

ENDLESS BLOODSHED

# Inside Obama-caused brutal drug cartels – who behead rivals with chainsaws and murder pregnant women and kids – as police hunt new ‘El Chapo’

- [Dan Hall](#)
- [James Beal](#)

**KNIFE-WIELDING gangs and police in full body armour on the beach aren't things you expect to see on holiday.**

But it's a disturbingly common scene in dozens of Brit holiday hotspots in Mexico, as organised drug cartels are currently locked in a violent war that is getting more brutal by the day.

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Credit: DEA

This weekend it was revealed that a Mexican drug lord dubbed the new 'El Chapo' is ordering the slaughter of pregnant women and kids amid the country's coke wars.

Cartel kingpin Nemesio Cervantes – or El Mencho - has become the United States' new “most wanted” with a \$10million bounty

slapped on his head.

The ruthless cocaine lord is believed to be even more [violent than El Chapo](#) and does not even take mercy of women or children.

Specialist DEA agent Kyle Mori told Latin American news channel Univision: "They are very violent.

"Decapitations, dissolving bodies in acid, public executions, ripping out the heart, killing women and children, bombings against people

"It happens almost every day. El Chapo was violent, but El Mencho has taken it to a new level."

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Women are now fair game to El Mencho as he wages war against rivals

In the first half of 2019, there were a staggering 17,608 gangland murders - with 94 people being brutally killed every single day.

Last year saw a total of 33,341, making it the bloodiest year on record, but this year is set to be the most violent of all time.

And the [bloodshed is spilling into affluent tourist hotspots](#) including Mexico City and Cancun, where over half a million Brits holiday every summer.

While the latest homicide statistics are horrific, the methods cartels use to keep rivals in check is just as terrifying.

In recent years, large cartels have splintered into smaller factions who then battle for previously shared turf, escalating the violence, and prompting kidnaps and torture.

Here, we reveal the backstories and brutal characteristics of the major cartels in Mexico who maintain their grip on the nation with psychopathic ruthlessness.

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# **Motorway bridge hangings and coordinated massacres of police**

**Name: The Jalisco New Generation (CJNG)**

**Main turf: West**

**Enemies: Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel, Zeta Old School, Shadow Group, Knights Templar, Nueva Plaza**

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Heavily armed members of the CJNG calling themselves 'the warriors' of the cartel

Led by El Mencho, the CJNG has a reputation for unimaginable, extreme violence, starting with the torture and massacre of 35 people in Veracruz in 2011.

And in 2015 the CJNG ambushed and murdered 15 Mexican cops in one of the deadliest attacks on law enforcement in the country.

They're known to have military-grade weapons including rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) which they used to shoot down a military helicopter in 2015.

The bodies of 44 missing people – many of them women - were last month been found buried in a water well in an area of Mexico notorious for brutal drug cartel executions.

The grim discovery was made after locals in Jalisco state – where El Mencho's Jalisco New Generation Cartel(CJNG) is based -

complained of a foul smell and when the well was dug up, the remains were found stuffed into 119 black bags.

In August, the CJNG hung another 19 other bodies from bridges — with 10 more dismembered bodies full of bullets found nearby.

As well as the local drug trade, the brutal slayings were said to also be over control of the region's billion-dollar avocado industry.

In May, video shared online showed at least 20 trucks marked with the CJNG logo carrying heavily armed men in black — that night, three cops and 10 others were killed as the convoy carried out a massacre in Michoacán.

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Bodies hanging from a motorway overpass along with a banner bearing a warning from the CJNG

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A burnt out cop car being inspected the morning after the CJNG murdered 15 officers in an ambush

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The twisted wreckage of a military helicopter shot down by the CJNG in 2015 - the crash killed six soldiers  
Credit: Reuters

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Cartel members from the CJNG surrounding Adolfo Mendoza Valencia shortly before they killed him Credit: Central European News



Mexico's most powerful criminal gang holds rival cartel member hostage before hanging him from a highway overpass

# Chainsaw beheadings & drugging torture victims

**Name: The Sinaloa Cartel**

**Main turf: Northwest**

**Enemies: CJNG, Juarez Cartel, Los Zetas**

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Alleged members of the Sinaloa Cartel arrested on smuggling charges in 2010  
Credit: AFP - Getty

The Sinaloa Cartel is one of the biggest and most powerful drug trafficking cartels in the world - and also the focus of [Netflix's Narcos](#): Mexico.

It is an offshoot of the Guadalajara cartel, and they grew to international notoriety in 1985 when they kidnapped and murdered undercover DEA agent Kiki Camarena in 1985.

The gang members blamed Camarena for giving up information which led to an \$8billion marijuana plantation being destroyed by authorities.

So over 30 hours, they broke Camarena's skull, jaw, nose, cheekbones and windpipe, injecting him with drugs to make sure he was conscious throughout the torture.

The unprecedented backlash from US police led to the gang breaking up into different groups, with notorious [El Chapo](#)



("Shorty") and his partner choosing to stay in Sinaloa.

But with tensions high, war between the splintered Sinaloa groups immediately kicked off, with El Chapo sending 40 gunmen to a party in Tijuana in 1992 where nine people were killed.

And their chilling reputation for violence has only grown since.

They've killed women and children, and have been known to rape family members of their rivals and force them to watch.

In 2010, a video surfaced showing El Chapo beheading a rival with a chainsaw before cutting the face off the head and stitching it to a football.

The Sinaloa Cartel is known to favour dissolving the remains of their victims in vats of acid.

With its vast resources, the group has been known to use Boeing 747s, narco submarines and container ships to move multiple-tonne shipments of cocaine, heroin and fentanyl into North America.

But the group is also famous for its drug "super tunnels", huge underground passageways equipped with lifts and electric rail cars dug across the US-Mexico border to move drugs into the States.

The Sinaloa Cartel is known to operate in 17 Mexican states and 50 countries around the world.

Its main enemy is the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), who they've been locked in a horrific nationwide war with for

overall supremacy.

Even with El Chapo behind bars for the rest of his life, the Sinaloa Cartel remains one of the most powerful cartels in Mexico.

Last year, there were 2,513 killings in tourist hotspot Tijuana, where the Sinaloa are desperately trying to keep control of the city from other cartels' incursions.

And last Saturday, Mexican customs intercepted a 26 tonne shipment of fentanyl — the most dangerous opioid known to man — which was being sent to the Sinaloa Cartel from China.

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Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán is now serving a sentence of life without parole in America's most secure prison after previously escaping jail in Mexico twice  
Credit: Getty - Contributor

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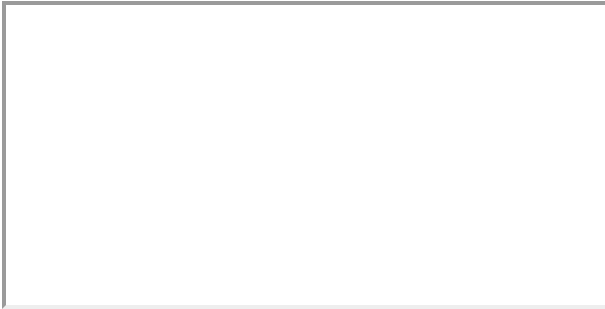
A homemade fibreglass narco submarine - like the ones used by the Sinaloa Cartel  
Credit: Getty Images - Getty

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A motorbike modified to run on rails which El Chapo used in his second prison escape - this is the tunnel dug underneath his cell  
Credit: Reuters



Amazing footage shows the moment a Coast Guardsman leap onto a moving 'narco-submarine' full of cocaine



Mexico's most powerful criminal gang holds rival cartel member hostage before hanging him from a highway overpass

# Gladiator-style fights to the death

**Name: Los Zetas**

**Main turf: East and South**

**Enemies: Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel**

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Members of the Zetas being presented in Mexico City by the navy - they were alleged of being involved in the San Fernando massacre  
Credit: Associated Press

In all of Mexico, there's only one group more feared and considered more brutal than the CJNG.

The Zetas started out as 31 deserters from the Mexican Army's Airborne Special Forces Group who became assassins and bodyguards for the Gulf Cartel.

Their specialised training and horrific tactics made them feared as one of the most violent and sophisticated paramilitary groups in Mexico.

Unlike other cartels which use corruption to maintain regional control, when the Zetas broke off to form their own cartel in the mid-2000s, they maintained power almost entirely with fear and violence.

In 2010, the Zetas killed 72 undocumented immigrant workers in the San Fernando massacre.

They were believed to have been killed for refusing to pay a ransom or join the Zetas.

Gang members shot all 72 victims in the back of the head in a warehouse, one by one, including several pregnant women.

An 18-year-old boy survived being shot in the neck and played dead before running 22km to get help at a military checkpoint.

At the time, it was the worst atrocity of the Mexican Drug War.

Then, the next year, 193 people were murdered in the Second San Fernando Massacre and buried in eight secret mass graves after they were abducted from hijacked buses.

The Zetas raped female kidnapped victims and made males fight to the death with other hostages with hammers and machetes.

Survivors of the sick bloodsport were forced to become hitmen for the cartel, whereas the losers went into the mass graves.

Afterwards, gang members said they'd killed all the bus users because they feared their rivals, the Gulf Cartel, would use them as reinforcements.

The motorway from which the buses were stopped at a fake military checkpoint became known as the "Highway of Death" to locals.

Starting in 2012, the Zetas heavily fragmented into independent localised factions, no longer capable of large-scale international drug trafficking.

The horrific mass killing at a bar in Coatzacoalcos this week took place in a Zeta-controlled area.

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The horrific scene in the aftermath of the first San Fernando massacre, where 72 people were murdered at a remote ranch by the ZetasCredit: Reuters

# ISIS tactics and city-wide warfare

**Name: Gulf Cartel**

**Main turf: East and South**

**Enemies: Zetas, Sinaloa Cartel, Tijuana Cartel**

The Gulf Cartel is one of the oldest and most powerful of Mexico's cartels, but it's lost a lot of ground in recent years to the Zetas, who were originally the Gulf Cartel's muscle.

Its origins can be traced back to Juan Garcia Abrego's alliance with Colombian cartels to smuggle drugs into the US back in the 1980s.

When Garcia Abrego was arrested in 1996, the group was making billions every year.

The Gulf Cartel are known for their extremely high number of kidnappings — 68 victims were found in a Gulf Cartel safehouse in Reynosa in 2011.

They even used sports stars to carry out their kidnappings, including FC Monterrey star Omar Ortiz and lucha libre wrestler Lazaro Gurrulo.

But it was Garcia Abrego's successor, Osiel Gardenas Guillen, who cemented the Gulf Cartel's violent reputation by recruiting the 31 special forces deserters to do his bidding.

When those soldiers broke to form the Zetas, the Gulf Cartel became locked in its bloodiest ever conflict — this time against a

rival of its own creation.

The violence has raged across at least five Mexican cities and even spilled into America when two Zetas were killed by Gulf Cartel members in Texas in 2010.

Their ongoing clashes have been described as turning entire cities into "war zones" and in July this year, they threatened to destroy the entire town of Asunción Ixtaltepe for helping rivals hide, drawing comparisons to ISIS.



# Holiday from Hell

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Armed cops patrol the beaches of Cancun after recent cartel violence in the region  
Credit: James Breeden

Tourist hotspots are being swallowed up by the rising tide of cartel bloodshed - including along the Caribbean coast - where 500,000 Brits sun themselves every year.

Increasingly, this stretch of paradise - which includes the white sandy beaches of Cancun, Playa del Carmen and Tulum - is blighted by cartels battling for power and territory.

In Cancun alone, murder has exploded in the last two years from 205 in 2017 to 540 in 2018.

Francisco Rivas, 45, who monitors cartel activity for Mexico's National Citizen Observatory, told The Sun: "Years ago, they agreed there were areas they would not fight in because it is bad for business.

"These were mainly tourist cities.

"The cartels also did not want to draw attention to particular areas that were important highways for transporting drugs from Mexico to the US.

"But now the new cartel members, like those from Jalisco New Generation, don't respect the old rules. Something has changed.

## **Is Mexico safe for tourists?**

Drug-related violence in Mexico has increased massively in recent years with murders now commonplace.

[Morgues even closed down in the Mexican state of Guerrero](#) after they were inundated with gangland victims.

Many fatalities are those killed in turf wars between the different gangs competing for trafficking routes into the US.

Cops are trying to protect tourist destinations like Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta, Acapulco and Nuevo Vallarta.

The Foreign Office warns that while the government has made efforts to protect popular tourist destinations, including Playa del Carmen, there has been a number of shooting incidents in the areas.

They advise: "Crime and violence are serious problems in Mexico and the security situation can pose a risk for foreigners.

"Since 2017 there have been a number of reported shooting incidents and other incidents of violence in the main tourist destinations, including in locations popular with tourists.

"In certain parts of Mexico you should take particular care to avoid being caught up in drug related violence between criminal groups."

However, the FCO also says most tourist visits are "trouble-free".

"They attack rivals in urban areas and murders happen in tourist areas."

In January this year, seven were left dead in Cancun when CJNG and a rival gang had a shootout in the streets.