



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 13, 2016

## Mexican Senator Proposes Expanded Gun Rights

On Tuesday, Senator Jorge Luis Preciado, a member of Mexico's National Action Party (PAN), [said](#) he is backing a bill to amend his country's constitution so that bus drivers, cabbies, truckers, and "other transportation drivers" can carry firearms to protect themselves, their cargo, and their passengers.



He said the constitution's current provisions need to be expanded: "The Mexican Constitution already allows citizens to possess certain firearms inside their homes, and we simply want to extend that right to other places.... We are in the midst of a very complex situation and we are simply arguing that if the State cannot protect us, then it should at least allow us to defend ourselves."

The situation may be complex, but the statistics on violent crime in Mexico are staggering. The day before Preciado's announcement, the National Survey on Victimization and Perception of Public Security was published, reporting that violent crime has reached such high levels that nearly three out of every four citizens polled "felt insecure," and that trust and confidence in local police is so low that most violent crimes aren't even reported. A third of those polled said that reporting violent crimes to the police is a waste of time, while another sixth distrust the authorities to do anything about it even if they were informed.

To put the crime rate in Mexico in context, in the United States in 2015 there were 1,197,704 violent crimes. With a population of 325 million, the ratio of violent crimes per 100,000 population was 369. In 2015 in Mexico, it was 35,497.

A lot of the violence is blamed on drug cartels which, by 2009, had already claimed 60,000 dead with another 20,000 missing. More recently, the violent murder in September of Maria Villar, the niece of the president of the Spanish Football Federation, was headline news all across the country. On September 30 a Canadian artist, Barbara MClatchie, was murdered on her way home and her body dumped beside the road in the Yucatán.

The Catholic Church has suffered grievous losses as well, with 31 priests having been murdered in Mexico since 2006, 15 of them just in the last four years.

Such violence has led to pressure to oust the country's current president, Enrique Peña Nieto, who took office in January 2012, running on a platform of reducing the violence. His approval rating, initially at 50 percent, has steadily dropped, partly thanks to the increased violence and his administration's inability to bring it under some kind of control. It's now just 23 percent, the lowest since the newspaper *Reforma* started reporting it in 1995. Said Jonathan Furszyfer, an investigator for the country's Justice



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and Crime Program: “What we are seeing is that murders in various states have gone up dramatically, showing violence is becoming more widespread.”

The possible solution — letting private civilians arm themselves more freely — comes with all manner of difficulties, many of which are already similar to gun-control laws being foisted on private American citizens. Senator Preciado’s amendment would assure that every weapon a private citizen buys is purchased through the country’s National Defense Ministry. The purchase takes place only after the citizen has complied with “strict and thorough background checks, including physical and psychological exams.” His proposed amendment would, in addition, require that the citizen provide fingerprints and DNA records for the government’s database.

At present, the bill has little chance of seeing the light of day thanks to resistance from both ends of the political spectrum. If by some miracle it does pass, and citizens are able to arm themselves more freely, the chances that it might have a positive impact on violent crime are modest. But Preciado’s intentions are reasonable: “Criminals have a monopoly on violence.... What I want is for them to know that the next time they plan to rob a business, a home or a car, they can expect some form of defense on the other side.”

What’s missing in Mexico is the equivalent of our Second Amendment and its protection of the natural human right to self-defense. The use of that right is keeping violent crime in the United States at close to record low levels.

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