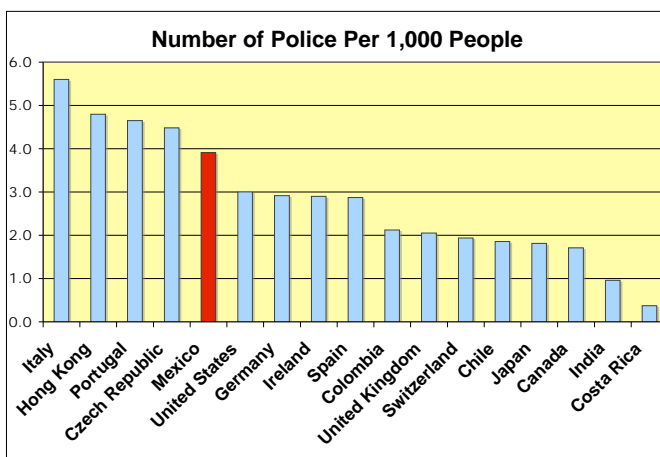
Evaluating Mexico's Drug Violence

- **Overall Increase in Drug Killings:** Drug-related killings mainly targeting traffickers, police, & public officials, increased from 2,120 in 2006 (2.02 per 100,000 people) to 2,280 (2.15 per 100,000 people) in 2007.
- **Regionalized Violence:** Despite U.S. perceptions of high levels of violence along the border, the greatest number and proportion of killings was found in states along the central Pacific Coast.
- **Bad, but not "Colombianization":** At roughly 22 per 100,000, homicides in Mexico are epidemic, but well below Colombia's homicide rates in the late-1980s and early-1990s which neared 90 per 100,000.



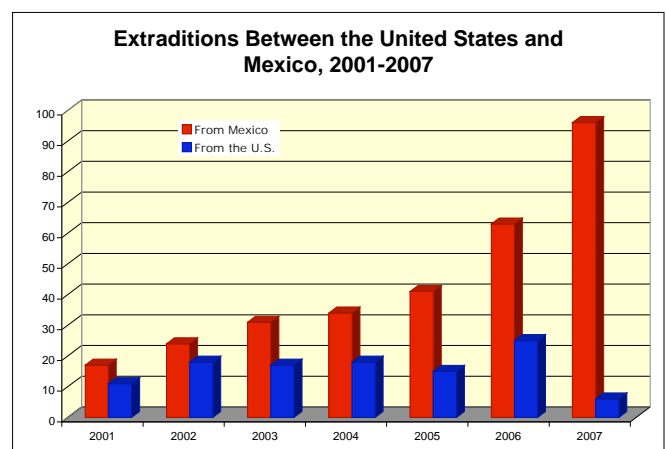
Mexican Law Enforcement Challenges

- **Professionalizing Mexico's Police Forces:** While Mexico has adequate numbers of police, the main challenges are professionalizing and properly equipping its roughly 400,000 police officers.
- **Dealing with Corruption:** The Mexican attorney general estimates that drug cartel profits amount to \$10 billion annually, and contribute to severe problems of corruption in Mexican law enforcement agencies.
- **Justice Sector Reform:** The Calderón administration hopes to pass a major reform package that will improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Mexican justice system.



U.S.-Mexico Collaboration in Counter-Drug Efforts

- **U.S.-Mexico Extraditions:** U.S.-Mexico collaboration to combat drug trafficking has increased significantly in recent years, particularly in the area of extradition.
- **Targeting Major Drug Kingpins:** Mexico's extradition of former Gulf cartel leader Osiel Cárdenas and the U.S. capture and life sentencing of Javier Arrellano Félix has signaled an aggressive binational effort against the drug cartels.
- **The Merida Initiative:** The United States is currently considering an aid package known as the "Mérida Initiative," which would provide increased U.S. funding to support Mexican anti-drug efforts.



Trans-Border Institute Factsheet: Narco-trafficking and Violence in Mexico, Copyright 2008. This factsheet was created for the Trans-Border Institute's Justice in Mexico Project (www.justiceinmexico.org), which is supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Drug related killings are measured as reported by *Reforma* newspaper. Numbers of police based on NationMaster.com calculations. Extradition data are from U.S. and Mexican foreign ministry sources. Collaborating in the creation of this factsheet were Robert Donnelly, Theresa Firestone, Ruth Gomez, Cory Molzahn, and David Shirk. Available at: www.sandiego.edu/tbi.

