



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 16, 2024

Crime Shutting Down Mexico's Economy Should Serve as a Warning to U.S.

Mexico is the living example of what befalls a nation when it allows corruption to run rampant and fails to crack down on crime.

The effect cartel violence has on the lives of Mexicans is now common knowledge — for many in the Latin American nation, there is always a lingering fear, a walking on eggshells to avoid running afoul of deadly organized crime. The average Mexican citizen understands that, should he rub the local *narcos* the wrong way and incur their displeasure, he can expect little-to-no help from the authorities and can do just as little to defend himself (after all, firearms are virtually unobtainable for most law-abiding Mexicans).



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But violence from organized crime also has a damaging effect on Mexico's economy, interrupting the flow of key sectors and industries, and thus keeping the nation from prospering.

As the Mexican newspaper [El Universal](#) reports, one way the cartels are hurting the Mexican economy is by impacting commercial transportation. In recent days, the Mexican Alliance of Transport Organizations (AMOTAC) has been carrying out a strike in which truckers park their trucks to blockade major roads all across the country. This has both interrupted traffic and set back Mexico's supply chains.

The cause of the strike? The biggest demand the truckers have is road safety; in the view of many of Mexico's truckers, the threat they face has become unbearable in the face of robberies and murders by highway bandits. And far from offering the solution to this safety issue, police have been part of the problem — according to the truckers, police bodies throughout the country have been engaging in extortion. Truckers face the choice of either coughing up their livelihood to corrupt cops or losing their lives to the criminals.

Per *El Universal*:

In an interview with the media, Raúl Torres Mendoza, national adviser of the Mexican Alliance of Transport Organizations (AMOTAC), pointed out that, prior to the mobilization within the state of San Luis Potosí, 44 transporters have been affected by assaults so far this year. In addition, two transporters from the state were affected outside of it.

“Currently, there are very violent states, states where it seems like there is no National Guard, such as Guanajuato, Querétaro, the State of Mexico, Michoacán, Tlaxcala, Puebla, and Veracruz, the first in terms of murders and operators. For us, when they kill an operator, it damages the economy of each of their families. No more, no more murders of



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operators.” He also asked the governor of the state, Ricardo Gallardo Cardona, to continue supporting with high-end patrols from the civil road guard, but they want to see them on federal highways: “Not to extort us, but to watch over us.” “And today we see that the National Guard lacks personnel because it seems that they are doing other tasks at the national level. Many National Guard members were taken to deal with the Hurricane Otis problem and have not returned. That is why we demand more presence, more surveillance on the roads in San Luis Potosí.”

The situation has gotten so bleak in Mexico that now President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) is asking the Catholic bishops in the state of Guerrero to serve as mediators between the government and the narcos in order to come up with a truce.

“Priest pastors, members of all churches, always participate and contribute to the pacification of the country. I see it very positively; I believe that we all have to contribute to achieving peace,” [El Universal](#) quoted AMLO as saying.

On Wednesday, the bishop of the Chilpancingo-Chilapa diocese, José de Jesús González Hernández, confirmed that he and three other bishops suggested a ceasefire to the leaders of criminal organizations in Guerrero with the aim of stopping the violence.

In short, organized crime in Mexico has grown to the point that it now brazenly competes on a level playing field with the country’s two other major institutions, the government and the Catholic Church. The Mexican government, far from having the ability to quell the cartels once and for all, is reduced to having to try to negotiate with them as though the criminals were a conquering army (and, for all intents and purposes, they are).

What’s more, the Mexican government lacks even the authority to appeal for peace itself — it has to rely on the good graces and intercession of the Church.

The situation in Mexico is the total opposite of that in El Salvador, which under President Nayib Bukele has become the example par excellence of the way a crime-ridden Latin American country can prosper if it takes a forceful, uncompromising approach to punishing criminals.

Per El Salvador’s security authorities, homicides in the Central American nation — long a hub of violence and stomping ground of brutal gangs such as MS-13 — [decreased by nearly 70 percent](#) in 2023.

Democrats in the United States have long advocated for a soft-on-crime approach, and have gotten their wish in cities like San Francisco and Chicago. If the situation is not reversed, and crime is allowed to fester and grow as it has in Mexico, it will eventually become an existential crisis imperiling America’s future.



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