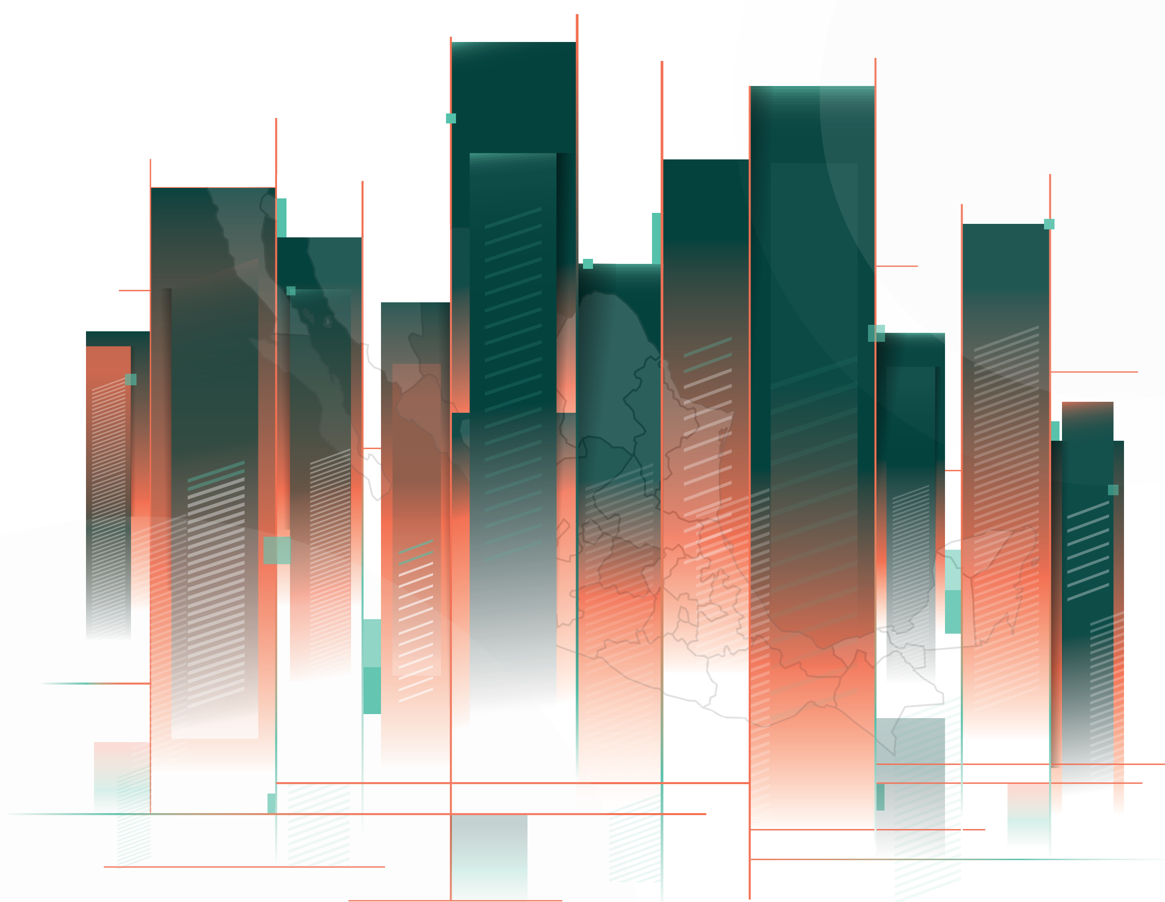
Identifying and measuring the factors that drive peace

Mexico Peace Index 2026

- Results and Trends
- Cartel Fragmentation
- Economic Impact of Violence
- Rise in Incarceration



IEP Institute for Economics & Peace

Quantifying Peace and its Benefits

The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress. IEP achieves its goals by developing new conceptual frameworks to define peacefulness; providing metrics for measuring peace; and uncovering the relationships between business, peace and prosperity as well as promoting a better understanding of the cultural, economic and political factors that create peace.

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Executive Summary

Mexico stands at a critical juncture. Peacefulness has long been undermined by diverse security challenges, including large-scale organized criminal activity, pervasive violent crime, and high levels of interpersonal and gender-based violence.

Last year, however, Mexico registered its most substantial improvement in peacefulness in at least a decade, following five years of modest but consistent improvements. This positive trend comes at a time of major disruptions to the country's most powerful criminal organizations, presenting both an opportunity and a risk. The weakening of leading cartels could help consolidate recent peace gains, but they could also trigger a new cycle of cartel fragmentation, thereby leading to renewed violence.

This moment of uncertainty lies at the heart of this 13th edition of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI), produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP). This executive report provides an assessment of peacefulness in Mexico, including key trends in violence and insecurity, as well as estimates of the economic impact of violence. The MPI is based on the Global Peace Index, the world's leading measure of peacefulness, and is constructed from 12 sub-indicators aggregated into five major indicators.

In 2025, Mexico's peacefulness improved by 5.1 percent, marking the sixth year of progress following four years of substantial deteriorations. At the state level, improvements were widespread but uneven. Twenty-two states recorded improvements in peacefulness last year, while 10 deteriorated. Yucatán remained the most peaceful state for the ninth consecutive year, followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche. In contrast, Colima continued to record the lowest levels of peacefulness, followed by Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Morelos, and Baja California.

The national improvement in peacefulness was driven by a sharp reduction in homicides. The homicide rate fell by 22.7 percent in 2025, representing nearly 7,000 fewer deaths compared to the previous year, the largest single-year decline on record. Despite this improvement, violence remains elevated relative to historical levels. Mexico's peace score is still worse than it was a decade ago, and long-term increases in firearms crime, organized crime, and gender-based violence continue to shape the country's security landscape.

Organized crime remains the main driver of extreme violence in Mexico. However, the structure of criminal violence is evolving. The early 2020s saw a partial consolidation of power among major groups, particularly the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), contributing to declines in inter-cartel conflict. Yet this fragile equilibrium has been disrupted by two major developments: the outbreak of sustained internal conflict within the Sinaloa Cartel since late 2024, and the death of the CJNG's long-standing leader in early 2026. While these developments represent major blows to Mexico's leading criminal organizations and could therefore create conditions for continued reductions in violence, they also risk triggering processes of cartel fragmentation that have historically been associated with increases in lethal conflict.

The recent rise in extreme violence in the state of Sinaloa demonstrates this risk. Once a state with low levels of organized criminal violence owing to the virtually unchallenged dominance of the Sinaloa Cartel, the state recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the country in 2025, driven by a sharp increase in homicides linked to cartel infighting. This shift also underscores a broader pattern: while national trends are improving, localized surges in violence continue to emerge where criminal structures fragment or come under pressure.

Early indications suggest that Mexico's evolving security strategy may be contributing to recent gains. Since taking office in October 2024, the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum and its security leadership have placed a renewed emphasis on intelligence-led

policing, institutional coordination, and targeted enforcement. There has also been a marked increase in arrests and detentions, reflected in a sharp rise in the incarcerated population during 2025. While these developments appear to have supported short-term reductions in high-impact crimes, their long-term effectiveness will depend on judicial capacity, due process, and broader institutional strengthening.

Trends in transnational crime also appear to be shifting. Over the past two years, both the volume and frequency of drug seizures at the Mexico–US border have declined for most major drug categories, particularly fentanyl. These trends coincide with falling overdose deaths in the United States and may indicate a contraction of cross-border drug flows. At the same time, domestic drug markets in Mexico have expanded, with retail drug crimes continuing to rise and playing an increasingly important role in organized criminal activity.

The weakening of leading cartels could help consolidate recent gains, but they could also trigger a new cycle of fragmentation, thereby leading to renewed violence.

Despite improvements in lethal violence in Mexico, other forms of insecurity remain persistent or have worsened in recent years. Family violence and sexual violence have increased substantially over the past decade, with family violence becoming the most common form of violent crime in Mexico in 2025. In parallel, the number of missing persons continues to rise, reflecting the ongoing use of disappearance as a tool of control by criminal groups, a practice that contributes to widespread fear and public concern.

The economic impact of violence in Mexico remains substantial, although it declined significantly in 2025. The total cost of violence fell to four trillion pesos (US$220 billion), equivalent to around 11 percent of GDP, marking the largest annual reduction on record. This improvement was driven largely by the reduction in homicides, though costs associated with the fear of violence, protection, and incarceration continue to place a heavy burden on the economy.

Mexico's justice system remains a critical constraint on further improvements in peacefulness. The country has an average of just two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, one-seventh the global average. This limited judicial capacity contributes to large backlogs of unsolved cases, high levels of impunity, and large numbers of unsentenced detainees. Compared to global and regional averages, both judicial and domestic security institutions are underfunded in Mexico, and this lack of investment undermines the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts.

While recent peace gains are significant, Mexico's trajectory remains uncertain. The interaction between evolving criminal dynamics, shifting security strategies, and broader social and institutional factors will determine whether the country consolidates recent progress or faces a renewed cycle of violence. Strengthening institutions, reducing impunity, and addressing the underlying drivers of violence will be essential to sustaining improvements in peacefulness over the long term.

Key Findings

SECTION 1: RESULTS AND TRENDS

- In 2025, peacefulness in Mexico improved by 5.1 percent, the largest improvement in the history of the MPI. Three MPI indicators registered sizable improvements, while two recorded minor deteriorations.
- Twenty-two states improved in peacefulness last year, while 10 deteriorated.
- The substantial improvement in peacefulness in 2025 can be attributed to a large reduction in the homicide rate, which fell by 22.7 percent, equivalent to nearly seven thousand fewer deaths than in 2024.
- In contrast to national trends, Sinaloa had the most substantial deterioration in peacefulness in the country last year, recording the third largest deterioration in the history of the MPI.
- As the epicenter of the highly lethal violence between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel since the end of 2024, Sinaloa experienced large increases in its homicide and firearms crime rates.
- Colima remained the least peaceful state in the country for the fourth consecutive year. Despite a large drop in homicides in 2025, the state once again recorded the worst homicide rate in the country, with 74.1 deaths per 100,000 people.
- After Colima, the least peaceful states in Mexico last year were Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Morelos, and Baja California.
- Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country for the ninth year in a row, followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche.
- In 2025, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness. This was the third year in a row it recorded the largest improvement, following substantial increases in violence between 2015 and 2022.
- Last year marked the sixth consecutive year that Mexico improved in peacefulness, following sharp deteriorations between 2015 and 2019. As a result, peace levels are now close to returning to levels last seen in the mid-2010s.
- As of 2025, Mexico's peace score is still 9.9 percent worse than it was in 2015. However, since violence peaked in 2019, the country has shown an improvement of 10.4 percent.
- All five of the MPI indicators have experienced overall deteriorations since 2015.
- Since 2015, firearms crime has experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 41.2 percent. This change is driven by deteriorations in both the homicide with a firearm and assault with a firearm sub-indicators.
- In the past ten years, the national homicide rate has increased by 19.7 percent, rising from 15.1 to 18.1 deaths per 100,000 people. Overall, there were over 5,700 more deaths in 2025 than in 2015.
- Mexico has seen increasing numbers of missing persons in recent years, with many cases believed to involve forced disappearances by criminal organizations. In the past twenty years, Jalisco has recorded both the highest number of missing persons and the most bodies recovered from clandestine graves.
- The national rate of violent crimes has risen by 12.4 percent since 2015, driven by a 176 percent increase in sexual violence and a 107 percent increase in family violence.
- With approximately 720 incidents per 100,000 people, family violence became the most common type of violent crime for the first time in 2025, surpassing both robbery and assault, which each had rates of around 660 incidents per 100,000 people. Robberies have declined notably in the past decade, while assaults have remained largely unchanged.
- Since 2015, the organized crime rate has risen 92.5 percent. This can be attributed to a nearly threefold increase in the rate of retail drug crimes and a doubling of the extortion rate. In contrast, the kidnapping and human trafficking rate has fallen by 70.8 percent and recorded instances of major organized crime offenses have fallen by 33.5 percent.
- Over the past two years, both the number and volume of illegal drug seizures at the Mexico–US border have fallen for most major drug categories, particularly fentanyl.
- Despite an improvement in peacefulness, fear of violence remains high, with 75.6 percent of the population regarding the state in which they live as unsafe in 2025. This is a nearly two percentage point increase from 2024.
- Colima has recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness since 2015. It has experienced deteriorations across all MPI indicators, with the rates of some increasing more than fivefold.

- After Colima, the largest deteriorations in peacefulness since 2015 were recorded in Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Morelos, and Quintana Roo.
- In the same period, Tamaulipas recorded the largest overall improvement in its peace score, followed by Guerrero, Durango, Coahuila, and Yucatán.
- Overall, 23 states have deteriorated in peacefulness since 2015, while nine states have improved.

SECTION 2: ECONOMIC VALUE OF PEACE

- Last year, the economic impact of violence in Mexico was four trillion pesos (US$220 billion), or around 11 percent of the country's GDP.
- The economic impact of violence fell by 11.4 percent in 2025, equivalent to 514 billion pesos.
- In relative and absolute terms, this is the greatest reduction in the cost of violence in the history of the MPI.
- Last year, the largest declines in the economic impact of violence were from the total cost of homicides, which fell by 382 billion pesos, and from reduced spending on national security and the military, which fell by 89 billion pesos.
- Since 2015, the total cost of violence has increased by 19 percent, or 639 billion pesos.
- From 2015 to 2025, spending on domestic security fell by 31.8 percent, while justice system spending declined by 8.4 percent.
- Mexico has only about two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, around one-seventh of the global average, severely limiting judicial capacity and contributing to case backlogs and unsentenced detainees.
- However, across categories of public expenditure on violence containment, spending on the justice system was the only one to record an increase in 2025.
- Over the course of 2025, the incarcerated population in Mexico rose by more than 20,000 inmates, or 8.9 percent. In both absolute and relative terms, this is the largest increase on record.
- By December 2025, the total incarcerated population exceeded 256,000, the highest end-of-year figure ever recorded. The economic impact of this increase, both on public spending and on lost economic activity, will be more fully reflected in future cost estimates.
- Violent crime accounted for 35.5 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, equivalent to 1.4 trillion pesos.
- Protection costs peaked in 2020, though they remained 7.6 percent higher in 2025 than in 2015.
- At 30,036 pesos per person in 2025, the economic impact of violence was nearly double the average monthly salary in Mexico.
- The economic impact of violence stood out in Guerrero and Morelos, where it represented more than a third of the states' GDPs.
- The per capita economic impact varied considerably across states, ranging from 10,785 pesos in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos in Colima.
- Since 2015, 24 states have seen the economic impact of violence increase, on average by 50.6 percent, while just eight states recorded decreases, with an average decline of 23.8 percent.

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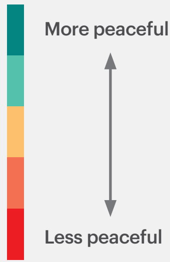
Explore the data on the interactive Mexico Peace Index map: see how peace changes over time, compare levels of peace between states and discover how the states fare according to each indicator of peace.

2026 Mexico Peace Index

A Snapshot of the State of Peace in Mexico

MPI SCORE



RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	Yucatán	1.279
2	Chiapas	1.708
3	Tlaxcala	1.728
4	Durango	1.868
5	Campeche	1.930
6	Coahuila	2.051
7	Nayarit	2.253
8	Oaxaca	2.293
9	Hidalgo	2.296
10	Tamaulipas	2.298
11	Zacatecas	2.315
12	Aguascalientes	2.318
13	Puebla	2.371
14	Veracruz	2.384
15	Jalisco	2.546
16	Querétaro	2.788

RANK	STATE	SCORE
17	Mexico State	2.867
18	San Luis Potosí	2.906
19	Mexico City	2.908
20	Michoacán	2.924
21	Nuevo León	3.030
22	Guerrero	3.097
23	Sonora	3.098
24	Tabasco	3.159
25	Baja California Sur	3.172
26	Chihuahua	3.450
27	Quintana Roo	3.496
28	Baja California	3.712
29	Morelos	4.142
30	Guanajuato	4.269
31	Sinaloa	4.364
32	Colima	4.579

1 Results and Trends

Key Findings

The substantial improvement in peacefulness in 2025 can be attributed to a large reduction in the homicide rate, which fell by 22.7 percent, equivalent to nearly seven thousand fewer deaths than in 2024.

22 ↖ 10 ↘

Twenty-two states improved in peacefulness last year, while 10 deteriorated.

In contrast to national trends, Sinaloa had the most substantial deterioration in peacefulness in the country last year, recording the third largest deterioration in the history of the MPI.

As the epicenter of the highly lethal violence between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel since the end of 2024, Sinaloa experienced large increases in its homicide and firearms crime rates.

Sexual violence

176% ↖

Family violence

107% ↖

The national rate of violent crimes has risen by 12.4 percent since 2015, driven by a 176 percent increase in sexual violence and a 107 percent increase in family violence.

5.1%

In 2025, peacefulness in Mexico improved by 5.1 percent, the largest improvement in the history of the MPI. Three MPI indicators registered sizable improvements, while two recorded minor deteriorations.

Colima remained the least peaceful state in the country for the fourth consecutive year. Despite a large drop in homicides in 2025, the state once again recorded the worst homicide rate in the country, with 74.1 deaths per 100,000 people.

After Colima, the least peaceful states in Mexico last year were Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Morelos, and Baja California.

Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country for the ninth year in a row, followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche.

In 2025, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness. This was the third year in a row it recorded the largest improvement, following substantial increases in violence between 2015 and 2022.

As of 2025, Mexico's peace score is still 9.9 percent worse than it was in 2015. However, since violence peaked in 2019, the country has shown an improvement of 10.4 percent.

All five of the MPI indicators have experienced overall deteriorations since 2015.

Since 2015, firearms crime has experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 41.2 percent. This change is driven by deteriorations in both the homicide with a firearm and assault with a firearm sub-indicators.

MPI RANK	STATE	OVERALL SCORE	HOMICIDE	ORGANIZED CRIME	VIOLENT CRIME	FIREARMS CRIME	FEAR OF VIOLENCE	OVERALL CHANGE 2024–2025	
1	Yucatán	1.279	1.112	1.206	1.087	1.031	2.760	0.010	-
2	Chiapas	1.708	1.405	1.715	1.261	1.266	4.290	-0.245	↖2
3	Tlaxcala	1.728	1.545	1.580	1.223	1.276	4.434	0.066	↘1
4	Durango	1.868	1.207	2.133	2.261	1.297	3.319	0.014	↘1
5	Campeche	1.930	1.704	1.826	1.563	1.665	4.063	-0.224	↖2
6	Coahuila	2.051	1.154	2.698	3.013	1.129	2.677	-0.075	-
7	Nayarit	2.253	1.915	2.490	2.392	1.648	3.408	0.151	↘2
8	Oaxaca	2.293	2.303	1.747	1.917	2.385	4.150	-0.254	↖5
9	Hidalgo	2.296	1.580	2.034	3.138	1.834	3.913	0.091	↘1
10	Tamaulipas	2.298	1.412	3.011	2.559	1.284	4.440	-0.085	↘1
11	Zacatecas	2.315	1.543	2.284	2.716	1.651	4.882	-0.633	↖7
12	Aguascalientes	2.318	1.426	3.010	2.708	1.970	3.176	-0.143	-
13	Puebla	2.371	1.829	1.878	3.013	1.868	4.475	-0.024	↘3
14	Veracruz	2.384	1.703	2.205	2.617	2.162	4.661	-0.038	↘3
15	Jalisco	2.546	1.867	2.263	3.058	2.320	4.439	-0.166	↘1
16	Querétaro	2.788	1.423	4.206	3.481	1.979	3.537	0.068	↘1
17	Mexico State	2.867	1.534	2.876	4.029	2.481	4.902	-0.517	↖8
18	San Luis Potosí	2.906	1.448	4.792	3.119	1.826	4.389	-0.012	↘1
19	Mexico City	2.908	1.619	3.542	3.935	2.136	4.359	0.187	↘3
20	Michoacán	2.924	2.605	2.813	2.467	3.257	4.598	-0.045	↘1
21	Nuevo León	3.030	1.767	4.633	3.036	2.571	4.013	-0.561	↖5
22	Guerrero	3.097	3.226	2.548	2.500	3.484	4.610	-0.275	↖2
23	Sonora	3.098	3.212	3.558	2.407	2.535	4.163	-0.214	-
24	Tabasco	3.159	2.630	2.737	3.235	3.480	4.993	0.014	↘3
25	Baja California Sur	3.172	1.959	4.619	4.656	1.736	2.662	0.192	↘5
26	Chihuahua	3.450	3.872	2.564	3.376	3.525	4.179	-0.199	↖1
27	Quintana Roo	3.496	1.996	4.885	4.832	1.890	4.569	-0.316	↖1
28	Baja California	3.712	3.773	4.143	3.520	2.946	4.228	-0.488	↖1
29	Morelos	4.142	4.332	3.697	4.257	3.701	5	-0.173	↖1
30	Guanajuato	4.269	3.445	5	3.963	4.815	4.933	-0.074	↖1
31	Sinaloa	4.364	4.274	4.073	4.271	4.928	4.580	1.081	↘9
32	Colima	4.579	5	5	3.551	4.605	4.608	-0.138	-
	National	**2.814**	**2.118**	**3.027**	**3.105**	**2.459**	**4.358**	**-0.153**	

Source: IEP

2025 Results and 2015–2025 Trends

Peacefulness in Mexico has deteriorated by 9.9 percent since 2015. However, the past decade has been marked by two distinct trends, with sharp deteriorations between 2015 and 2019, followed by consistent improvements thereafter. Last year, Mexico experienced its most substantial reduction in violence on record, with peacefulness improving by 5.1 percent.

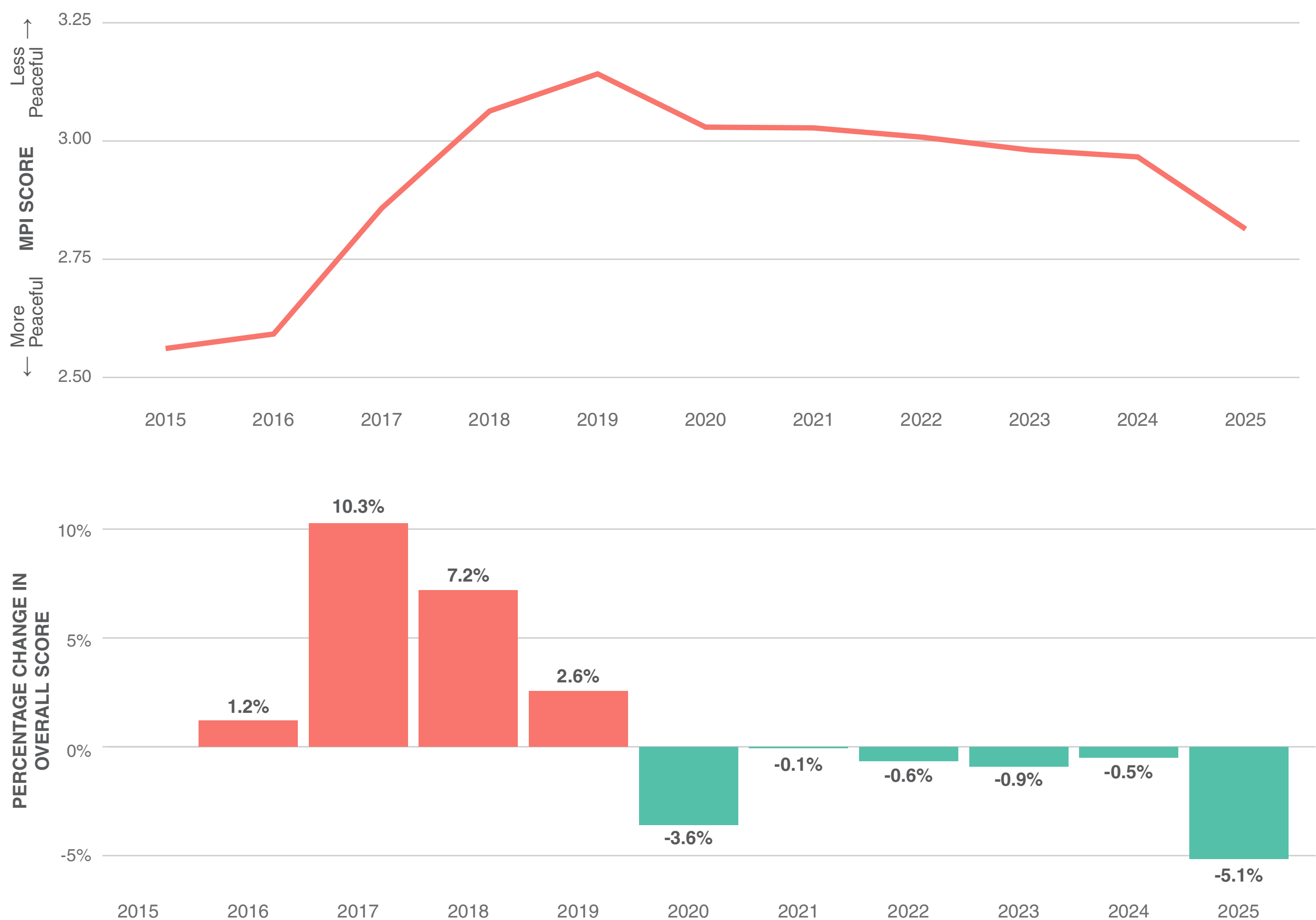
Figure 1.1 illustrates the changes in overall peacefulness in Mexico since 2015. The largest single-year change occurred in 2017, when peacefulness deteriorated by 10.3 percent. Although the score continued to worsen over the following two years, the pace of deterioration slowed.

In 2020, the country experienced a reversal of this trend, with peacefulness improving by 3.6 percent, driven primarily by reductions in commonplace forms of violent crime associated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was followed by more modest improvements over the next four years. Last year's substantial improvement resulted in Mexico recording its best peace score since 2016.

FIGURE 1.1

Change in overall peacefulness, 2015–2025

Peacefulness has improved in each of the past six years, with last year marking the largest improvement on record. This follows substantial deteriorations in peacefulness in the late 2010s.



Source: IEP

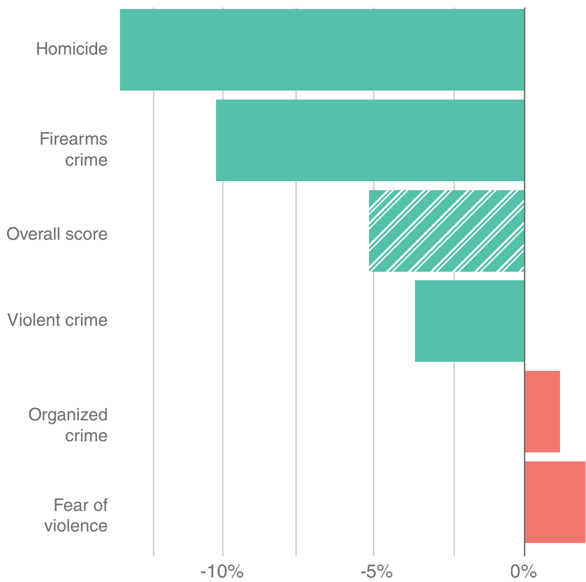
The deterioration in peacefulness over much of the past decade was driven largely by increases in homicide and firearms crime. Although both indicators peaked in 2019 and have since improved significantly, they remain above their pre-deterioration levels. Over the past 11 years, firearms crime has experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 41.2 percent. This rise reflects increases in both firearm-related assaults and homicides. Since 2015, the rate of homicides involving firearms has risen by more than 50 percent, while assaults committed with firearms have increased by over 20 percent.

In 2025, three of the five main indicators of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI) improved, with the largest gains recorded in the homicide and firearms crime indicators, as shown in Figure 1.2. At the state level, 22 states recorded improvements in peacefulness last year, while 10 experienced deteriorations.

FIGURE 1.2

Score changes in peacefulness by indicator, 2024–2025

Three peace indicators improved substantially in 2025, and the other two deteriorated marginally. A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.



Source: IEP

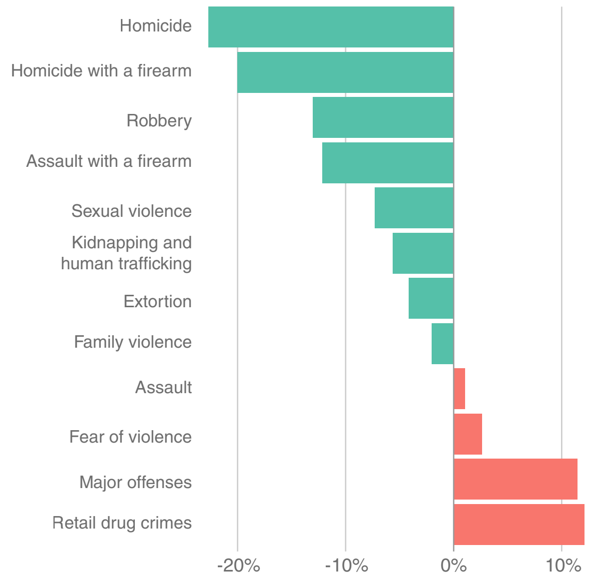
Figure 1.3 depicts the changes in rates of all sub-indicators last year, as well as the changes in rates of homicide and fear of violence, which have no underlying sub-indicators. Eight of the 12 categories improved, while the other four recorded deteriorations. Total homicides and homicides with a firearm were the two indicators to experience the largest improvements in 2025, with the rate of total homicides falling by 22.7 percent and the rate of homicides with a firearm falling by 20 percent.

In contrast, the rates of two organized crime categories – retail drug crime and major offenses – both rose by over 10 percent last year. Major offenses include federal drug trafficking crimes and criminal offenses committed by three or more people. Retail drug crime has experienced increases each year since 2016, and its rate has tripled in that time. While Mexico has traditionally been seen as a producer or transit point for drugs destined for the United States, its internal drug market has been growing in recent years. The trend in retail drug crimes reflects the increasing reliance of drug traffickers on sales to local consumers.

FIGURE 1.3

Rate changes in peacefulness by sub-indicator, 2024–2025

In 2025, most peace sub-indicators improved, led by homicides, robberies, and firearms crimes. However, drug-related crimes and fear of violence levels saw increases.



Source: IEP

According to national survey data, the prevalence of illegal drug use among the general population increased from 9.9 percent in 2016 to 13.1 percent in 2025. However, drug use among adolescents declined over the same period, falling from 6.2 percent to 4.1 percent. On this note, the average age of a person first starting illegal drug use rose, from 17.5 years in 2016 to 19 years in 2025. Overall, cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug, with the prevalence of its use rising from 8.6 to 12 percent over the period. In 2025, the reported rate of drug addiction was 0.6 percent – representing one percent of men and 0.3 percent of women. Among individuals who reported using drugs in 2025, 9.9 percent had received treatment for addiction at some point in their lives.[1]

Last year marked the first time since the index's inception that the rates of family violence improved. However, the improvement was marginal after nearly a decade of deterioration. In 2025, the family violence rate fell by two percent after rising by 112 percent between 2015 and 2024. The increase in family violence has followed a similar trend to sexual violence, which has experienced an even steeper rise over the past decade, despite showing more annual variation in rates. Between 2015 and 2025, sexual violence rose by 176 percent.

For the third consecutive year, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness, with its score improving by 21.5 percent last year and by 48.5 percent since violence in the state peaked in 2022. Improvements in the state continued to be driven by its falling homicide rate, which dropped by 70.5

percent last year. There were only 151 murders recorded in the state in 2025, compared to over 1,600 in 2021.

Sinaloa, by contrast, recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the country last year, marking the third largest decline ever observed in the MPI. The state has long served as the base of operations for the Sinaloa Cartel, which over the past decade has been one of the two most powerful criminal organizations in Mexico. The cartel's criminal hegemony over the state led to a relative infrequency of turf wars and cartel violence, and Sinaloa recorded marked improvements in peacefulness between 2015 and the early 2020s. However, in September 2024, the eruption of major armed clashes in Sinaloa between factions of the cartel has reversed this trend.2 This ongoing conflict drove significant increases in both homicide and firearms crime in the state last year.

Since 2015, peacefulness has deteriorated in 23 states, while only nine have recorded improvements. Over the past decade, Tamaulipas has experienced the largest overall improvement in peacefulness, driven by gains across all indicators. The most significant reductions occurred in homicide and firearms crime, both of which fell by around 70 percent. As a result of these improvements, Tamaulipas climbed 19 places in the MPI rankings, rising from 29th in 2015 to become the 10th most peaceful state in the country in 2025. Following Tamaulipas, the states that recorded the largest improvements in peacefulness were Guerrero, Durango, Coahuila, and Yucatán.

Colima has recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness since 2015, with its rates of organized crime and violent crime increasing more than fivefold, its rate of firearms crime increasing more than threefold, and its homicide rate also nearly tripling. The states with the next most significant deteriorations in peacefulness were Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Morelos, and Quintana Roo. Except for Quintana Roo, all these states recorded dramatic increases in their homicide rates.

In 2025, Colima was once again the least peaceful state in the country, a spot that it has occupied since 2022. The state's poor performance was driven by its extremely high homicide rate. With 74.1 deaths per 100,000 people, last year was the fourth consecutive year in which Colima registered the country's most extreme homicide rate. Despite this, its 2025 rate represented a substantial improvement from the previous three years, when it recorded over 100 homicides per 100,000 people. For the second year in a row, the port city of Manzanillo – a major entry point for precursor chemicals for producing fentanyl – had the highest homicide rate of any major municipality in Mexico.

Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country in 2025, marking its ninth consecutive year in the top spot. It was followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche. Since the index's inception, Yucatán has consistently recorded the lowest homicide rate in the country. In 2025, its rate of 1.8 deaths per 100,000 people was ten times lower than the national rate of 18.1 per 100,000 people.

TABLE 1.1

States recording the largest improvements and deteriorations in peacefulness, 2024–2025

Sinaloa recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness last year, while Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement.

STATE	CHANGE IN SCORE	2024 RANK	2025 RANK	CHANGE IN RANK
		LARGEST IMPROVEMENTS		
Zacatecas	-0.633	18	11	↖7
Nuevo León	-0.561	27	21	↖5
Mexico State	-0.517	26	17	↖8
Baja California	-0.488	30	28	↖1
Quintana Roo	-0.316	29	27	↖1
		LARGEST DETERIORATIONS		
Sinaloa	1.081	23	31	↘9
Baja California Sur	0.192	21	25	↘5
Mexico City	0.187	16	19	↘3
Nayarit	0.151	5	7	↘2
Hidalgo	0.091	8	9	↘1

Source: IEP

Cartel Fragmentation and Mexico's Prospects for Peace

Organized criminal actors undermine peacefulness in Mexico in countless ways, but their most extreme impact is reflected in the high homicide rates the country has experienced for much of the past two decades. While many ordinary citizens have fallen victim to this type of violence, the primary targets have typically been members of rival criminal groups. Turf wars between groups have thus been the principal drivers of Mexico's most extreme forms of violence in recent years. They have also been key determinants of the rises and falls in the country's peace scores.

Since at least 2007, the changes in levels of homicide have been driven by organized criminal groups. Drawing on figures from Lantia Intelligence, the annual number of killings estimated to be linked to organized crime has risen more than fourfold in that time, while all other homicides doubled. This relationship is shown in Figure 1.4.

Since 2015, the trend appears particularly consistent. While there has been considerable annual variation in the numbers of killings associated with organized crime, the number of other types of homicide has tended to hover around 13,000 per year, only once diverging by more than 10 percent from that figure.

Mexico's organized criminal landscape is composed of dozens of groups, and recent studies have estimated that these groups have between 160,000 and 185,000 members.[3] While certain national cartels have dominated the landscape in recent years, even these are not monoliths. Rather, they are multifaceted organizations composed of and supported by diverse networks of individuals, cells, factions, and local allies. The individuals and subgroups that make up these organizations span different states and contexts, participate in cartel activities in diverse ways, and do so for different periods of time and with different motivations.

As such, Mexico's criminal organizations and networks are far from static in their composition; they continuously shift and evolve in response to changing local conditions and new opportunities for gains in power and profit. Because of this, the question of cartel violence is not limited to violence between organizations; violence within groups can be just as common. Infighting and cartel fragmentation have been major drivers of Mexico's overall decline in peacefulness in the past two decades.

The sustained high levels of conflict between organized crime groups in Mexico followed the splintering of Mexican cartels

FIGURE 1.4

Annual homicides, overall and estimated number associated with organized crime, 2007–2025

Organized crime has been the driver in the annual increases and decreases in homicide levels across Mexico.

Source: INEGI; Lantia Intelligence; SESNSP
Note: Overall homicide statistics from 2007 to 2024 are sourced from INEGI, while the 2025 value is sourced from SESNSP.

after the launch of the war on drugs in 2006. This offensive employed what is known as the kingpin strategy, which sought to combat criminal organizations by targeting their leadership. While drug trafficking operations were formerly controlled by a handful of organizations, in several instances the kingpin strategy contributed to those organizations breaking up into smaller but more violent groups. Throughout the 2010s, this trend was seen, for example, in the emergence of Los Caballeros Templarios as an offshoot of La Familia Michoacana, the independence of Los Zetas from the Gulf Cartel, and the breakdown of the alliance between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel.[4] With a larger number of organized crime groups, the country experienced a surge in disputes over territory and power, which led to a greater number of turf wars and casualties across Mexico.

While allegiances are continuously shifting, by the early 2020s Mexico's criminal landscape appeared to be entering a period of partial reconstitution. This followed an aggressive national expansion campaign by the CJNG, much of it directed against the Sinaloa Cartel. This rivalry, and the CJNG's rapid territorial expansion, were key drivers of the surge in extreme homicide rates recorded across the country in the late 2010s.

But as of a few years ago, these two groups had clearly emerged as the dominant criminal actors in Mexico, and levels of inter- and intra-cartel violence began to decline. According to the records of Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), deaths from cartel conflict peaked in 2021 at around 15,000 deaths, with most of these associated with either the CJNG, the Sinaloa Cartel, or both. By 2024, the latest year on record, the recorded number of such deaths had fallen below 11,000.

However, two major developments in the past two years have disrupted the partial balance that had appeared to emerge by the early 2020s. The first was the initiation of open warfare between the two main factions of the Sinaloa Cartel in September 2024, which followed years of simmering rivalry and sporadic violence. The second was the 22 February 2026 death of Nemesio 'El Mencho' Oseguera Cervantes, leader of the CJNG, following a raid by the Mexican military. The immediate aftermath of his death was extreme, with widespread retaliatory violence. However, after calm appeared to return within a few days, the longer-term consequences of the CJNG's loss of its leader remain unclear.

Sinaloa infighting

The Sinaloa Cartel is one of Mexico's oldest cartels. It rose to prominence in the 1990s and 2000s under the leadership of Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán through the production and trafficking of drugs such as marijuana and heroin from a region known as the Golden Triangle, a mountainous area stretching between the states of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Durango.[5] However, after several instances of arrests and escapes from custody, the 2016 arrest of El Chapo weakened the cartel's central leadership and contributed to growing internal tensions. Over time, these fissures grew and led to the emergence of two main rival factions within the organization: the Mayiza and the Chapitos.

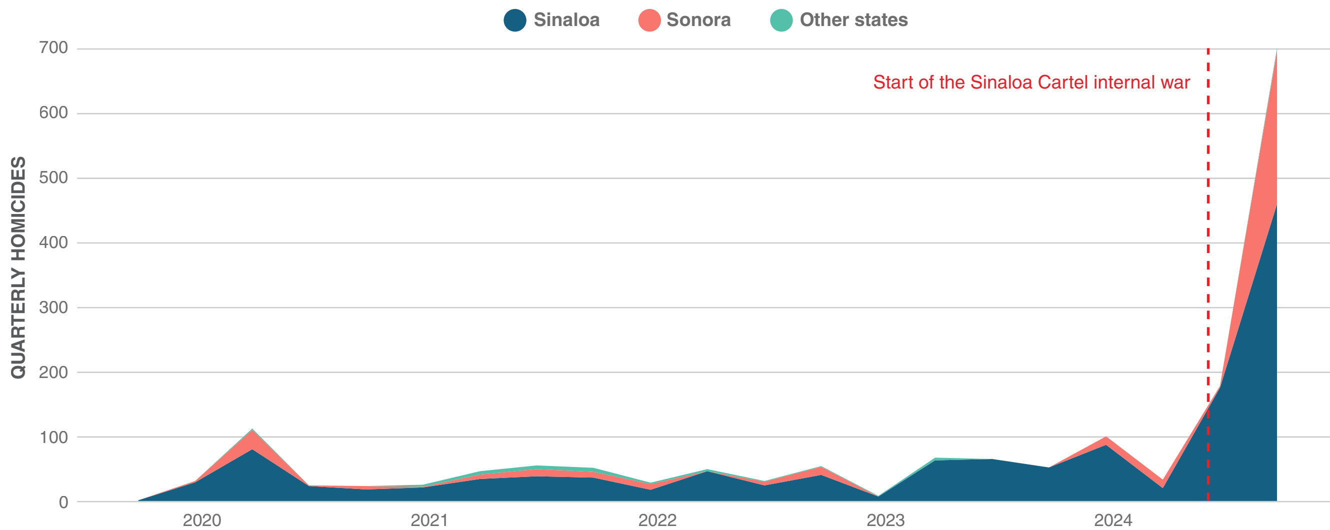
The Chapitos are affiliated with El Chapo's sons, while the Mayiza faction is affiliated with El Chapo's former partner, Ismael 'El Mayo' Zambada. After several years of deadly but mostly low-intensity infighting, the rivalry escalated dramatically following the 25 July 2024 arrest of Zambada at an airport in the United States. Zambada was reportedly betrayed and forcibly handed over to US authorities by Joaquín Guzmán López, a leading member of the Chapitos faction, who also surrendered to US authorities on the same day.[6] Following Zambada's arrest, the leadership of the Mayiza faction reportedly fell to his son, Ismael 'El Mayito Flaco' Zambada Sicairos.[7]

On 9 September 2024, less than two months after these arrests, armed clashes involving the two factions, as well as government security forces, erupted across Culiacán, the capital of Sinaloa and the stronghold of the Sinaloa Cartel. In the days that followed, Culiacán and neighboring municipalities experienced widespread violence, with cartel gunmen establishing roadblocks, inspecting civilians' cell phones for contacts linked to rival factions, and engaging in kidnappings and executions.[8] Based on the records of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the dramatic escalation of the fighting can be seen in Figure 1.5.

FIGURE 1.5

Quarterly conflict deaths from Sinaloa Cartel infighting, by state, late 2019 to 2024

Homicides attributed to the Chapitos–Mayiza conflict were limited until the onset of open warfare between the two factions in September 2024.



Source: UCDP

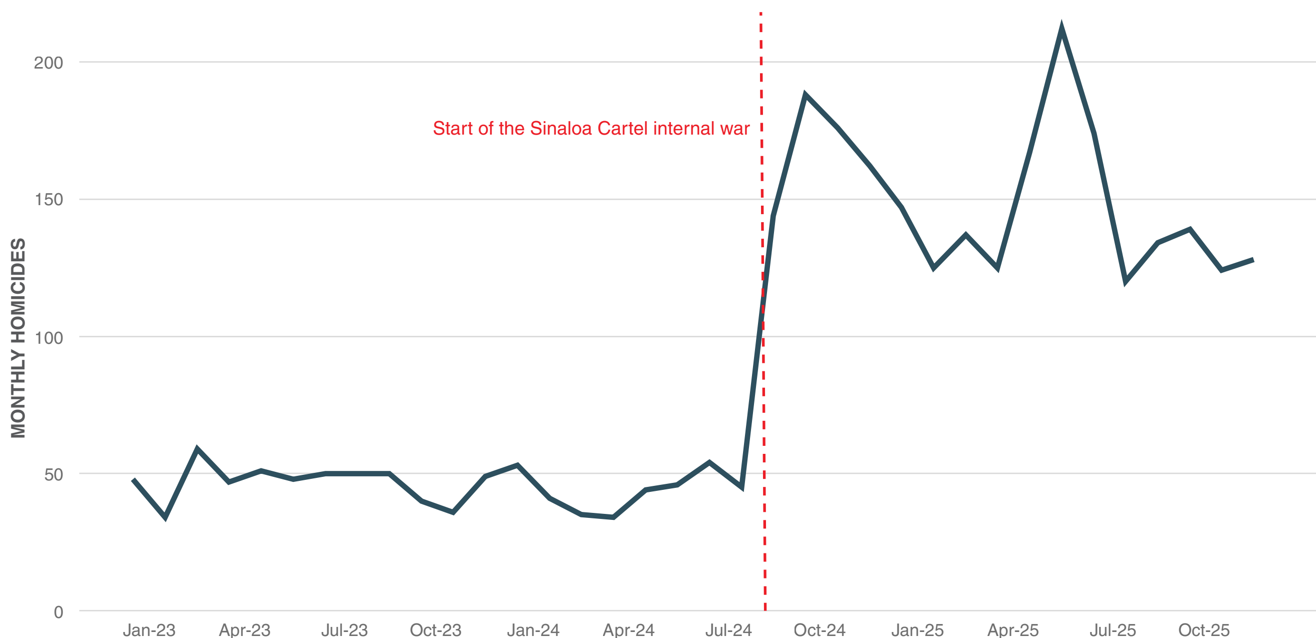
Despite the deployment of about 11,000 security personnel to Culiacán,[9] murders remained prevalent for the remainder of 2024 and throughout 2025. As shown in Figure 1.6, between January 2023 and August 2024, there were consistently between 30 and 55 homicides in Sinaloa per month, with an overall average of 45. Since the onset of the Sinaloa Cartel's internal war, however, the number of monthly homicides has ranged from 120 to 212, with an overall average of 150.

In 2025, even as much of the rest of the country recorded marked improvements in peacefulness, this conflict drove Sinaloa to record one of the sharpest deteriorations in the history of the MPI. The state's total homicide count rose from 1,022 in 2024 to 1,732 in 2025. Moreover, the vast majority of the deaths in Sinaloa in 2024, around 670 in total, occurred after the eruption of the cartel's internal war.

FIGURE 1.6

Monthly homicides, Sinaloa, 2023–2025

After the onset of the Sinaloa Cartel's internal war in September 2024, the monthly homicide rate in the state of Sinaloa more than tripled.



Source: SESNSP

The conflict has produced gruesome scenes across the state, with bodies frequently discovered in vehicles, coolers, and public areas, reflecting a strategy of rival groups to intimidate opponents and local populations.[10] The intensity of the conflict appears to have peaked in June 2025, but high levels of violence continued throughout the year, with authorities registering an average of 3.5 homicides per day in December, alongside renewed reports of roadblocks and shootings targeting individuals caught in the resulting traffic.[11]

Although the Sinaloa Cartel is no stranger to infighting, as seen in a bloody 2008 schism with the Beltrán Leyva Organization and the 2017 split with Dámaso López 'Licenciado' Núñez, experts argue that the current confrontation has been by far the longest-lasting and the one with the most profound economic impact.[12] The costs have been substantial for the state, especially in Culiacán and surrounding communities, with some estimates suggesting losses equivalent to two to three percent of the state's gross domestic product.[13]

Throughout 2025, law enforcement pressure also appears to have contributed to weakening the Chapitos faction. Arrests of key operators and increased security operations disrupted elements of the group's structure, and by the end of the year only two of its leaders, Iván Archivaldo Guzmán and his brother Jesús Alfredo, remained at large.[14]

The internal conflict also appears to have shifted the Sinaloa Cartel's attentions away from its longstanding rival, the CJNG, and toward internal consolidation and survival. As resources, personnel, and operational focus have likely been redirected toward the Chapitos–Mayiza confrontation, the intensity of inter-cartel conflict between the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG has declined relative to its peak in the early 2020s.

According to UCDP records, since 2015, the rivalry between the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG has been associated with some 30,000 confirmed deaths. However, the true number is probably substantially higher, especially as this figure may not fully take into account battles waged by affiliate gangs and other allied groups. Nevertheless, at nearly 29 percent of the total count of cartel conflict deaths, the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict has been by far the most lethal in Mexico in the past decade. By comparison, the next two most lethal conflicts, the CJNG's fight with the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel's fight with the Juárez Cartel, respectively represent about 18 and 13 percent of the total.

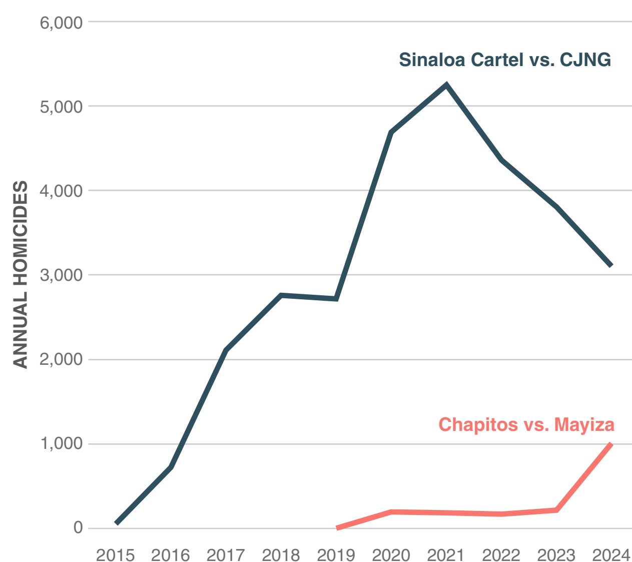
UCDP records also indicate that the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict has unfolded in at least 19 states since 2015, with the primary battleground being Baja California, representing 55 percent of the total deaths. This state is followed by Zacatecas (14.9 percent of the total), Colima (11.4 percent), Jalisco (9.5 percent), and Quintana Roo (4.1 percent).

As with the overall cartel conflict deaths, killings associated with the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict peaked in 2021 and declined over the next several years, as shown in Figure 1.7. This decline has coincided with the gradual rise in deaths attributed to the Chapitos–Mayiza conflict, which rose from two in 2019 to 215 in 2023, before jumping to 1,005 in 2024.

FIGURE 1.7

Annual deaths, Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict and the Chapitos–Mayiza conflict, 2015–2024

As the intensity of the infighting between the Chapitos and Mayiza factions has risen, deaths linked to the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG rivalry have declined.



Source: UCDP

The shift in rivalries appears to have been cemented by the emergence of a reported alliance between the Chapitos and the CJNG by May 2025. Such a partnership could increase each group's territorial reach and access to resources.[15] It also represents a striking development in Mexico's organized criminal landscape, given that the rivalry between the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG has been one of the principal drivers of cartel violence over much of the past decade.

The killing of 'El Mencho'

With the outbreak of open hostilities within the Sinaloa Cartel in 2024, the CJNG appeared poised to capitalize on the fragmentation of its main rival. As the Sinaloa Cartel's internal divisions intensified, the CJNG had greater opportunity to consolidate its position in contested territories and expand into areas where Sinaloa's control had weakened. However, these strategic gains were thrown into jeopardy by the death of El Mencho on 22 February 2026.

While his death dealt a major blow to the CJNG, it also risks triggering a renewed surge of violence across Mexico. Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, was quickly plunged into chaos as the cartel retaliated against law enforcement and citizens, with violence spreading to cities and beach resorts across the country as gunmen set fire to stores and banks.[16] At least 25 National Guard personnel were killed in Jalisco following the outbreak of the violence.[17] Narco-blockades and roadblocks were also reported across 19 Mexican states, including in Baja California, Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Tamaulipas.[18] According to a March report, retail sales fell by 6.5 percent due to blockades, mobility disruptions, and insecurity across the country.[19]

However, the initial outburst of violence appeared to be relatively short-lived, and a degree of calm quickly returned in many affected areas.[20] According to the records of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) monitor, political violence events spiked on the day of El Mencho's death, as shown in Figure 1.8. They rose more than tenfold from the day before, while the number of deaths from such events more than doubled. Yet by the following day, the number of recorded events and deaths fell back to their previous levels and continued at those levels through the end of March.

Given the size and geographic reach of the CJNG, the death of its leader raises the possibility of internal fragmentation and succession struggles within the organization. El Mencho's grip over the organization was unusually centralized, with the CJNG revolving more tightly around its leader than many other large criminal groups in Mexico.

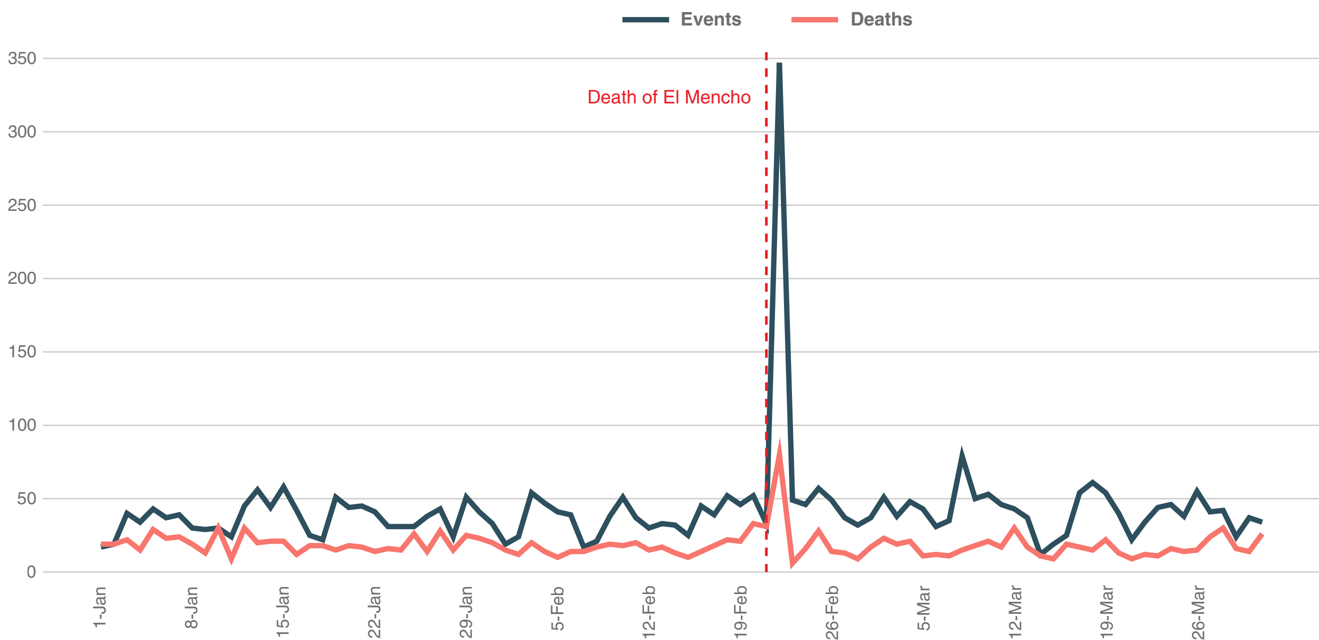
As of March 2026, reports suggest that the CJNG may already have settled on a new leader in Juan Carlos Valencia González, El Mencho's California-born stepson. According to reporting, Valencia González appears to command considerable internal legitimacy within the organization and is seen by some officials and analysts as the figure best placed to ensure continuity and prevent a violent rupture within the cartel's hierarchy. His rise would also reinforce the role of the Valencia family network, long central to the CJNG's financial and organizational structure.[21]

If this transition holds, it lowers the risk of succession war within the organization. If, however, his authority is contested or proves insufficient to hold together the cartel's far-flung network of operatives and regional commanders, the CJNG could still fragment, with significant implications for violence across multiple parts of the country. Moreover, the future of the reported alliance between the CJNG and the Chapitos faction of the Sinaloa Cartel remains uncertain, since it was reportedly brokered under El Mencho's supervision.[22] If internal competition within the CJNG coincides with shifting alliances elsewhere in the criminal landscape, Mexico could see a resurgence of the very turf wars that drove the dramatic deterioration in peacefulness in the late 2010s.

FIGURE 1.8

Daily political violence events and fatalities in Mexico, January to March 2026

Violent events and fatalities spiked immediately after the death of El Mencho but returned to prior levels within days.



Source: ACLED

Homicide

Over the past decade, more than 325,000 people have been murdered in Mexico. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of homicides rose rapidly, with the national rate climbing from 15.1 to 28.2 deaths per 100,000 people. Over the past six years, however, there has been a steady decline in killings, with last year seeing the most substantial drop on record. The 2025 rate of 18.1 deaths per 100,000 people was the lowest since 2015.

Figure 1.9 depicts the national monthly trend in homicide rate since January 2015. Following three years of significant increases, the monthly homicide rate peaked in July 2018 at 2.52 deaths per 100,000 people, after which it gradually but evenly declined over the next six years. In mid-2024, however, the rate entered a period of steep decline, falling to 1.25 deaths per 100,000 people in December 2025. This was the lowest rate since October 2015.

Geographic concentration of homicides

Mexico's high levels of homicide are primarily driven by violence in a relatively small number of urban centers. In 2025, a quarter of all homicide cases were recorded in just 10 municipalities. However, relative to population sizes, high levels of homicide are present in urban, semi-urban, and rural settings across the country.

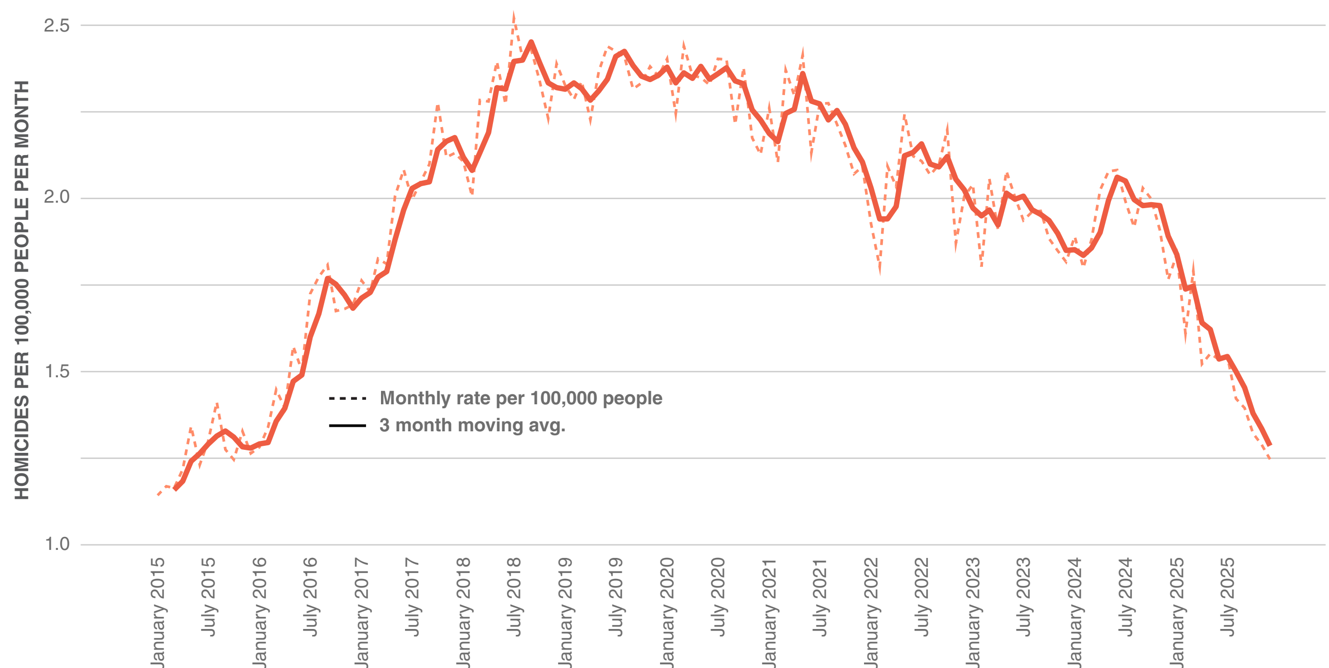
The map in Figure 1.10 depicts the homicide rate across Mexico's municipalities. At the municipal level, Mexico's National System for Public Security (SESNSP) only provides the number of homicide cases, which is often distinct from the number of homicide victims, as a single homicide case may involve multiple victims. However, both figures are provided at the state level. To estimate the municipal homicide rate, therefore, each municipal homicide case rate has been adjusted based on the level of state-wide discrepancy between victims and cases – differences which range widely across states.

In Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Yucatán, for example, every homicide victim in 2025 was associated with a unique case and there were therefore no discrepancies. In contrast, Jalisco, Zacatecas, and Guanajuato had the highest discrepancies between the two figures, with the total number of victims in each state being 20 percent higher than the total number of cases.

FIGURE 1.9

Monthly homicide rate, 2015–2025

In mid-2024, homicides began declining rapidly.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Encouragingly, for crime statistics from 2026 onward, the National Crime Incidence Registry (RNID) has introduced a new methodology that shifts away from aggregated reporting to record cases, crimes, and victims separately and link them using unique identifiers. Among other improvements, this will allow the number of homicide victims to be measured directly at the municipal level, which will significantly improve the precision of subnational homicide estimates.

Out of Mexico's 2,462 municipalities,[23] there were about 210 with an estimated homicide rate of at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people in 2025, meaning that approximately eight percent nationally experienced extreme levels of homicidal violence. In contrast, about 1,200 had a rate of less than five deaths per 100,000 people, including about 1,040 with zero deaths, meaning that nearly half of municipalities had either no or relatively few recorded murders last year. The remaining municipalities fall within the moderate to very high homicide level ranges: about 22 percent of all municipalities recorded a rate of 5-15 deaths per 100,000 people, about 14 percent recorded a rate of 15-30, and about seven percent recorded a rate of 30-50.

Municipalities experiencing extreme levels of homicidal violence are often clustered together in the same geographic area. These clusters commonly represent strategic places for the production or trafficking of illegal drugs. They tend to be in areas in dispute by two or more criminal organizations, whose turf wars drive up homicide rates.

There were six states where at least 30 percent of municipalities recorded extreme homicide rates in 2025. With the exception of Morelos, all of these states are located in the western and northwestern regions of the country, which have long served as important corridors for drug trafficking. Colima, the most violent state in the country, continued to have the highest proportion of municipalities with extreme homicide rates, with seven of its ten municipalities exceeding 50 deaths per 100,000 people. It was followed by Morelos, Baja California Sur, Baja California, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa, all of which saw at least three in ten municipalities record extreme rates.

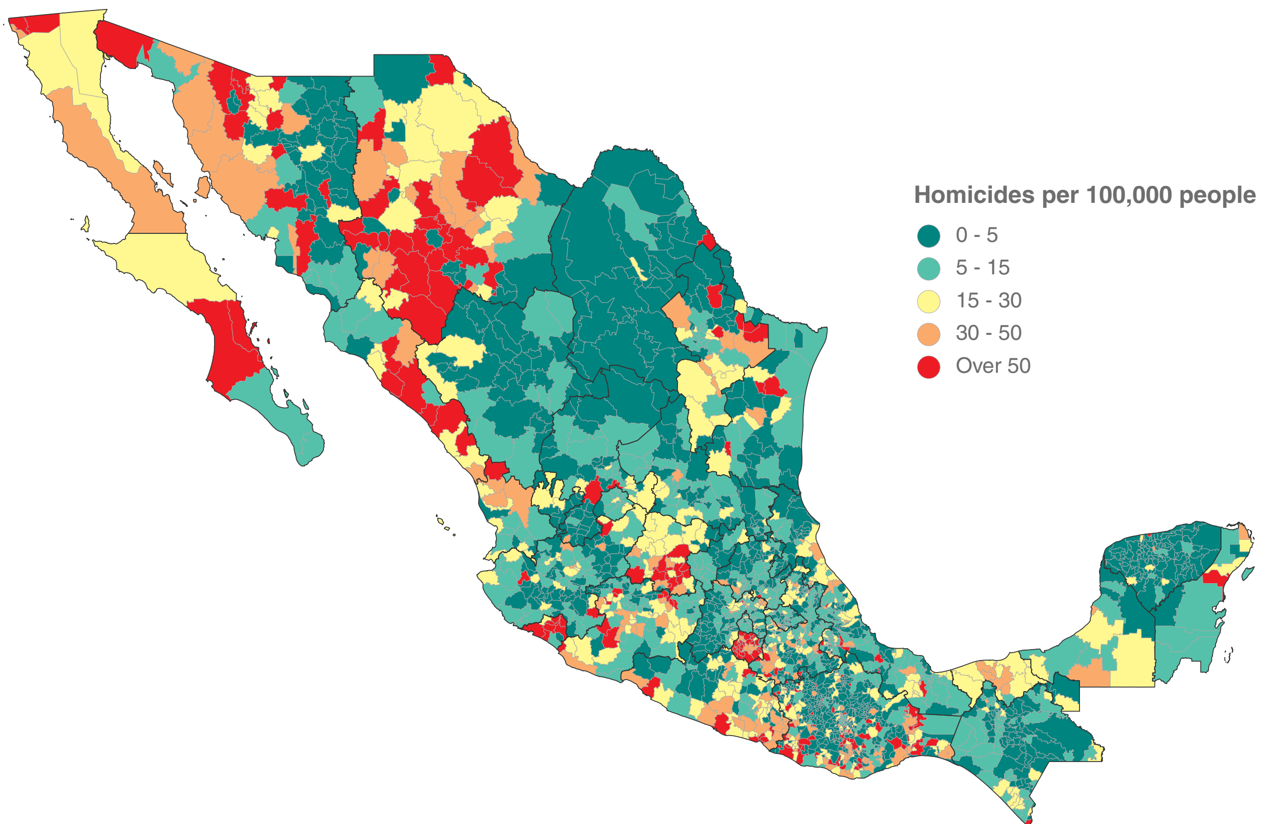
The case of Sinaloa is particularly striking. Not only did the number of municipalities registering extreme homicide rates rise from four to six, but the homicide rate increased in all 20 municipalities, rising by an average of roughly 70 percent over the previous year. These jumps can largely be attributed to the ongoing internal conflict between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel that erupted in September 2024. The capital of Culiacán, for example, experienced a dramatic surge in violence. Between 2024 and 2025, its estimated homicide rate climbed from 64 to 107 deaths per 100,000 people, giving it the second highest rate in the country last year.

While Sinaloa's criminal economy historically developed in rural areas dedicated to marijuana and opium poppy cultivation, the current generation of cartel leaders has increasingly brought violent conflict into major urban centers. Newer actors within the cartel have backgrounds shaped by the immense wealth

FIGURE 1.10

Municipal homicide rates, 2025

About eight percent of municipalities have a homicide rate of at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

generated by earlier trafficking operations and have tended to operate from urban environments such as Culiacán, where criminal networks are now deeply embedded in local business and financial activities.[24]

However, such violence is not limited to urban centers. In Chihuahua, for example, more than one-third of municipalities recorded extreme homicide rates in 2025. Most of Chihuahua's 67 municipalities are rural, with populations of fewer than 20,000 people. With the exception of the cities of Juárez and Cuauhtémoc, all the municipalities with extreme homicide rates in the state have small populations, and most are rural.

A large cluster of extreme homicide rates stretches from southwestern Chihuahua into central Sinaloa, overlapping with the Golden Triangle region, which has historically been known for heroin and marijuana production.[25] In recent years, the decriminalization of marijuana across much of the United States and the growing shift from heroin to synthetic opioids have reduced demand for the cultivation of the plant-based drugs from this region. Nevertheless, the Golden Triangle – considered the birthplace of the Sinaloa Cartel – has remained a stronghold for the organization into the 2020s.

Table 1.2 lists the 20 mid-sized and large-population municipalities with the highest homicide rates in 2025, along with the 20 with the lowest rates.[26] Collectively, the highest homicide municipalities accounted for one-third of all homicide cases in Mexico. The port city of Manzanillo, which is a highly strategic location for the import of precursor chemicals for synthesizing fentanyl, recorded the highest homicide rate in the country. Its rate has been above 90 deaths per 100,000 people each year since 2016. However, for the eighth consecutive year, Tijuana had the highest number of homicides overall, with about 1,090 registered cases, though this is about 500 fewer than it had in 2024.

TABLE 1.2

Municipalities with the highest and lowest homicide rates, 2025

Homicide rates in Mexican cities range from fewer than one to as many as 140 deaths per 100,000 people.

HIGHEST HOMICIDE RATES

RANK	MUNICIPALITY	STATE	HOMICIDE CASES	HOMICIDE RATE*
1	Manzanillo	Colima	242	140
2	Culiacán	Sinaloa	908	107
3	San Luis Río Colorado	Sonora	187	105
4	Colima	Colima	139	97.7
5	Valle de Santiago	Guanajuato	122	97.3
6	Zamora	Michoacán	171	96.1
7	Cajeme	Sonora	368	94.0
8	Salamanca	Guanajuato	201	88.0
9	Acapulco de Juárez	Guerrero	485	73.5
10	Cuautla	Morelos	114	67.4
11	Tijuana	Baja California	1090	62.7
12	Juárez	Chihuahua	791	61.1
13	Cuauhtémoc	Chihuahua	87	56.2
14	Celaya	Guanajuato	241	55.4
15	Pénjamo	Guanajuato	70	54.1
16	San Miguel de Allende	Guanajuato	73	50.0
17	Irapuato	Guanajuato	239	48.3
18	Uruapan	Michoacán	142	45.8
19	San Martín Texmelucan	Puebla	57	41.3
20	Chilpancingo de los Bravo	Guerrero	98	40.9

LOWEST HOMICIDE RATES

RANK	MUNICIPALITY	STATE	HOMICIDE CASES	HOMICIDE RATE*
1	Ciudad Madero	Tamaulipas	1	0.52
2	Tampico	Tamaulipas	3	1.09
3	Lerdo	Durango	2	1.30
4	Ixtlahuaca	Mexico State	2	1.41
5	Mérida	Yucatán	16	1.61
6	Saltillo	Coahuila	15	1.70
7	Tepatitlán de Morelos	Jalisco	3	2.40
8	Acuña	Coahuila	4	2.45
9	Ciudad Valles	San Luis Potosí	4	2.47
10	Torreón	Coahuila	18	2.50
11	Monclova	Coahuila	6	2.52
12	Gómez Palacio	Durango	9	2.56
13	Nuevo Laredo	Tamaulipas	11	2.79
14	Benito Juárez	Mexico City	12	3.06
15	Ocosingo	Chiapas	7	3.33
16	Comitán de Domínguez	Chiapas	5	3.35
17	Durango	Durango	22	3.39
18	Toluca	Mexico State	30	3.73
19	Veracruz	Veracruz	21	3.94
20	Coyoacán	Mexico City	24	4.33

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Note: The municipal homicide rate* has been estimated by adjusting the municipal homicide case rate based on state-wide discrepancies between the recorded numbers of victims and cases. Only includes municipalities with a population of at least 150,000.

In contrast, there are several major cities and municipalities across Mexico that recorded low homicide rates in 2025. With just one recorded case of intentional homicide, Ciudad Madero in Tamaulipas had the lowest homicide rate in the country for the second year in a row. Ciudad Madero is part of the Tampico metropolitan area, and the neighboring municipality of Tampico itself had the country's second lowest homicide rate, with 1.1 deaths per 100,000 people respectively.

Mérida in Yucatán had the lowest homicide rate of any state capital, with about 1.6 homicides per 100,000 people. Other capitals with low homicide rates include Campeche City (Campeche), Saltillo (Coahuila), and Toluca (Mexico State), while two of Mexico City's 16 boroughs were also among the municipalities with the lowest homicide rates.

Homicide rates disaggregated by sex

Looking at the dynamics of homicides by the sex of the victims highlights the necessity for tailored approaches to address distinct patterns of violence affecting men and women in Mexico. Overall, men are much more likely than women to be victims of homicide in Mexico, consistently accounting for nearly nine in ten victims. Male homicides are more likely to be linked to organized crime trends, while female deaths are more likely to be associated with intimate partner violence.[27] Since 2015, for example, nearly one in five female homicides occurred in the home, compared to one in 13 for male homicides.[28]

Table 1.3 shows that since 2015 male homicides have risen by nearly 40 percent, increasing by a larger percentage than female homicides. However, both male and female homicides peaked in 2019, as the two categories of killings have fallen since. Male homicides have declined 32.6 percent over the past five years, while female homicides have declined by 27.3 percent.

Femicides, the murder of a woman for gender-based reasons,[29] have become a major concern across Latin America in recent years. In most cases, this crime is committed by current or former intimate partners, highlighting the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence within the family sphere.[30] In Mexico, the murder of a woman or girl is considered gender based and included in femicide statistics when one of seven criteria is met, including evidence of sexual violence prior to the victim's death; a sentimental, affective, or trusting relationship with the perpetrator; or the victim's body being displayed in public.[31]

Recorded cases of femicide in Mexico have risen significantly in the past decade, from 428 reported victims in 2015 to 721 in 2025, a 68.5 percent increase. While femicides are usually included in female homicide figures, not all female homicides are considered femicides. In this analysis, femicide data is presented as separate from female homicide to assess the different dynamics of reported femicides compared to female homicide.

As a relatively new crime category that requires added levels of investigation and analysis to identify, femicides have not been uniformly classified as such by different law enforcement institutions since the category's introduction. At present, about one in four female killings in Mexico is classified as a femicide. However, the rates at which the murders of women are classified as femicides vary substantially across states. In 2025, for example, 73.1 percent of the murders of women in Sinaloa were classified as femicides, compared to only 6.4 percent in Guanajuato. It is therefore difficult to determine with certainty the true number of femicides in different states and over time.[32]

Feminicides, male homicides, and non-femicide female homicides also show different patterns in terms of weaponry. While male homicides and non-femicide female homicides show

TABLE 1.3

Homicides by sex, 2015–2025

Both male and total female homicides peaked in 2019, while femicides peaked in 2021.

YEAR	TOTAL HOMICIDES	MALE HOMICIDES	FEMALE HOMICIDES	% MALE	% FEMALE	FEMICIDES	% FEMALE HOMICIDES CLASSIFIED AS FEMICIDES
2015	18,312	15,158	2,161	87.5%	12.5%	428	*19.8%*
2016	23,188	20,007	2,834	87.6%	12.4%	648	*22.9%*
2017	29,636	25,898	3,301	88.7%	11.3%	769	*23.3%*
2018	34,662	30,422	3,682	89.2%	10.8%	924	*25.1%*
2019	35,694	31,013	3,846	89.0%	11.0%	973	*25.3%*
2020	35,548	30,903	3,780	89.1%	10.9%	976	*25.8%*
2021	34,380	29,696	3,769	88.7%	11.3%	1,021	*27.1%*
2022	31,969	27,277	3,787	87.8%	12.2%	983	*26.0%*
2023	30,585	26,596	3,434	88.6%	11.4%	853	*24.8%*
2024	30,915	26,806	3,414	88.7%	11.3%	853	*25.0%*
2025	24,095	20,909	2,795	88.2%	11.8%	721	*25.8%*
% Change, 2015-2025	**31.6%**	**37.9%**	**29.3%**	**-**	**-**	**68.5%**	**-**

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations
Note: Female homicides includes femicides. Total homicides include homicides where the sex of the victim is unknown, but the male and female percentages do not.

very similar trends, with three-quarters being carried out with guns in both cases, femicides are far less likely to involve firearms. Nearly a quarter of femicide victims were killed with knives, while the largest share – more than two-fifths – were killed by 'other means'. These latter cases likely include beatings and strangulations, though official records do not provide additional detail.

Missing persons

Mexico has experienced a growing number of reported disappearances in recent years. Some of these cases are likely linked to homicides, suggesting that the country's official homicide rate may be lower than the true figure. In response to longstanding concerns about unreliable data on missing and disappeared persons, the Mexican government created the National Search Commission (CNB) in 2017 to improve tracking and documentation of these cases.[33]

Disappearances represent a grim reality in Mexico. They are devastating to families, as they leave loved ones without a sense of closure or justice. Concerns that some missing persons are homicide victims have intensified with the growing discovery of clandestine and unmarked graves across Mexico. Organized crime groups frequently use forced disappearance as a tool of social control, eliminating perceived threats while avoiding the attention that overt killings might attract. By secretly disposing of victims' bodies, these groups conceal the scale of their violence and reinforce fear and uncertainty within local communities.[34]

Between 2006 and 2021, authorities discovered 4,839 clandestine graves containing 8,278 bodies.[35] With more than 5,600 graves identified by mid-2023, the total number of bodies recovered nationwide likely exceeds 9,500. Jalisco has been the most affected state: between late 2018 and late 2021, roughly one-third of the 3,335 bodies exhumed from clandestine graves across Mexico were found there.[36]

In March 2025, national attention focused on a ranch near Teuchitlán, Jalisco, where citizens searching for missing relatives uncovered what appeared to be a large killing site linked to the CJNG. Investigators found hundreds of items of clothing, around 200 pairs of shoes, and three alleged cremation sites, sparking nationwide protests over authorities' failure to prevent such violence and locate victims.[37]

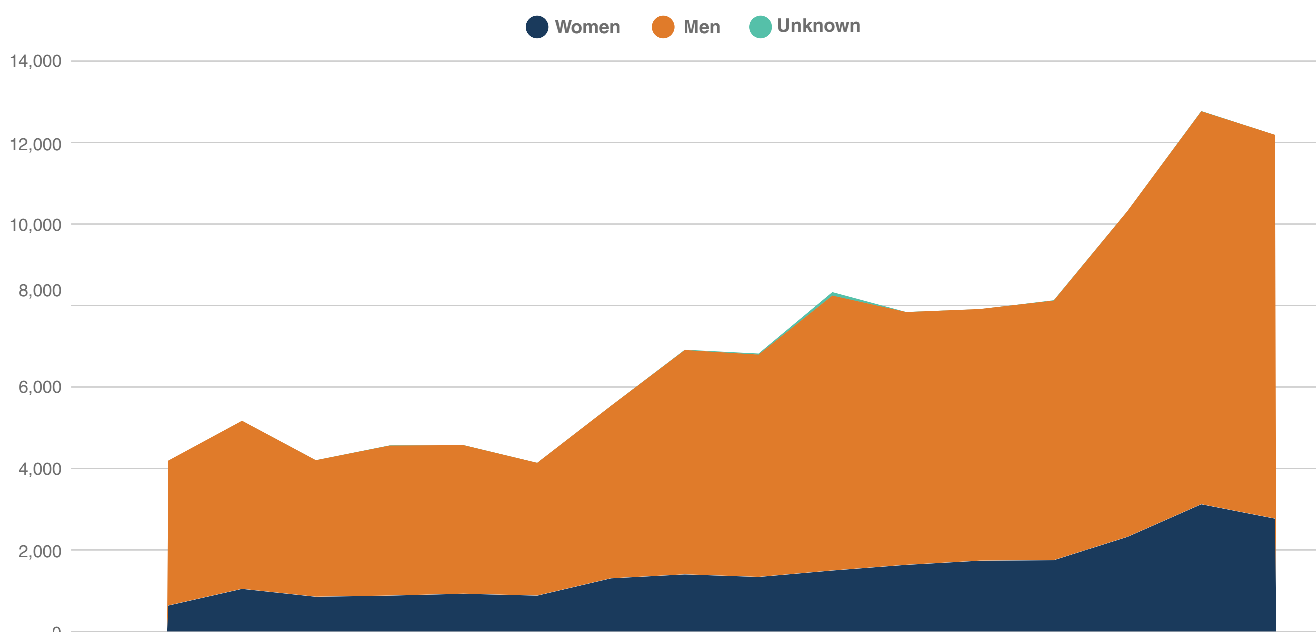
After Jalisco, the states of Sinaloa and Colima have recorded the largest numbers of exhumed bodies in recent years – areas that are also strongholds of the CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel. In Colima, the municipality of Tecomán has been a particularly violent battleground between the two groups. Although its homicide rate has declined since reaching the highest level among Mexican municipalities with over 100,000 residents in 2017, Tecomán remains a major site of clandestine graves, accounting for 7.3 percent of those discovered nationwide between 2018 and mid-2023.[38]

While it is not known how many missing people end up as victims of homicide, there have been similarly alarming increases in disappearances in recent years. Since 2010, more than 113,000 people have been reported missing in Mexico and have not been found. More than half of these cases are from the past six years, as the number has been steadily climbing since 2015, as shown in Figure 1.11. Last year, nearly 35,500 people were reported missing, of which over 12,000 have not been found.

FIGURE 1.11

Missing or disappeared people, by sex, 2010–2025

In 2025, over 12,000 people were reported missing and have not been found, a decline from the all-time high of 2024.



Source: Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda
Note: Figures accurate as of 10 March 2026.

Figure 1.12 depicts the number of people reported missing by state since 2020, along with the outcomes to date of such cases. With nearly 30,000 cases over the past six years, Mexico State has had by far the highest number of people reported missing. In absolute terms, it has also had the largest number of people that have never been found or been found dead. However, the vast majority of the cases in Mexico State, around 21,000 people, have eventually been found alive.

In contrast, in Baja California, only 14.6 percent of missing cases have resulted in the person being found alive since 2020. More than 80 percent have not been found, and four percent have been found dead. Chihuahua and Guerrero have respectively the second and third highest rates of missing persons cases going unresolved. In terms of the rates at which missing persons are eventually found dead, Colima, Querétaro, Guanajuato, and Jalisco have had the worst rates since 2020, with more than nine percent of cases in each recording this outcome since 2020.

Yucatán is the state to have recorded the fewest missing cases in the past six years, with just over 700. It also recorded the fewest people that were not eventually found. The neighboring state of Campeche has also registered relatively few cases since 2020, with just over 1,250. Campeche has registered the lowest number of instances – and the lowest rate – of missing persons eventually being found dead; there have been only 26 such cases, equivalent to 2.1 percent of those reported missing.

Previous IEP analysis has found that there are divergences in missing person dynamics across Mexico on the basis of sex.[39] Most women are eventually found alive, but this is not the case for men. Over the past 15 years, nearly four out of five missing women have been located alive, and only around two percent have been found dead. In the case of men, who account for about 60 percent of all cases, just under half have been found alive, while more than two-fifths have never been found, and around seven percent have been found dead.

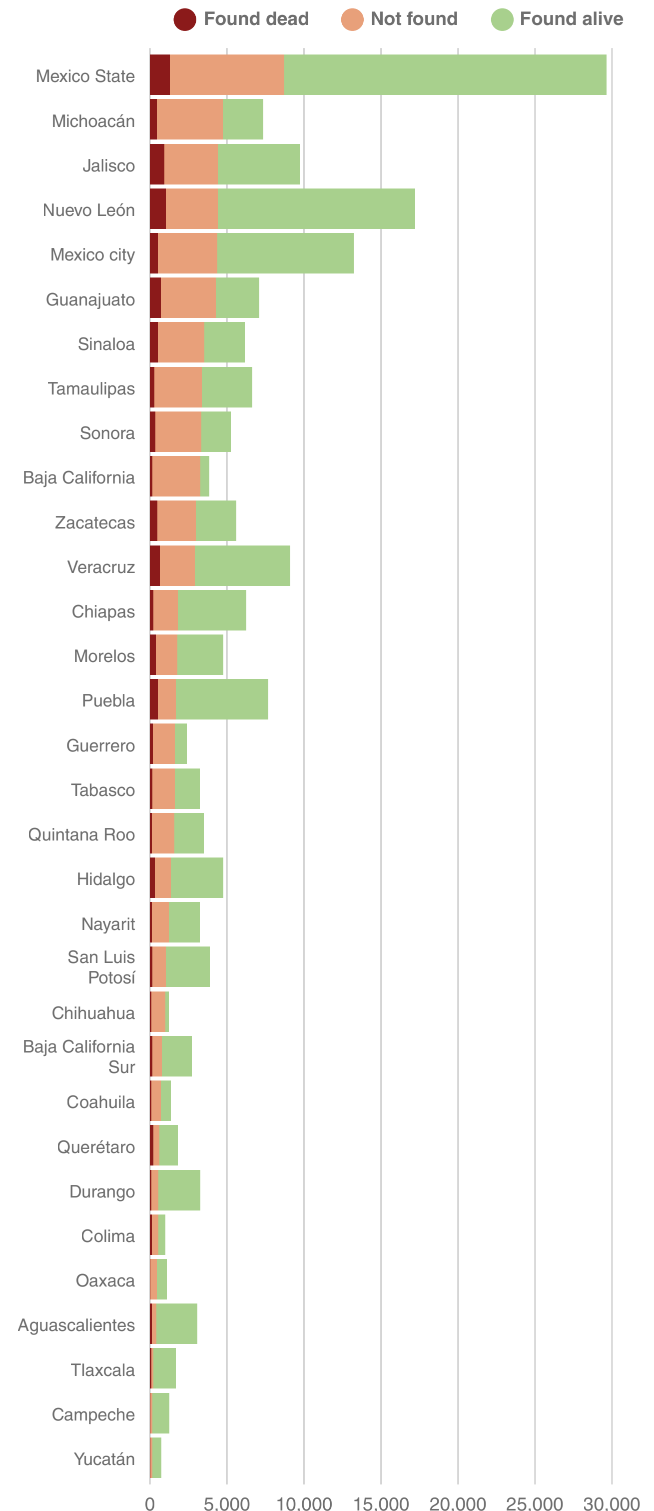
The divergences based on geography and sex in the prevalence and outcomes of missing person cases are undoubtedly the result of a wide range of factors. Among these is likely the degree of dominance of organized criminal groups in different areas and such groups' favored methods of using violence to assert control.

This can be seen in the fact that more men than women are associated with unresolved or deadly disappearances. Women in Mexico are more likely to be the victims of interpersonal and domestic violence. As such, a larger portion of female disappearances may be temporary measures to flee abuse from a known assailant, rather than enforced disappearances by an armed group. The influence of organized crime also appears evident in the large overall number of cases in states with a historically strong presence of criminal groups, as well as in the higher presumed or confirmed lethality of cases in these places.

FIGURE 1.12

Missing person cases and outcomes, by state, 2020–2025

In the past six years, Mexico State has recorded the highest total number of people reported missing, but most of these have been eventually found alive. In some states, missing person cases are more likely to go unresolved or result in the person being found dead.



Source: Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda
Note: Figures accurate as of 10 March 2026.

Organized Crime

There are four sub-indicators that make up the overall measure of organized crime: extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking, retail drug crimes, and major organized crime offenses. Major offenses include federal drug trafficking crimes and criminal offenses committed by three or more people.

Since 2015, the overall rate of organized crime has nearly doubled. However, this rise has been entirely driven by increases in retail drug crimes and extortions, as shown in Figure 1.13. In contrast, the rate of kidnapping and human trafficking as well as the rate of major organized crime offenses have both dropped markedly. Because of these diverging trends, the overall indicator score was only 12.5 percent worse in 2025 than in 2015.

In 2025, the two states with by far the lowest rate of organized crime were Yucatán and Tlaxcala, whose rates were respectively 11 and six times lower than the national rate. In contrast, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Colima had the highest rates, each around three times higher than the national rate. Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Colima were also the states to have seen the largest deteriorations in rates since 2015.

Over the past decade, the decline in the rate of kidnappings and incidents of human trafficking has been striking. In 2015, there were 13.8 instances of these crimes per 100,000 people, but this rate has fallen in most of the past 10 years, including last year. As of 2025, the rate stood at just four instances per 100,000 people.

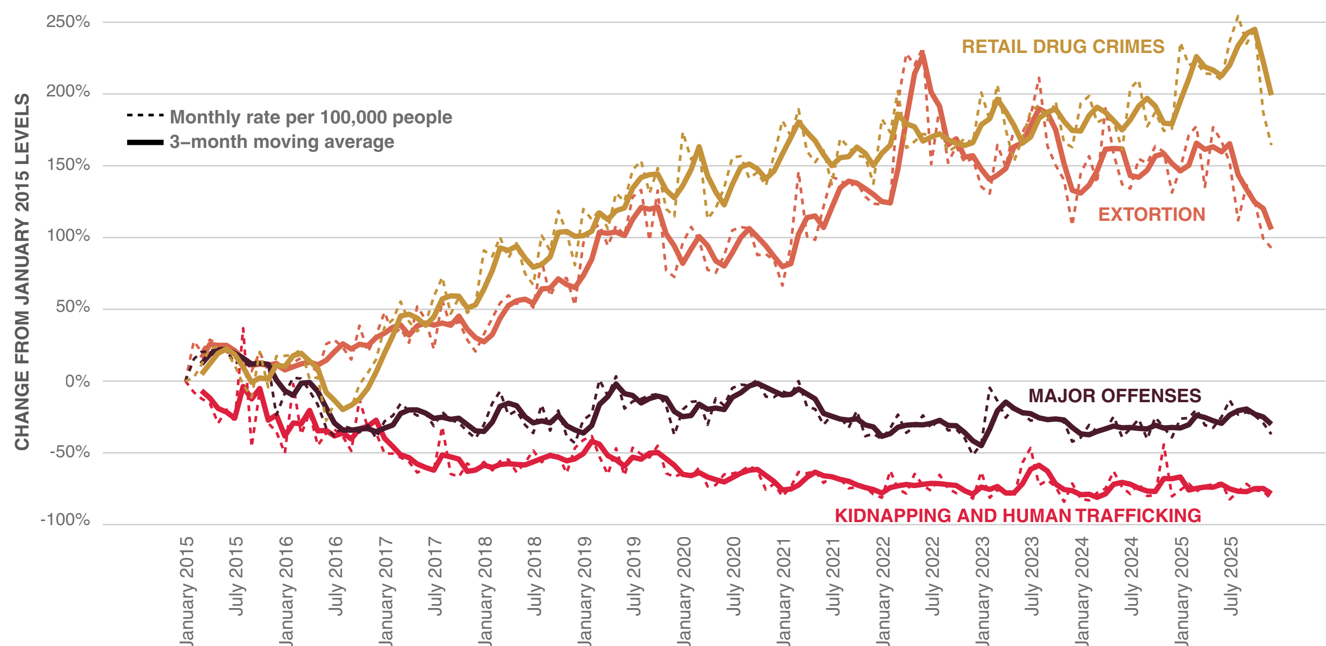
This improvement has been broad based, with 26 out of Mexico's 32 states recording reductions in kidnappings and human trafficking incidents. Coahuila, Puebla, and Tamaulipas have registered the largest rate improvements, as their rates fell from over 50 instances per 100,000 people in 2015 to between 1.4 and 4.4 last year. In absolute terms, these states – along with Mexico City and Chiapas – also had the largest drops in total cases. Together, these five states had more than 21,000 kidnapping and human trafficking crimes in 2015, but they recorded only around 1,000 in 2025.

Major offenses, which tend to be coordinated drug trafficking activities, have also experienced a noteworthy drop across Mexico. Over the past decade, the rate has fallen by 33.5 percent. However, much of this decline is the result of the baseline year of comparison, 2015, having recorded an unusually high number of crimes, at around 9,700 nationally. In each of the years since, the number of documented offenses of this kind has oscillated between about 6,200 and 8,100.

FIGURE 1.13

Indexed change in organized crime offenses, 2015–2025

Since 2015, retail drug crimes and extortions have risen substantially, while the rates of major offenses and kidnapping and human trafficking have declined.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Part of this improvement since the mid-2010s may be the result of changes in the types of drugs that are produced and trafficked in the country. The increased prevalence of drugs like fentanyl, which are sold as small pills and can be chemically synthesized in small spaces, may be easier to covertly produce and traffic than plant-based drugs. Marijuana and heroin, for example, which used to dominate the market, require large tracts of land to grow and are bulkier to move, making them more difficult to hide from authorities.

Often owing to their location along key drug trafficking routes, the states of Colima, Baja California, Querétaro, Sinaloa, and Sonora had the five highest rates of major offenses in 2025, with rates ranging between 15.8 and 44.1 recorded offenses per 100,000 people. In contrast, the southern, eastern, and central states of Veracruz, Mexico State, and Tabasco recorded the lowest rates, with between 0.6 and 1.3 recorded offenses per 100,000 people. Since 2015, Colima has been the state to record the largest deterioration in its rate of major offenses, while Tamaulipas experienced the most significant improvement.

Over the past decade, the national extortion rate has more than doubled. However, the rate peaked in 2022, and in the past three years has experienced modest declines, falling by 12 percent over the period. According to national survey data, monetary losses from the average extortion appear to have risen over the past decade, from around 1,300 pesos per extortion to roughly 6,700 pesos per extortion.[40]

However, this survey data confirms that most instances of extortion result in minimal to no financial losses to the victims. For example, only 10.7 percent of extortion victims report damages that were principally economic, while 51.6 percent report no damages and 36.6 percent report primarily psychological damages.[41]

A major reason for this is that the overwhelming majority of extortions in Mexico are committed through fraudulent phone calls.[42] Such extortions often take the form of 'virtual kidnappings', in which offenders cold-call victims, falsely claim to have a loved one held hostage, and demand a ransom payment. While extortion via phone call is the most prevalent form of extortion, most recipients of these calls are not deceived, with one study finding just a 5.4 percent success rate for criminals.[43]

In contrast, business protection rackets, known as 'cobro de piso', succeed in roughly two-thirds of reported cases.[44] Estimates indicate that approximately one in four small business owners are affected. Victims are typically required to make weekly payments averaging about 500 pesos, with street vendors and market traders particularly vulnerable.[45] Failure to pay on time often leads to intimidation or armed violence.[46]

Another major local revenue source for criminal groups is domestic drug sales. While Mexico has traditionally been seen as a producer or transit point for drugs destined for the United States, its internal drug market has been growing in recent years. Among other metrics, this trend can be seen in the steep rise in its rate of retail drug crimes over the past decade.

Since 2015, retail drug crimes have experienced the largest increase of any indicator in the MPI. It is also the only indicator to have consistently risen each year since 2016. Although the pace of growth appeared to be gradually slowing, in 2025, the rate jumped by 12.1 percent, the most significant uptick since 2019. As such, Mexico recorded a retail drug crimes rate of 78.1 crimes per 100,000 people last year, nearly three times the rate of 26.7 in 2015.

The vast majority of states recorded deteriorations in this sub-indicator, with only six recording improvements. San Luis Potosí recorded by far the worst rate of retail drug crimes in 2025, with 417 crimes per 100,000 people. This represents an 80-fold increase over its rate in 2015. San Luis Potosí's rate is also substantially worse than that of Guanajuato, the second worst performing state, which had the highest rate from 2021 to 2024.

These trends are also reflected in national survey data on drug consumption. Between 2016 and 2025, the share of Mexicans aged 12 to 65 who reported having used any drug at least once in their lifetime increased from 10.3 to 14.4 percent, while lifetime use of illegal drugs rose from 9.9 to 13.1 percent. Cannabis is by far the most widely used illicit drug, with 12 percent of Mexicans reporting using it at some point in their lives, up from 8.6 percent in 2016.[47]

These increases were driven primarily by adults rather than adolescents. Among people aged 18 to 65, lifetime illegal drug use rose from 10.6 percent in 2016 to 14.6 percent in 2025, whereas among adolescents it fell from 6.2 percent to 4.1 percent. Drug use also followed marked regional patterns, with the highest rates concentrated in the northern border regions as well as Mexico City, suggesting that domestic consumption is becoming more entrenched in specific local markets.[48]

Violent Crime

The violent crime indicator comprises four sub-indicators: robbery, assault, family violence, and sexual violence. Since 2015, Mexico's violent crime rate has risen by 12.4 percent, driven by significant increases in the rates of sexual violence and family violence.

As shown in Figure 1.14, violent crime in Mexico peaked in 2018 at a rate of around 2,600 incidents per 100,000 people. In the context of the restrictions on public interactions caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the violent crime rate experienced a sharp decline in 2020 but largely rebounded between 2021 and 2024. However, it once again dropped notably in 2025, falling to a rate of around 2,300 crimes per 100,000 people.

This decline in the violent crime rate was entirely the result of reductions in the frequency of robberies. After rising between 2015 and 2018, they declined in each of the next seven years. By 2025, they had fallen to less than half of their 2018 levels. This trend is confirmed by national survey data, which shows robberies have declined markedly over the past seven years. Historically, robberies on the street or on public transportation were the most common form of crime that Mexicans reported experiencing in their everyday lives.[49]

Mexico State has recorded the highest robbery rate in the country for most of the past 11 years, including each year since 2020. Much of this crime takes place in the greater Mexico City area, as Mexico City itself has also consistently recorded among the top three worst robbery rates in the country. Despite Mexico State registering a 20 percent decline in robberies last year, its rate was more than 14 percent higher than the state with the second highest rate, Sinaloa, whose rate jumped by 73.5 percent last year.

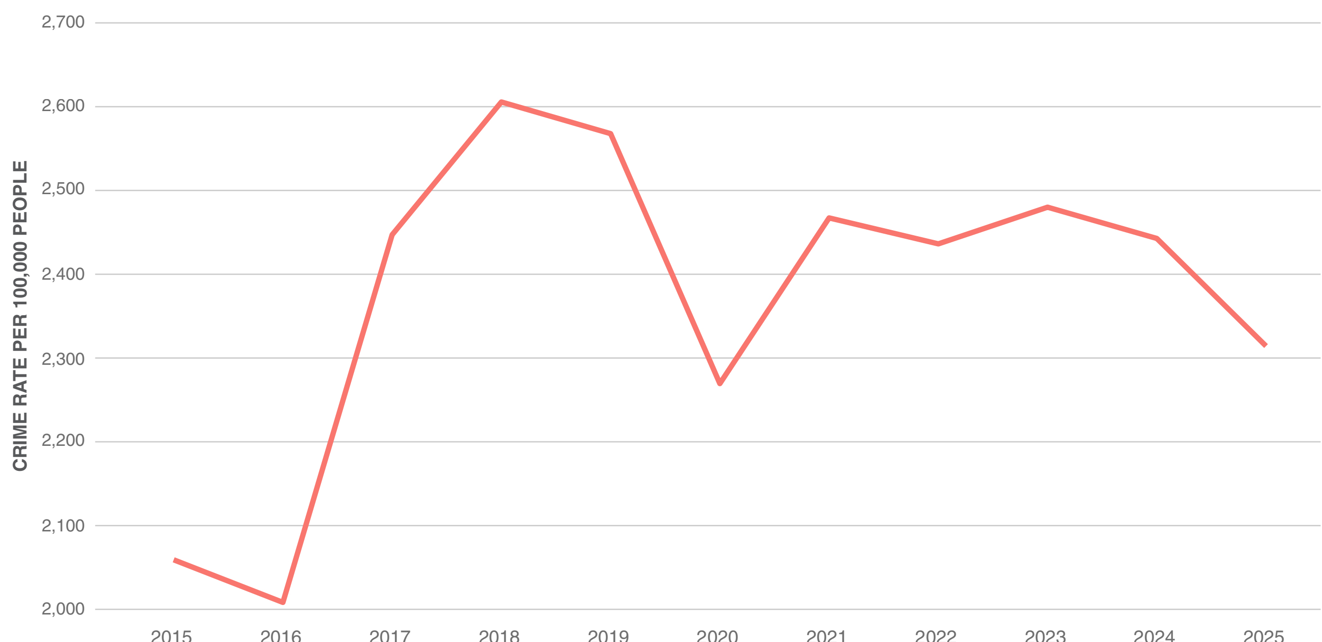
For the sixth year in a row, Yucatán recorded the best violent crime score in the country. This was driven by it registering the lowest robbery and assault rates, and the second lowest family violence and sexual violence rates. In contrast, the neighboring state of Quintana Roo recorded the worst violent crime score for the third year in a row. This was the result of it recording the highest sexual violence rate in the country, the third highest family violence and assault rates, and the sixth highest robbery rate.

As shown in Figure 1.15, robbery used to be by far the most prevalent type of violent crime in Mexico. However, as a result of the substantial reductions over the past seven years, coupled with a doubling of the family violence rate since 2015, family

FIGURE 1.14

Overall violent crime rate, 2015–2025

The national rate of violent crime dropped by 5.3 percent in 2025, a change driven by the continued decline in the robbery rate.



Source: SESNSP, INEGI, IEP calculations

violence became the most common type of violent crime for the first time in 2025. There were approximately 720 family violence crimes per 100,000 people last year, while robbery and assault each had rates of around 660 incidents per 100,000 people.

Family violence and sexual violence represent the two violent crime sub-indicators most associated with violence against women. Gender-based violence in Mexico is deeply rooted in *machismo*, impunity, and socio-cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination against women.[50]

Family violence and sexual violence have both seen troubling trends over the past decade. While the family violence rate has more than doubled, the sexual violence rate experienced even more dramatic increases, rising by 176 percent since 2015.

National survey data indicates that seven in ten women over the age of 15 report experiencing some form of violence in their lifetimes, including 39.9 percent who had suffered abuse from a partner. Half of women aged 15 and older reported experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lives, and 23.3 percent in the 12 months prior to the survey. Young girls are also disproportionately victimized by these types of crimes, with girls between the ages of five and nine being three times more likely to be sexually abused than boys, while girls between 15 and 17 years old are abused eight times more often than boys of the same age.[51]

Impunity and weak institutional responses remain major obstacles to preventing and prosecuting gender-based violence in Mexico. Around 93 percent of sexual violence cases are either not reported or do not lead to an investigation. Many victims choose not to file complaints due to fears of retaliation and a lack of trust in authorities.[52] In addition to perceptions of institutional inefficiency or indifference, documented cases show that gender bias within law enforcement and prosecutors' offices can hinder access to justice by placing blame on victims rather than holding perpetrators accountable.[53]

Despite the severity of violence against women in Mexico, some positive developments have emerged in recent years. Although the rate of family violence has more than doubled since 2015, last year marked the first improvement in this sub-indicator since the index was created, declining by two percent. Furthermore, despite the sharp rise in sexual violence over the past decade, the rate peaked in 2021 and has gradually declined since, falling by 15.4 percent overall.

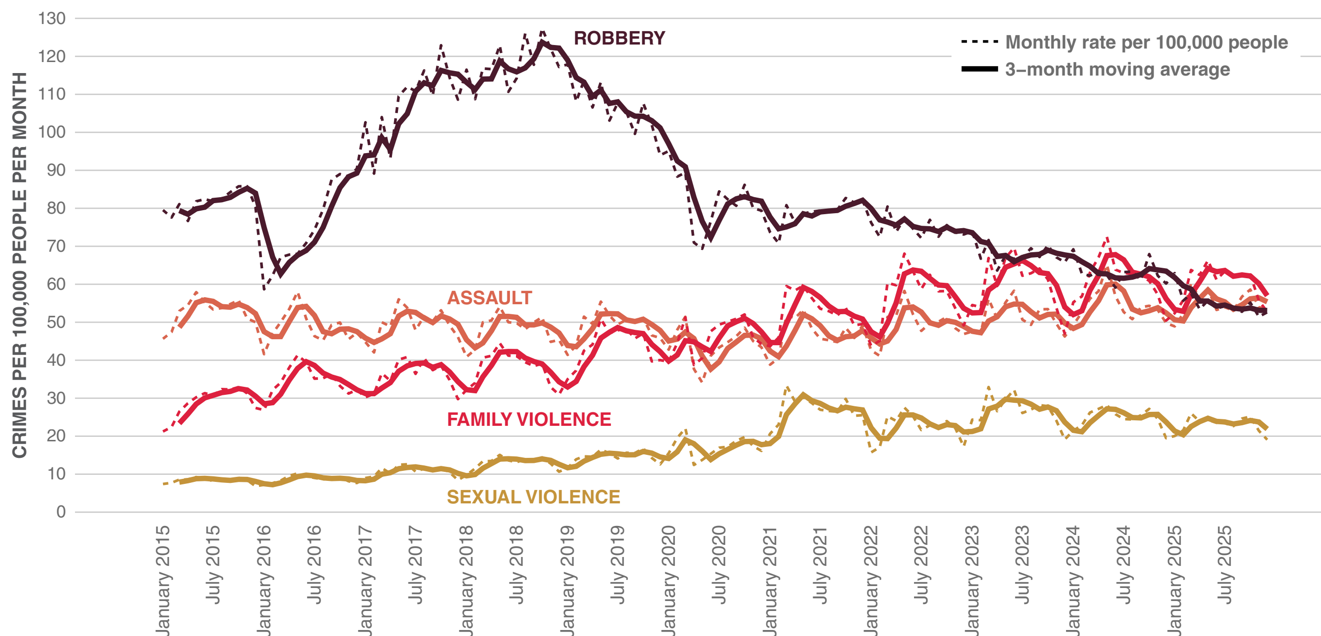
Significant recent gains in women's representation in government have also improved prospects for stronger institutional responses to gender-based violence. The country has implemented reforms to strengthen protections for women, including measures addressing violence, pay discrimination, and other forms of vulnerability. Some reforms require public security and investigative institutions to operate with a gender perspective and mandate that public prosecutors' offices establish specialized units to handle cases involving violence against women.[54]

While these developments are encouraging, regional bodies have recommended additional reforms and innovations to more effectively address violence against women. These include improving data collection and information systems, strengthening prevention through greater investment in education and public awareness campaigns that challenge harmful gender norms, expanding access to protection and support services, and reducing impunity through better resourced and more effective investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial processes.[55]

FIGURE 1.15

Monthly violent crime rates, by sub-indicators, 2015–2025

In the late 2010s, the rate of family violence was significantly lower than the assault rate and far lower than the robbery rate. In 2025, however, family violence surpassed both these categories to become the most common form of violent crime.



Source: SESNSP, INEGI, IEP calculations

Firearms Crime

Firearms have been a principal driver of Mexico's widespread increases in homicides over the past decade. More than 225,000 people have been killed with guns in the past decade. However, last year saw the largest improvement in firearms crime on record.

The firearms crime indicator comprises two sub-indicators: homicides committed with a firearm and assaults committed with a firearm. It is noteworthy that the deterioration of the firearms crime indicator has been primarily driven by homicides and much less by assaults. Since 2015, the rate of homicides with a firearm has increased by 54.5 percent, while the rate of assaults with a firearm has increased by only 22.5 percent. These trends are reflected in Figure 1.16.

These trends align with the fact that lethal, firearm-powered cartel conflicts have led to Mexico's major deteriorations in peacefulness in the past decade, while more commonplace forms of crime and violence – whether involving guns or not – have shown less change.56 The proportion of homicides committed with a firearm has increased substantially, from 57.4 percent in 2015 to 74.1 percent in 2025, the highest rate on record.

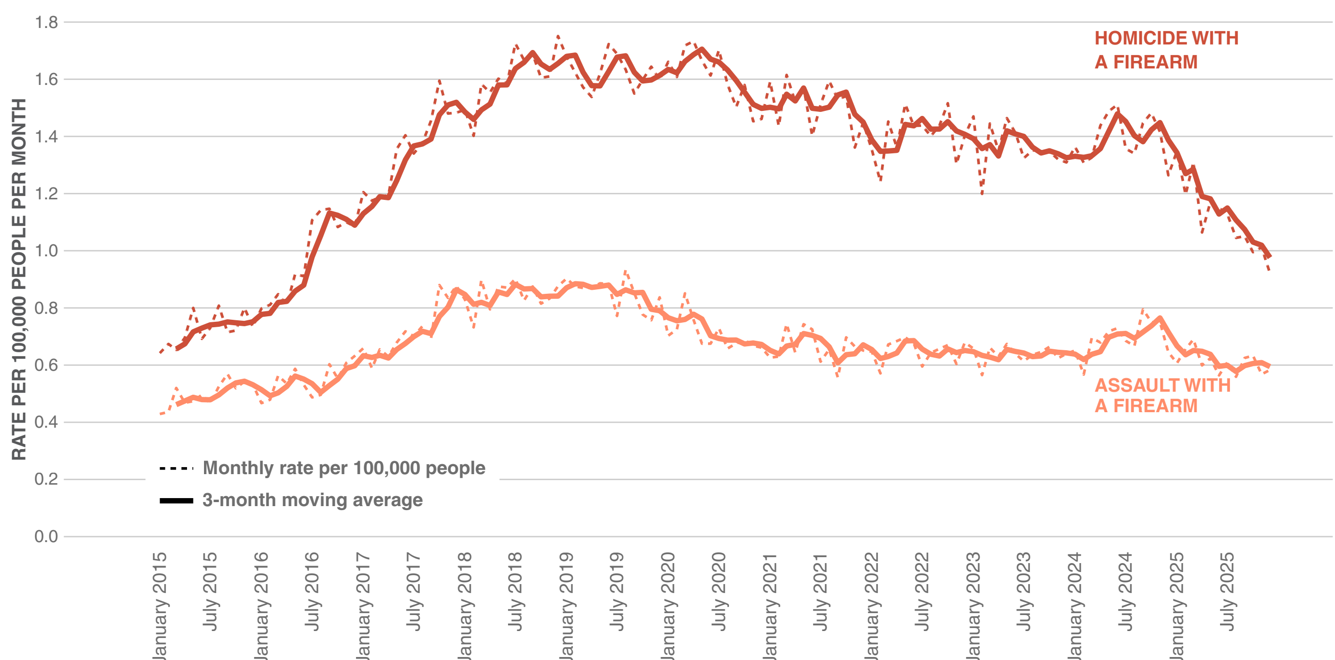
While Mexico has seen long-term deteriorations in its firearms crime score, this indicator has generally been marked by distinct trends over the past 11 years. Between 2015 and 2019, firearms crimes increased precipitously, but the next four saw modest but consistent decreases. In 2024, the rate again saw an uptick of 4.5 percent, but last year it resumed its downward trajectory, falling by 17.4 percent, the largest drop since the inception of the index. This was driven by notable declines in both homicides and assaults involving firearms.

Despite registering a 27 percent reduction last year, Colima had the highest rate of firearms crime in the country for the fourth year in a row, with 68.9 incidents per 100,000 people. Virtually all of these crimes were homicides, as Colima actually had one of the lowest assault with a firearm rates in the country. More than nine in ten killings in Colima were carried out with guns last year, the highest proportion of any state. Colima is also the state that experienced the largest deterioration in firearms crime in the past 11 years.

FIGURE 1.16

Monthly firearms crime rates, 2015–2025

Despite recently recording large declines, homicides with a firearm remain more common than assaults with a firearm.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

For the ninth year in a row, Yucatán had the lowest firearms crime rate in Mexico. With just 0.3 incidents per 100,000 people, its rate was more than 60 times lower than the national rate and more than four times lower than the rate of the second-best ranking state, Coahuila. This was driven by Yucatán's low number of homicides with a firearm. The state had the lowest overall homicide rate in Mexico last year, and only 4.7 percent of these killings were carried out with guns, the smallest proportion in the country.

Durango has experienced the largest improvement in firearms crime since 2015; its rate fell by 75.7 percent. Last year, Chiapas experienced the largest relative decline in firearms crime rate of any state, after experiencing an upsurge of gun violence in 2024. Its rate fell from 12.4 to 4.4 firearms crimes per 100,000 people, a 64.9 percent decline.

A major factor contributing to the prevalence of firearms crime in Mexico is the illicit trafficking of guns from the United States. While civilian gun ownership is legally permitted in Mexico, it is highly restricted and regulated, with background checks required and only a single store in the country authorized to sell firearms to civilians.[57] To bypass these controls, criminal networks rely on trafficking pipelines in which intermediaries in the United States purchase weapons legally and then transfer them to cartel representatives.58 Mexican authorities have estimated that at least half a million firearms are smuggled across the border each year,[59] including military-grade weapons that have intensified cartel conflicts and confrontations with security forces.[60]

Tracing conducted by the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has consistently found that at least two-thirds of firearms recovered at Mexican crime scenes were trafficked from the United States.[61] Roughly three-quarters of these originate in southwestern border states such as Texas and Arizona, and they are often moved south along established drug smuggling corridors into states like Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, and Guanajuato.[62] The growing availability of trafficked firearms has coincided with Mexico's sharp increases in lethal violence over the past decade.

Fear of Violence

The fear of violence indicator measures the extent to which citizens view the state where they live as unsafe. The indicator draws on the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE), which annually surveys more than 100,000 Mexican households on a range of issues related to their experiences and perceptions of crime and public safety.

Since 2015, roughly three-quarters of Mexicans have reported feeling unsafe in their state, although this share has fluctuated over time, as illustrated in Figure 1.17. Perceptions of insecurity reached their highest level in 2018. After declining gradually for several years, they rose again in 2025, when 75.6 percent of citizens reported feeling unsafe.

In the past decade, levels of fearfulness rose in 21 states and fell in 11 states. Coahuila has had the largest improvement since 2015; the number of residents who regard the state as unsafe has halved, falling from 74.9 to 37.7 percent of the population. The second largest improvement occurred in Baja California Sur, where feelings of unsafety fell by 24.4 percentage points. These two states recorded the best fear of violence scores in the country in 2025.

In contrast, Colima and Guanajuato have seen the largest increases in fearfulness in the past decade, each seeing 24-25 percentage point rises since 2015. Last year, Sinaloa saw by far the greatest increase in fear levels, with the proportion of residents regarding the state as unsafe rising from 54.9 to 80.5 percent.

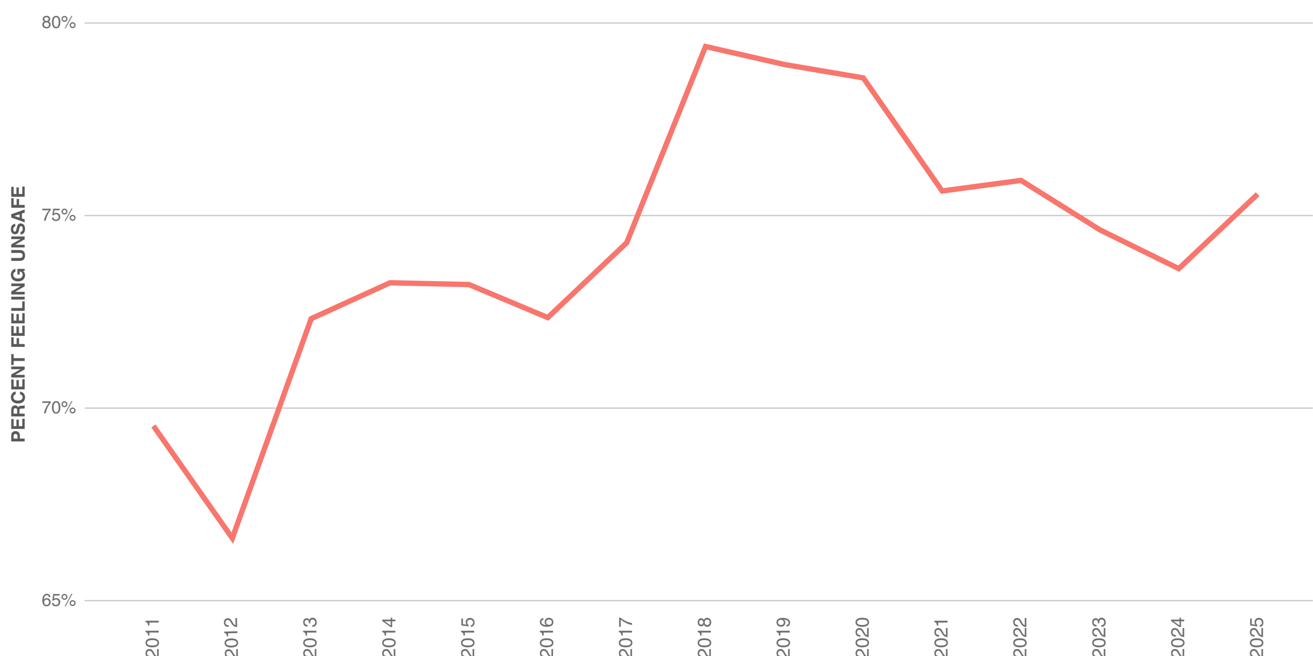
National trends in perceptions of insecurity have generally – though not exactly – followed changes in the country's overall peace score. Like the overall peace score in Mexico, the fear of violence score in Mexico got rapidly worse beginning in 2016, deteriorating by 7.4 percent in the next two years and then gradually improving after 2018. This reciprocal relationship is reflective of IEP's underlying definition of peace, which comprises both the absence of external manifestations of violence as well as the absence of fearfulness about violence.[63]

Figure 1.18 shows states by their fear of violence scores in 2025, along with their overall MPI scores. For the past three years, Baja California Sur has had the best fear of violence score in the country; in 2025, only 37.4 percent of residents reported that they felt unsafe in the state. From 2015 to 2022, Yucatán topped the list, but it is now ranked third after Coahuila.

FIGURE 1.17

Percentage of people fearing violence in their state of residence, 2011–2025

The proportion of people feeling unsafe peaked in 2018 at 79.4 percent and has fallen in the years since.

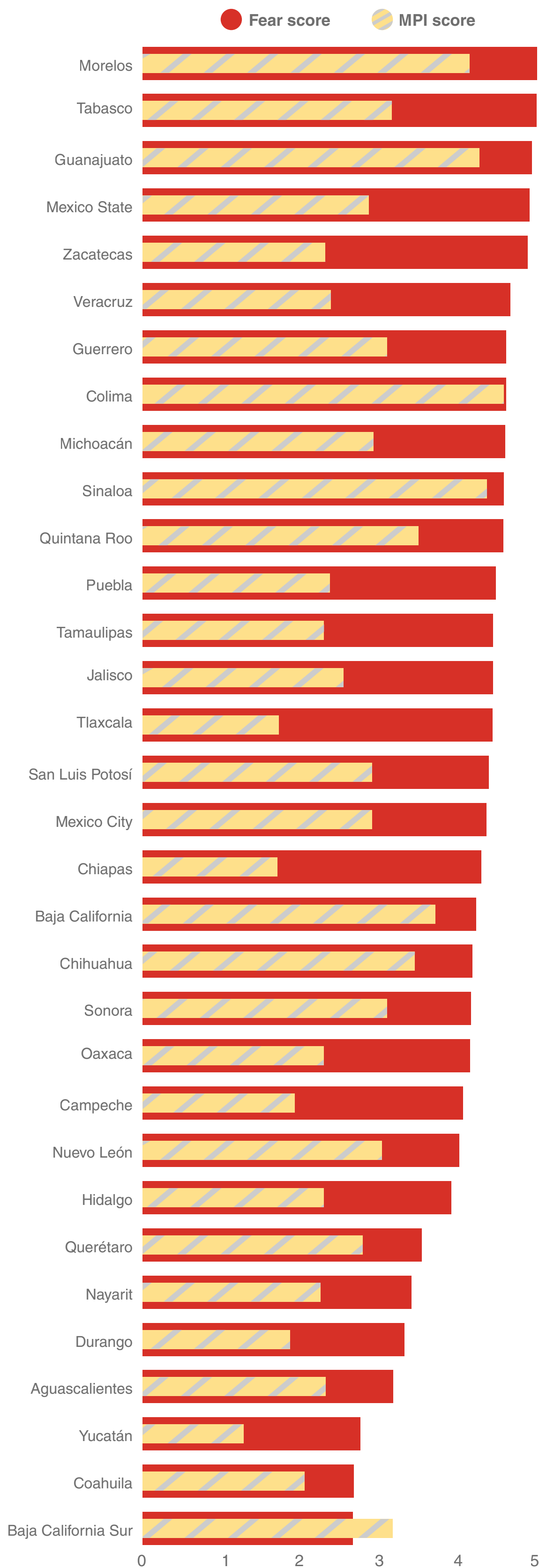


Source: INEGI

FIGURE 1.18

Peace scores and fear of violence, by state, 2025

Baja California Sur is the only state whose peace score is worse than its fear of violence score. Last year, Tlaxcala recorded the largest discrepancy between the two, with a fear of violence score of 4.4 and an overall MPI score of 1.7.



Source: IEP
Note: A higher score denotes a lower level of peacefulness.

For the second year in a row, Morelos recorded the highest fear of violence levels, with 90.1 percent of the population regarding the state as unsafe. It was followed by Tabasco, with 89.8 percent. Other states with extremely high fear of violence levels are Guanajuato, Mexico State, and Zacatecas, with more than 87 percent of the residents of each regarding their state as unsafe.

The figure also demonstrates that states' fear of violence scores tend to be worse than their overall peace scores, with only one state – Baja California Sur – registering worse MPI scores. There is generally a strong correlation between lower levels of peacefulness and higher levels of fear. However, several states score notably worse in this indicator than in overall peace, suggesting that citizens' perceptions of insecurity are substantially higher than recorded levels of crime and violence.

With a fear of violence score of 4.4 and an overall MPI score of 1.7, Tlaxcala recorded the largest discrepancy on this front. Last year, Tlaxcala experienced the second largest rise in fear levels of any state, with the rate jumping from 63.3 to 77.3 percent of the population. After Tlaxcala, Chiapas had the next largest discrepancy, though fear levels declined slightly in the state last year.

Despite recording very large improvements in peacefulness since 2022, Zacatecas had the third largest discrepancy between fear of violence levels and overall peace levels. This dynamic suggests that reductions in the outward manifestations of violence may take time to translate into improved perceptions of safety, with residents continuing to feel unsafe even as objective conditions improve. In the case of Zacatecas, several years of extreme violence – particularly between 2020 and 2022 – have likely created durable perceptions of insecurity, meaning public sentiment may remain pessimistic even after some conditions appear to improve.

The role of the media in intensifying perceptions of insecurity cannot be overlooked. Multiple studies have demonstrated that coverage of violent crime by the news media often misrepresents its true prevalence, as well as the actual threat of victimization. As a result, a significant relationship has been found between consumption of media and fear of violence. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that organized crime groups exploit the media's fixation on violence to promote their activities and purposefully spread fear.[64]

The relationship between overall levels of peacefulness and perceptions of safety is a multifaceted one. Global survey data has revealed, for example, that across an array of domains with the potential to cause a person harm – including road accidents, severe weather, food and water risks, and workplace hazards – violence elicits the most disproportionate levels of worry relative to actual experience. Research has shown that threats that are perceived as unpredictable or uncontrollable tend to elicit higher levels of fear than those over which people feel a greater sense of control and agency. This helps explain why violent crime, more than other potential sources of harm, generates higher levels of fear.[65]

2 | Economic Value of Peace

Last year, the economic impact of violence in Mexico was four trillion pesos (US$220 billion), or around 11 percent of the country's GDP.

The economic impact of violence fell by 11.4 percent in 2025, equivalent to 514 billion pesos.

In relative and absolute terms, this is the greatest reduction in the cost of violence in the history of the MPI.

19% ↑

Since 2015, the total cost of violence has increased by 19 percent, or 639 billion pesos.

Last year, the largest declines in the economic impact of violence were from the total cost of homicides, which fell by 382 billion pesos, and from reduced spending on national security and the military, which fell by 89 billion pesos.

Domestic security	Justice system
31.8% ↓	**8.4%** ↓

From 2015 to 2025, spending on domestic security fell by 31.8 percent, while justice system spending declined by 8.4 percent.

Over the course of 2025, the incarcerated population in Mexico rose by more than 20,000 inmates, or 8.9 percent. In both absolute and relative terms, this is the largest increase on record.

Mexico has only about two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, around one-seventh of the global average, severely limiting judicial capacity and contributing to case backlogs and unsentenced detainees.

However, across categories of public expenditure on violence containment, spending on the justice system was the only one to record an increase in 2025.

By December 2025, the total incarcerated population exceeded 256,000, the highest end-of-year figure ever recorded. The economic impact of this increase, both on public spending and on lost economic activity, will be more fully reflected in future cost estimates.

Violent crime accounted for 35.5 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, equivalent to 1.4 trillion pesos.

Protection costs peaked in 2020, though they remained 7.6 percent higher in 2025 than in 2015.

30,036 pesos

At 30,036 pesos per person in 2025, the economic impact of violence was nearly double the average monthly salary in Mexico.

Key Findings

The economic impact of violence stood out in Guerrero and Morelos, where it represented more than a third of the states' GDPs.

The per capita economic impact varied considerably across states, ranging from 10,785 pesos in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos in Colima.

24 states ↑ **8** states ↓

Since 2015, 24 states have seen the economic impact of violence increase, on average by 50.6 percent, while just eight states recorded decreases, with an average decline of 23.8 percent.

Economic Impact of Violence in 2025

The economic disruptions stemming from violence and the fear of violence are substantial. Violent incidents give rise to costs in the form of property damage, physical injury and psychological trauma. Fear of violence also alters economic behavior, primarily by changing investment and consumption patterns, which diverts public and private resources away from productive activities and towards protective measures. These generate significant losses in the form of productivity shortfalls and foregone earnings. Therefore, measuring the scale and cost of violence has important implications for assessing its effects on economic activity.

In 2025, Mexico's estimated economic impact of violence amounted to four trillion pesos (US$220 billion). This figure is equivalent to about 11 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP), or 30,036 pesos per person, nearly double the average monthly salary in Mexico.[1]

Last year, the economic impact of violence fell by 11.4 percent, or 514 billion pesos. In relative and absolute terms, this is the greatest reduction in the cost of violence in the history of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI). The peak of the economic impact of violence occurred in 2021, at approximately 4.7 trillion pesos. An overview of the economic costing model is provided in Box 2.1, and a full explanation is provided in Section 3.

BOX 2.1

The economic impact of violence definition and model

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic effect related to containing, preventing, and responding to the consequences of violence. It comprises the **economic cost of violence** – both direct and indirect – plus a multiplier effect (Table 2.1).

- The total economic impact of violence includes:
- The direct cost of violence
- The indirect cost of violence
- The multiplier effect

Direct costs are incurred by the victim, the perpetrator and the government. These include medical expenses, policing costs and expenses associated with the justice system. **Indirect costs** accrue after the fact and include the current value of long-term costs arising from incidents of crime, such as lost future income and physical and psychological trauma.

The **multiplier effect** represents the economic benefits that would have been generated if all relevant expenditure had been directed into more productive alternatives.

TABLE 2.1

Components of the economic impact of violence model

The economic impact of violence comprises the economic cost of violence plus a multiplier effect.

IMPACT			COMMENTARY
Economic impact of violence	Economic cost of violence	i) Direct costs	Costs directly attributable to violence or its prevention
		ii) Indirect costs	Medium- and long-term losses arising from acts of violence
	iii) Multiplier effect		Economic benefits forgone by investing in violence containment and not in other more productive activities.

Source: IEP

TABLE 2.2

The economic impact of violence, billions of pesos, 2025

Last year, the total economic impact from violence amounted to four trillion pesos.

INDICATOR	DIRECT	INDIRECT	MULTIPLIER EFFECT	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE
Homicide	157.7	1,035.9	157.7	1,351.2
Violent crime	260.1	900.8	260.1	1,420.9
Fear of violence	-	63.3	-	63.3
Protection costs	221.2	-	221.2	442.4
Military and national security spending	172.1	-	172.1	344.3
Domestic security spending	54.7	-	54.7	109.4
Justice system and incarceration spending	131.6	10.8	131.6	273.9
Total	**997.4**	**2,010.7**	**997.4**	**4,005.4**

Source: IEP

A full breakdown of the 2025 economic impact of violence estimates is presented in Table 2.2. This outlines the direct costs, the indirect costs, and the multiplier effect for each indicator that, combined, gives the total economic impact of violence.

Last year's reduction in the economic impact of violence was driven by the steep drop in the number of homicides. As a result, costs associated with homicides fell by 22.1 percent, or 382 billion pesos. Because of this decline, the violent crime category became the costliest component of the model for the first time since 2015, despite it also registering a 4.5 percent drop in cost.

Of the seven components of the model, three – homicides, national security spending, and violent crime – recorded sizable decreases in cost last year. Three others – justice system and incarceration spending, protection costs, and fear of violence – recorded modest increases, while domestic security spending remained virtually unchanged.

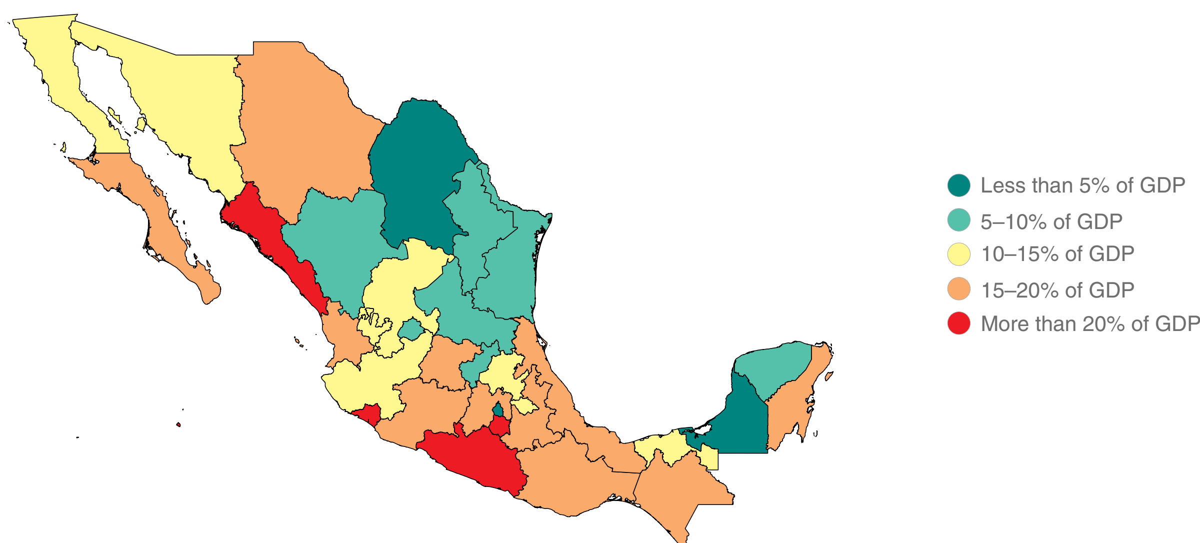
It is noteworthy that costs associated with protection and the fear of violence continued to rise, despite the substantial improvement in peacefulness last year. This likely reflects how both perceptions of safety and risk-mitigation behaviors are shaped more by longer-term experiences of insecurity than by immediate conditions.

As shown in Figure 2.1, there is substantial variation in the economic impact of violence as a percentage of state GDP. Four states – Guerrero, Morelos, Colima, and Sinaloa – had economic impacts equivalent to more than 20 percent of their GDPs. In contrast, in Campeche, Coahuila, and Mexico City, the cost represented less than five percent of state GDP.

FIGURE 2.1

Economic impact of violence by state, percentage of state's GDP, 2025

The economic impact of violence ranges from 4.3 percent of GDP in Campeche to 33.8 percent in Guerrero and Morelos.



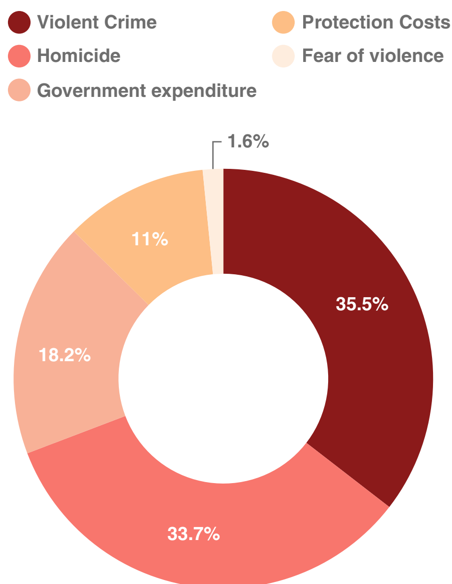
Source: IEP

The share of the total economic impact of violence in 2025 by category is illustrated in Figure 2.2. The costs associated with homicide and violent crime in Mexico are significantly greater than government expenditure on violence containment. In 2025, 29.2 percent of Mexico's economic impact from violence was in government expenditures and private protection expenditures, while 70.8 percent was associated with homicide, violent crime, and the fear of violence. This differs significantly from global metrics, in which around four-fifths of the economic impact stems from government and private expenditures on containing and preventing violence.[2] Moreover, federal spending on violence containment in Mexico (358 billion pesos) represents just 5.2 percent of all federal government spending. In contrast, healthcare and education represent, respectively, 13.7 and 15.4 percent of federal government spending.

FIGURE 2.2

Breakdown of the economic impact of violence, 2025

Homicide, violent crime, and the fear of violence represent more than 70 percent of the economic impact of violence.



Source: IEP

Violent crime – including robbery, assault, sexual violence, and firearm crimes – accounted for 35.5 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, costing the country over 1.4 trillion pesos. This is equivalent to 4.4 percent of Mexico's GDP. By contrast, in the global economic impact of violence model, violent crime accounted for 3.1 percent of the total, or about 0.4 percent of global GDP.[3]

Similarly, homicide in Mexico represented 33.7 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, costing the country just under 1.4 trillion pesos, or 4.2 percent of GDP. But in the global model, homicide accounted for 5.7 percent of the total economic impact of violence, or 0.7 percent of global GDP.

Federal government spending on activities aimed at reducing violence – domestic security, the military, and the justice system – amounted to 728 billion pesos, or 18.2 percent of the total economic impact. Also included in government spending is the economic impact of incarceration, calculated as the lost wages of those imprisoned. Prisoners' lost wages are assumed to equal the Mexican minimum wage of 100,368 pesos per year in 2025. In 2025, the indirect cost of incarceration was estimated at 10.8 billion pesos.

Also captured in the economic impact model are the costs households and businesses incur in protecting themselves from crime and violence. Protection costs amounted to 442 billion pesos in 2025, or 11 percent of the total economic impact.[4] This indicator includes insurance, private security spending, the cost of firearms for protection, changing place of residence or business due to violence, and the installation of alarms, locks, doors, windows, bars and fences. Protection costs peaked in 2020 and have fallen over the past several years.

Fear of violence accounts for the remaining 1.6 percent of economic losses. Fear of violence affects consumer and business behavior, which in turn causes economic losses. These losses were calculated at 63 billion pesos in 2025.[5]

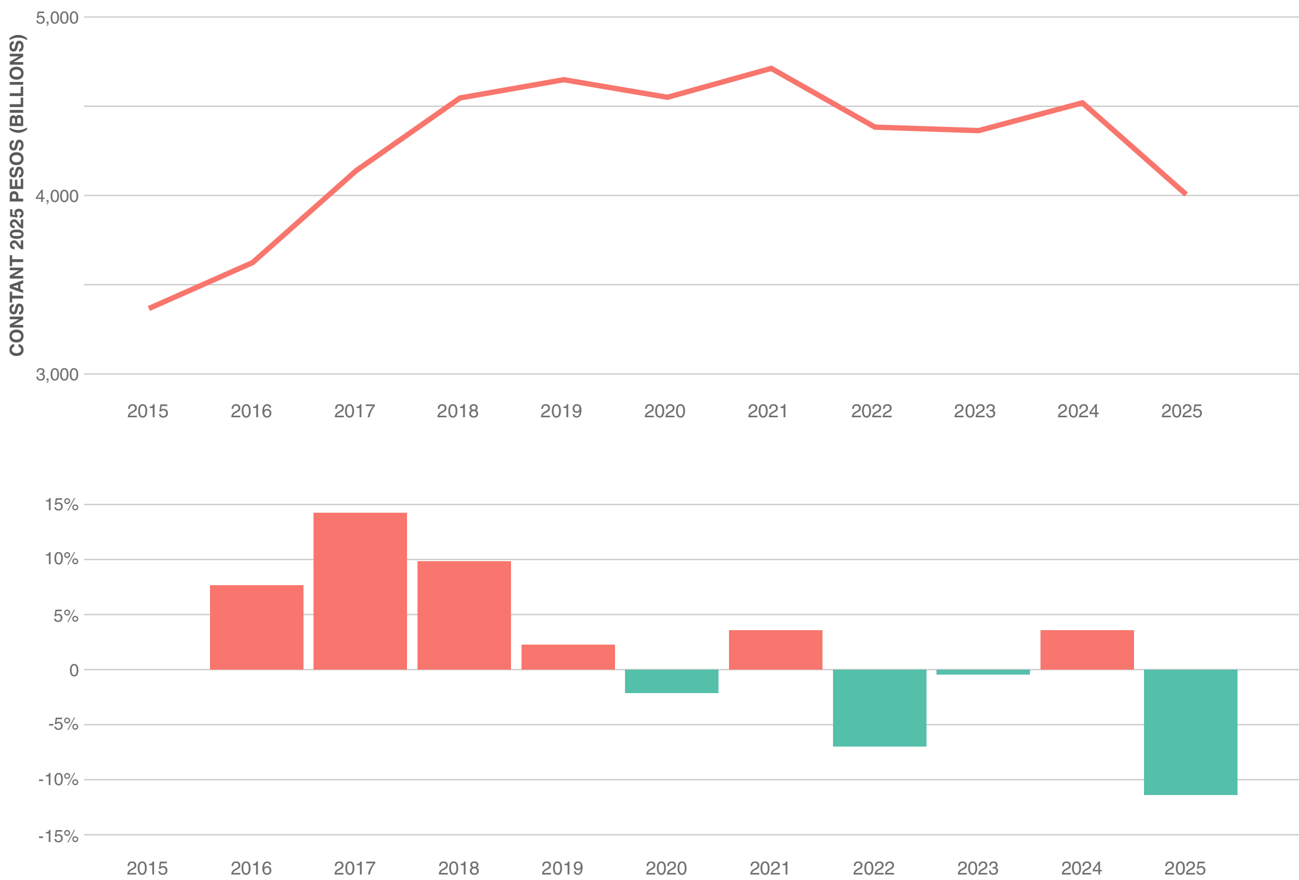
Trends in the Economic Impact of Violence

Since 2015, the economic impact of violence in Mexico has risen by 19 percent, reflecting the overall deterioration in peacefulness in Mexico over the same period. However, as shown in Figure 2.3, the economic impact has fallen since its 2021 peak, dropping by 15 percent in the past four years. The trends by cost category are illustrated in Table 2.3.

FIGURE 2.3

Trend in the economic impact of violence and year-on-year percentage changes, 2015–2025

Last year marked the largest decline on record in the cost of violence in Mexico.



Source: IEP

TABLE 2.3

Trend in the economic impact of violence, billions of pesos, 2015–2025

Costs associated with homicides and violent crime have seen the largest increases over the past decade, while domestic security and judicial system expenses were the only cost items to decline since 2015.

INDICATOR	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	ABSOLUTE CHANGE: 2015–2025	PERCENTAGE CHANGE: 2015–2025
Homicide	1,027	1,300	1,662	1,944	2,002	1,994	1,928	1,793	1,715	1,734	1,351	324	31.6%
Violent Crime	1,093	1,042	1,267	1,365	1,366	1,253	1,505	1,410	1,518	1,488	1,421	328	30.0%
Fear of violence	55	55	57	61	62	62	61	62	61	61	63	8	14.3%
Protection Costs	411	465	465	463	509	525	476	418	405	429	442	31	7.6%
National security spending	320	295	279	284	322	344	390	353	317	433	344	24	7.5%
Domestic security spending	161	142	125	126	109	103	94	87	88	110	109	51	31.8%
Justice system spending and incarceration	299	324	285	303	279	269	259	261	259	264	274	25	8.4%
TOTAL	3,366	3,624	4,140	4,546	4,649	4,550	4,712	4,383	4,364	4,519	4,005	639	19.0%

Source: IEP
Note: Values are in constant 2025 pesos.

The costs of violence in Mexico can be grouped into three broad categories: government expenditure on violence containment, criminal and interpersonal violence costs, and personal and business protection costs. Figure 2.4 traces the trends across these three categories. The category that experienced by far the biggest increase in cost was criminal and interpersonal violence, which includes violent crime, homicides, and the fear of violence. Between 2015 and 2021, criminal and interpersonal violence costs rose by 60.6 percent, but since that peak, they have fallen by 18.8 percent. On balance, they rose 30.3 percent over the course of the decade.

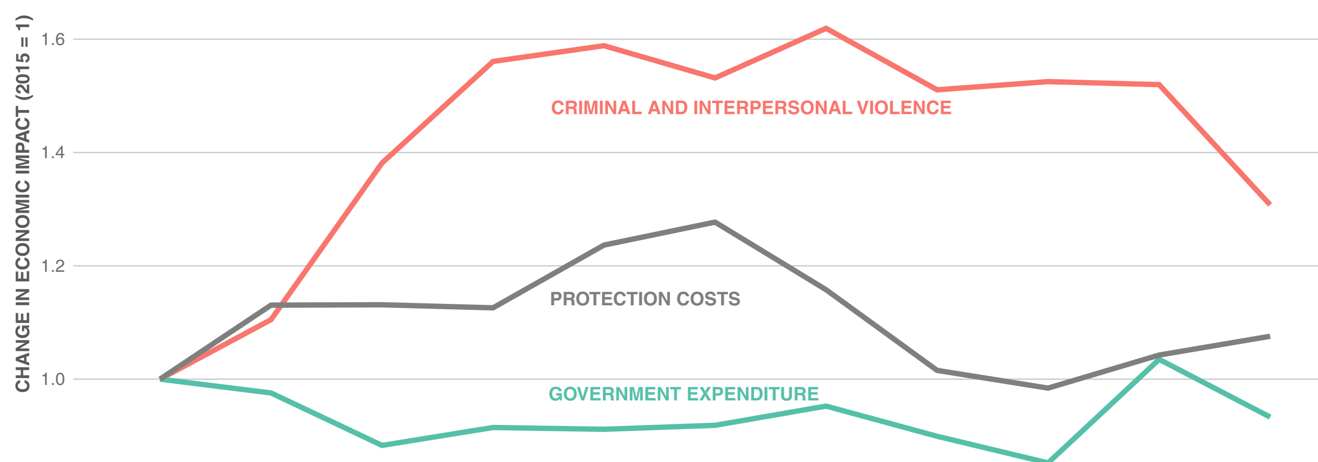
Until 2023, federal government spending on violence containment remained below its 2015 level. In 2024, a major uptick in military and national security spending caused government spending to surpass this level. However, last year, national security spending dropped back down again, driving an overall decline in government expenditure.

Protection costs have also risen in economic impact terms, increasing by 7.6 percent since 2015. However, since peaking in 2020, they have dropped significantly. Protection costs are an aggregate of surveyed responses on expenditures made by businesses and citizens to protect themselves and are sourced from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE). Business expenditures include higher insurance premiums and installing additional locks, alarms, video surveillance cameras and tracking devices.

FIGURE 2.4

Indexed trend in the economic impact of violence, 2015–2025

Costs associated with criminal and interpersonal violence dropped dramatically last year, despite remaining substantially higher than their 2015 levels.



Source: IEP

Economic Impact of Violence by State

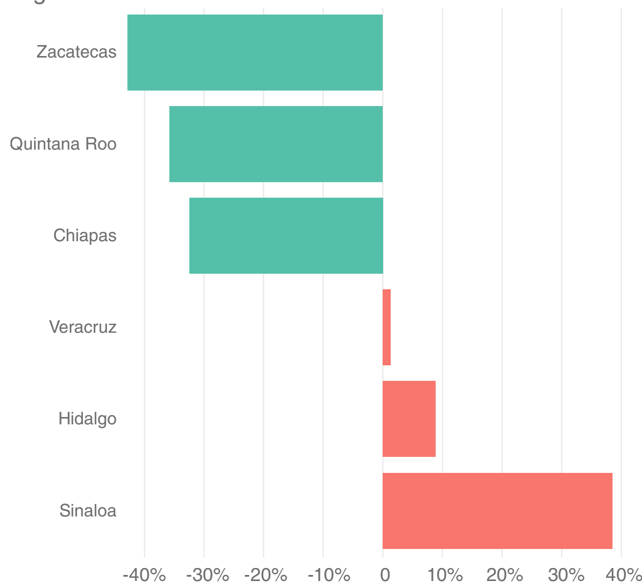
Last year, only three states recorded increases in the economic impact of violence, while 29 recorded decreases. As shown in Figure 2.5, Sinaloa registered by far the most substantial increase, with a 38.5 percent rise. This was driven by the dramatic increase in homicides in the state last year. It was followed by Hidalgo and Veracruz, where the economic impact of violence rose by 8.9 and 1.3 percent, respectively.

In contrast, for the second year in a row, Zacatecas recorded the most substantial decline in the economic impact of violence, with a 42.8 percent decline. This change was also driven by a change in homicides, with Zacatecas's homicide rate falling by more than 70 percent last year. Quintana Roo had the second most significant reduction in the economic impact of violence, with a 35.7 percent drop, and Chiapas had the third, with a 32.4 percent drop.

FIGURE 2.5

Largest state-level increases and decreases in the economic impact of violence, 2024–2025

Only three states recorded increases in the economic impact of violence last year, with Sinaloa recording the largest rise.



Source: IEP calculations

Considerable variation exists in the economic impact of violence between states. Of the 32 Mexican states, Guerrero and Morelos recorded the highest impact as a percentage of their economic output, equivalent to 33.8 percent of the states' respective GDPs. Morelos had the second highest homicide rate in the country last year, while Guerrero had the seventh highest rate. It should also be noted that Guerrero and Morelos are among the poorer states in Mexico, with Guerrero in particular having the second lowest GDP per capita in the country. Table 2.4 lists the five states where the economic impact of violence represents the largest share of state GDP, and the five where it represents the smallest.

Campeche, Coahuila, and Mexico City were the states where the cost of violence was smallest relative to their economic output. In each, the economic impact of violence represented five percent or less of their GDPs. Each of these states ranks in the top half of the MPI in relation to homicide rates. Moreover, each ranks among the five wealthiest states in the country, as measured by GDP per capita.

TABLE 2.4

States most and least economically impacted by violence, 2025

The states most economically impacted by violence are among the least peaceful in the country.

STATE	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (PERCENTAGE OF STATE GDP)
Guerrero	33.8%
Morelos	33.8%
Colima	29.8%
Sinaloa	24.7%
Guanajuato	19.9%
Campeche	4.3%
Coahuila	4.7%
Mexico City	5.0%
Yucatán	5.2%
Tamaulipas	6.6%

Source: IEP

On this note, evaluating the economic impact of violence on a per capita basis reveals a distinct but related pattern. In 2025, the per capita cost ranged from just 10,785 pesos in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos in Colima, meaning that the cost of violence in the country's least peaceful state was nearly seven times higher than in its most peaceful state. Other states with particularly high per capita impacts included Morelos (54,767 pesos), Sinaloa (52,083 pesos), and Baja California Sur (47,632 pesos), reflecting concentrations of violence in smaller populations. In absolute terms, however, the economic impact of violence is concentrated in the country's largest states. Mexico State recorded by far the highest total cost, at 527.6 billion pesos, followed by Guanajuato

(295.6 billion pesos), Jalisco (246.6 billion pesos), and Mexico City (243.3 billion pesos). These figures reflect both population size and economic scale, meaning that even states with moderate per capita costs can incur substantial total losses.

Since 2015, the economic impact of violence has increased in most states, although the scale of change varies significantly. The most significant increases were recorded in Colima (up 156.2 percent), Oaxaca (100.3 percent), and Nayarit (89.1 percent), reflecting sharp deteriorations in violence over the past decade. In contrast, a smaller number of states experienced notable reductions, including Tamaulipas (-43.2 percent), Yucatán (-27.9 percent), and Coahuila (-20 percent), consistent with broader improvements in security conditions. These divergent trends highlight the uneven evolution of violence across Mexico, with some states making sustained progress while others continue to face elevated costs.

TABLE 2.5

Per capita economic impact of violence, 2025

The per capita economic impact of violence varies significantly across states, from 10,785 pesos per person in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos per person in Colima.

RANK	STATE	PER CAPITA ECONOMIC IMPACT (PESOS)	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE: 2015–2025
1	Yucatán	10,785	25.7	-27.9%
2	Chiapas	13,102	80.3	-16.1%
3	Tlaxcala	17,932	26.1	8.7%
4	Durango	17,258	33.5	-35.6%
5	Campeche	25,019	27.0	55.1%
6	Coahuila	17,189	58.9	-20.0%
7	Nayarit	30,762	42.2	89.1%
8	Oaxaca	25,282	107.3	100.3%
9	Hidalgo	23,629	76.9	43.9%
10	Tamaulipas	17,440	66.1	-43.2%
11	Zacatecas	24,251	41.7	-8.0%
12	Aguascalientes	25,233	38.5	28.6%
13	Puebla	25,500	175.7	25.4%
14	Veracruz	24,083	210.9	69.4%
15	Jalisco	28,061	246.6	29.5%
16	Querétaro	29,125	72.0	50.7%
17	Mexico State	28,928	527.6	-19.9%
18	San Luis Potosí	23,170	68.5	21.8%
19	Mexico City	27,264	243.3	5.1%
20	Michoacán	32,658	162.5	37.7%
21	Nuevo León	29,984	179.2	43.9%
22	Guerrero	37,762	139.9	-19.4%
23	Sonora	39,991	130.0	55.6%
24	Tabasco	33,820	91.4	24.4%
25	Baja California Sur	47,632	42.1	43.7%
26	Chihuahua	46,545	184.6	45.4%
27	Quintana Roo	44,189	84.3	60.8%
28	Baja California	46,090	179.8	22.7%
29	Morelos	54,767	117.4	54.8%
30	Guanajuato	45,678	295.6	78.1%
31	Sinaloa	52,083	170.5	63.4%
32	Colima	70,123	59.1	156.2%
National		**30,036**	**4,005.4**	**19.0%**

Source: IEP
Note: Values are in constant 2025 pesos.

Increases and Decreases in the Economic Impact of Violence

Over the past decade, only eight states have seen the economic impact of violence decrease, while 24 have recorded increases. This has led to the national economic impact of violence being 19 percent higher in 2025 than in 2015. The increases in the economic impact of violence have been much larger in states that were less peaceful to begin with, which has led to an increase in the 'economic impact gap' between the most peaceful and least peaceful states.

Only nine states have recorded improvements in the MPI since 2015, while all remaining states saw their peace scores decline. Table 2.6 displays the economic impact in 2015 and 2025 for the five states with the greatest improvements and the five states with the greatest deteriorations in the MPI over the past decade.

The largest improvement since 2015 was seen in Tamaulipas, which achieved a 43.2 percent reduction in the economic impact of violence. Despite historically being an epicenter of organized crime and a major transport site for drugs into the United States, the state's decline in levels of organized crime drove its improvement in overall peacefulness. Tamaulipas ranked as the fourth least peaceful state in 2015 and as the 10th most peaceful state in 2025. Taken together, the five states with the greatest improvements in peacefulness recorded an average decrease of 29.2 percent in their economic impact of violence since 2015.

In contrast, Colima, Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Morelos, and Quintana Roo were the five states that recorded the largest deteriorations in the MPI. On average, the economic impact of violence in these states increased by 82.7 percent. Colima recorded the largest deterioration and ranks as the least peaceful state in the MPI. Since 2015, its economic impact of violence has increased by more than 150 percent.

TABLE 2.6

The economic impact in the states with the largest improvements and deteriorations in peacefulness, billions of pesos, 2015–2025

On average, the impact of violence fell by an average of 29.2 percent across the five states with the largest improvements in the MPI, while rising by 82.7 percent in the states with largest deteriorations.

STATE	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE			
	2015 (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	2025 (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	ABSOLUTE CHANGE (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
LARGEST IMPROVEMENTS IN PEACEFULNESS				
Tamaulipas	116.4	66.1	-50.4	-43.2%
Guerrero	173.6	139.9	-33.6	-19.4%
Durango	52.1	33.5	-18.6	-35.6%
Coahuila	73.6	58.9	-14.7	-20.0%
Yucatán	35.6	25.7	-9.9	-27.9%
LARGEST DETERIORATIONS IN PEACEFULNESS				
Colima	23.1	59.1	36.1	156.2%
Guanajuato	166.0	295.6	129.6	78.1%
Sinaloa	104.3	170.5	66.2	63.4%
Morelos	75.8	117.4	41.5	54.8%
Quintana Roo	52.4	84.3	31.9	60.8%

Source: IEP
Note: Values are in constant 2025 pesos.

Government Expenditure on Violence Containment

Accounting for 18.2 percent of Mexico's economic impact, federal government expenditure on containing and responding to violence totaled 728 billion pesos in 2025. Violence containment spending comprises government expenditures in three areas: domestic security, the justice system, and the military and national security. In 2025, expenditure across these three areas fell by 9.8 percent from the previous year.

After accounting for inflation, federal violence containment expenditure has decreased by 6.7 percent since 2015. While government expenditure on the military has risen overall in that time, it experienced a steep decline last year, dropping more than 20 percent from its all-time high in 2024, as shown in Figure 2.6. However, domestic security and judicial system spending have changed less dramatically over the period, though both have experienced reductions in the past decade. Domestic security spending dropped by 31.8 percent since 2015, and judicial system spending dropped by 8.4 percent.

This primarily upward trend in military spending between 2018 and 2024 is notable in that it largely coincided with the expanded use of the military to combat organized crime, which has been a point of concern in recent years.[6] Despite this, as of 2025, Mexico's expenditure on the military is equivalent to about 1.1 percent of its GDP, well under the global average of 2.5 percent.[7]

Mexican public spending on the justice system and domestic security is similarly well below regional and international levels. Mexico spent 0.5 percent of its GDP on the justice system and domestic security in 2025, less than a third of the OECD average, which currently stands at 1.7 percent of GDP. Moreover, the Latin American average on public order and safety spending is 1.5 percent of GDP, also three times that of Mexico.

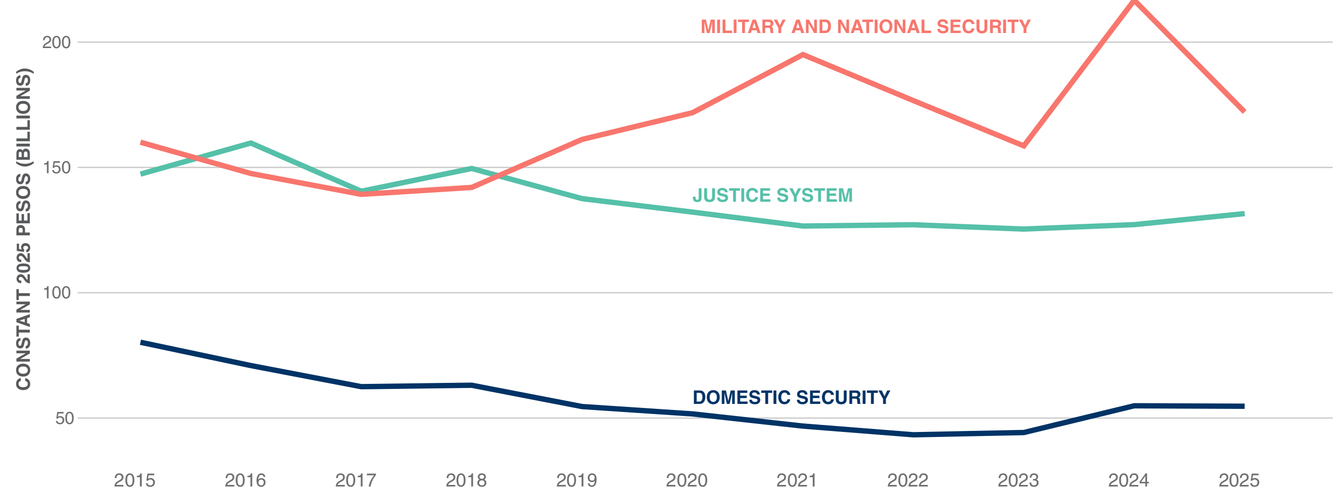
While the two categories associated with security measures may be underfunded, it is investment in the judicial system that appears to be particularly insufficient. Mexico has an average of two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, one-seventh the global average.[8] This deficit limits the judicial system's capacity to process cases, creating backlogs of unsolved cases and unsentenced detainees. Through greater investment in the judiciary to increase the number of judges, the capacity of Mexico's legal system may improve, leading to reductions in overcrowding in prisons and the number of those incarcerated without sentences. This particularly pressing given that, last year, Mexico experienced a marked rise in incarcerations. The context and drivers of this rise, as well as its future economic implications, are discussed in Box 2.2.

Federal expenditure on domestic security and the justice system by state does not align with the levels of violence as captured by state MPI scores. States such as Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Baja California, and Chihuahua experience high levels of violence, yet they receive below-average per capita funding on domestic security and the justice system. In contrast, Tlaxcala, Durango, Campeche, and Nayarit are comparatively peaceful, yet they receive above-average levels of per capita funding in these areas. Figure 2.7 shows the level of peacefulness and per capita domestic security and justice system expenditure by state.

FIGURE 2.6

Trends in federal government spending on violence containment, 2015–2025

Mexico's expenditure on violence containment peaked in 2024, driven by increases in military spending.

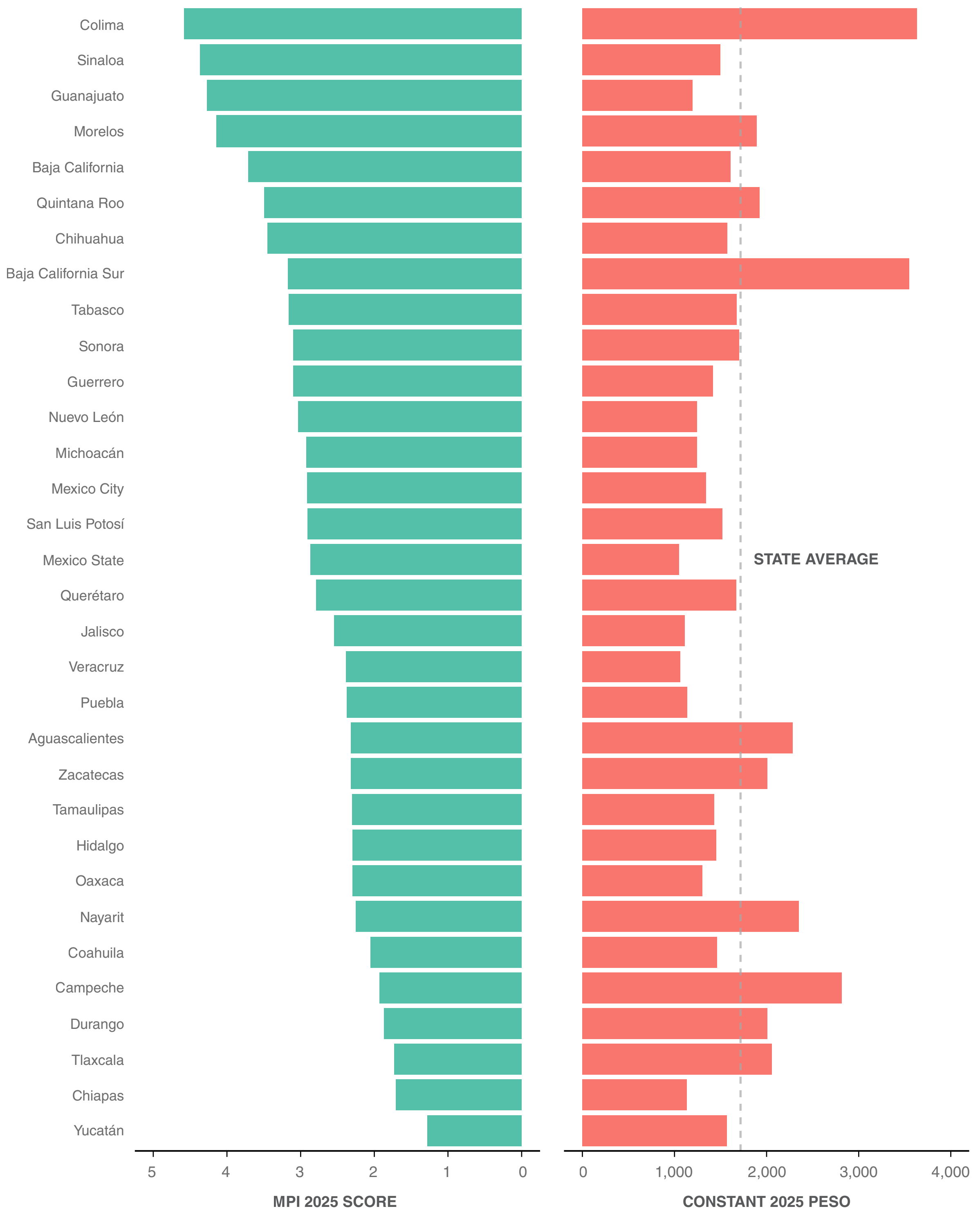


Sources: Mexican Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), IEP calculations

FIGURE 2.7

State MPI scores and per capita expenditure on domestic security and justice, 2025

States that experience the lowest levels of peace do not necessarily receive more federal funding on domestic security and the justice system.



Sources: INEGI, IEP

BOX 2.2

The rise in incarceration in Mexico in 2025

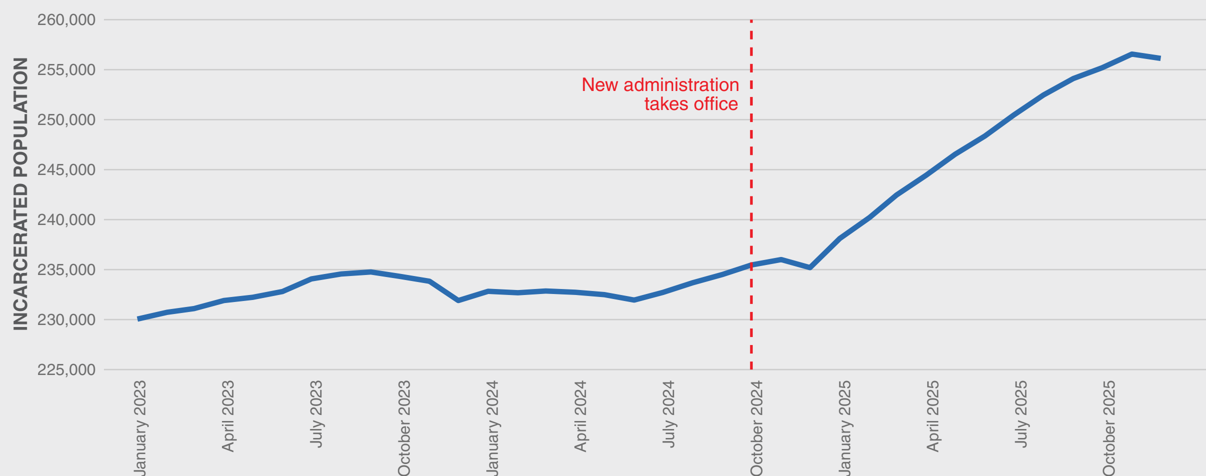
Mexico's prison population rose sharply in 2025, increasing by nearly 21,000 people to exceed 256,000 by year's end, the highest figure on record. As shown in Figure 2.8, the increase began in early 2025, marking a clear break from prior trends. This surge coincided with a broader recalibration of security policy following the transition in federal leadership.

In her first year in office, President Claudia Sheinbaum introduced a strategy focused on strengthening the National Guard, expanding intelligence gathering, improving investigative capacity, and coordinating federal institutions more closely in order to reduce murders, kidnappings, and extortion.[9] The new federal strategy and security leadership contributed to the rise in arrests and detentions over the course of the year.[10]

FIGURE 2.8

Monthly incarcerated population in Mexico, 2023–2025

Starting at the beginning of last year, there was a marked rise in the number of people incarcerated or detained across the country.



Source: Órgano Administrativo Desconcentrado Prevención y Reinserción Social

The increase in incarceration occurred alongside mounting external pressure, specifically from the United States under the Trump administration. This included a push to investigate political links to organized crime, under threat of expanded tariffs on Mexican exports.[11] Such pressure contributed to an environment in which enforcement actions were intensified, particularly against priority cross-border targets.

One of the most visible manifestations of this shift was the launch of 'Operación Frontera Norte' in February 2025. The operation, which focused on combating drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and organized crime in northern border states, resulted in a rapid increase in detentions. Within its first days, authorities reported over one hundred arrests, with the total surpassing 10,000 by December 2025.[12]

At the same time, institutional dynamics within the justice system also contributed to the increase. Following the 2024 judicial reform, which introduced the direct election of judges beginning in 2025, prison admissions substantially exceeded releases last year. It has been suggested that direct elections may favor the selection of judges perceived as less likely to authorize releases, while also increasing ongoing political influence on judicial decision-making around pretrial detention and sentencing.[13]

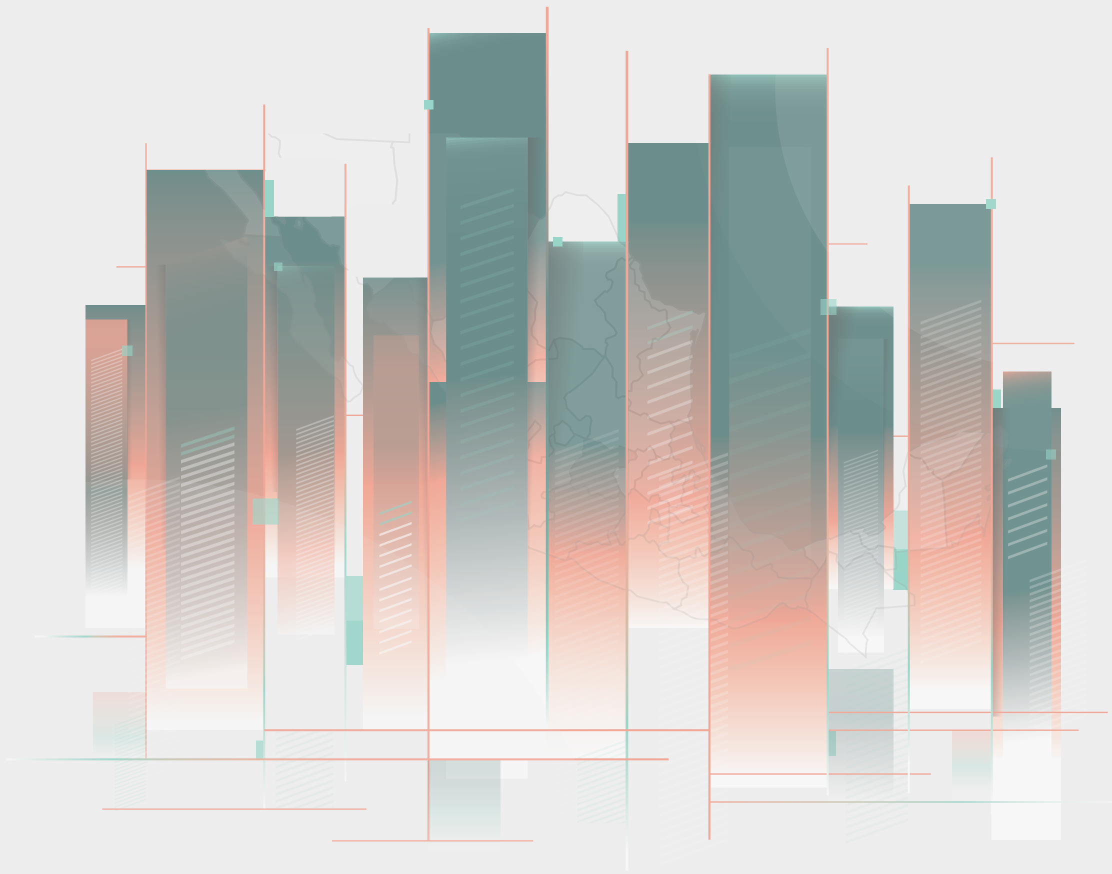
The rapid increase in the incarcerated population carries important economic implications. Current cost estimates are based on incarceration levels at the beginning of the year and therefore do not fully capture the financial impact of the recent surge. However, preliminary analysis suggests that maintaining an additional 21,000 inmates would result in at least one billion pesos in lost economic output annually through forgone labor. Moreover, this does not include the additional direct costs that processing and incarcerating offenders and alleged offenders will entail for the judicial system and domestic security apparatus.

3 | 2026 Mexico Peace Index Methodology

The Mexico Peace Index (MPI) is based on the concepts and framework of the Global Peace Index (GPI), the leading global measure of peacefulness, produced annually by IEP since 2007. As an internal analysis of a single country, the MPI adapts the GPI methodology for a sub-national application. Both indices measure negative peace – that is, the 'absence of violence or fear of violence'.

The 2026 edition is the 13th iteration of the MPI and uses data published by the Executive Secretary of the National System for Public Security (SESNSP), along with the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE) published by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).

The MPI measures peacefulness at the state level in Mexico. A key reason for choosing this unit of analysis is that Mexico's state governments have wide-ranging autonomous powers, allowing them to have a significant impact on the levels of violence within their states. The response to violence may therefore differ significantly from state to state.



2026 MPI INDICATORS

The MPI is composed of five indicators. The homicide and violent crime indicators are based on those used in the IEP's United Kingdom Peace Index (UKPI) and United States Peace Index (USPI), using the US Federal Bureau of Investigation's standard definition of violent crime. The organized crime indicator is specific to Mexico because of the problems the country faces with organized criminal activity. The firearms crime indicator represents gun use and availability, using the best available data. Lastly, the fear of violence indicator in the MPI captures the degree to which citizens feel unsafe in the states in which they reside.

All crime data used to calculate the MPI comes from government bodies in Mexico. IEP then uses survey data collected by the national statistics office to adjust certain crime figures for underreporting.

DATA SOURCES

The MPI is composed of the following five indicators, scored between 1 and 5, where 1 represents the most peaceful score and 5 the least peaceful. Population data is used for estimating rates per 100,000 people. The data runs from 2015 to 2025.

Homicide

The number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

Violent Crime

The number of cases of robbery, sexual violence, and family violence, and the number of violent assault victims per 100,000 people, adjusted for underreporting. Robbery cases must meet one of two criteria to be included:

- types of robbery that rely on the threat of violence, such as a mugging, or
- robbery incidents where the database indicates violence was used.

Source: SESNSP

Organized Crime

The number of extortions, drug trade related crimes, and kidnapping or human trafficking investigations per 100,000 people. Extortion rates and kidnapping and human trafficking rates are adjusted for underreporting. Drug trade and major organized crime offenses include:

- the federal crimes of production, transport, trafficking, trade, supply, or possession of drugs or other crimes under the Crimes Against Public General Health Law, retail drug crimes, as a proxy indicator of the size of the market fueled by illegal drug production and distribution, and
- crimes classed under the Law Against Organized Crime, which includes all of the above crimes when three or more people conspire to commit them.

Source: SESNSP

Firearms Crime

The number of victims of an intentional or negligent homicide or assault committed with a firearm per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

Fear of Violence

The percentage of people that perceive the state in which they reside as unsafe.

Source: ENVIPE

Population data

The estimated population of each state in each year. Population data is used to calculate the rate per 100,000 people for homicide, violent crime, organized crime and firearms crime.

Source: National Population Council (CONAPO)

UNDERREPORTING

Only about ten percent of crimes in Mexico are reported to the authorities. As such, two of the MPI indicators – violent crime and organized crime – are adjusted for underreporting. IEP uses ENVIPE data to calculate underreporting rates for each state and adjusts the official statistics for robbery, assault, family violence, sexual violence, extortion, and kidnapping and human trafficking to better reflect actual rates of violence. This approach helps to counterbalance the high rates of underreporting in Mexico.

IEP calculated the underreporting rates for each state and crime based on the information from ENVIPE. The survey asks each respondent if they were a victim of a particular type of crime and whether or not they reported it to the authorities. To calculate underreporting rates, IEP uses a rolling five-year window of ENVIPE survey data – for example, 2015 crime data is adjusted using 2011–2015 survey data, 2016 using 2012–2016, and so on through to 2025. IEP totals the number of each crime reported by survey respondents and the number of those crimes that respondents said they reported to the authorities across the five-year window, then divides the former by the latter to produce a multiplier for adjusting the official statistics. The adjustments are made for the crimes of robbery, assault, family violence, sexual violence, extortion, and kidnapping and human trafficking.

The underreporting rates use five years of data because, in some states, there were crimes where none of the victims reported the crime to the authorities. If none of the crimes were reported, a reporting rate of zero percent cannot be used to adjust the police-recorded numbers. Additionally, combining data over a rolling window smooths out large fluctuations in underreporting rates that may result from complex and imperfect surveying methodologies, rather than reflecting a true change in reporting behaviour. Reporting rates have not changed significantly in Mexico over the study period.

Underreporting rate

Definition: Number of crimes reported by victims on the victimization survey divided by the number of those crimes that victims stated they reported to the authorities.

Source: ENVIPE

INDICATOR SCORE AND OVERALL CALCULATIONS

The MPI indicators are scored between 1 and 5, with 5 being the least peaceful score and 1 being the most peaceful score. Banded indicator scores are calculated by normalizing the range of raw values based on each state's average value over the period 2015 to 2025.

First, the average value for each state over all the years of the study is calculated. Then the outliers are removed from the range of average state values in order to identify the minimum and maximum of normally distributed average values. Outliers in this case are defined as data points that are more than three standard deviations greater than the mean. Next, the values for each year are normalized using the minimum and maximum of the normal range and are banded between 1 and 5. The calculation for banded scores is:

$$Banded\ score_x = \left(\frac{raw\ value_x - min_{sample}}{max_{sample} - min_{sample}} * 4\right) + 1$$

Finally, if any of the banded values are above 5, the state is assigned a score of 5 and if any values are below 1, the state is assigned a score of 1.

There is one additional step used to calculate the organized crime and firearms crime scores. In these cases, the raw values of each crime sub-indicator are multiplied by a sub-weight before being aggregated into the indicator score. The sub-weights are used so that the indicator score reflects the more serious societal impact of particular crimes and to correct for the uneven distribution of offenses. In 2025, extortion and retail drug crimes made up over 90 percent of crimes, which means that the trend in these offenses would overshadow any changes in kidnapping, human trafficking, or major drug crime rates.

Major organized crime offenses, such as drug trafficking and kidnapping and human trafficking have the highest weights in the organized crime score. These crimes reflect more severe acts of violence and provide an indication of the strength and presence of major criminal organizations. Retail drug crimes serve as a proxy indication of the size of the drug market. However, some portion of the retail drug market will represent small individual sellers or reflect personal drug use, both of which are of less concern. Human trafficking and major drug trafficking offenses are more destabilizing to Mexican society because these crimes:

- reflect large revenue sources for criminal organizations
- absorb more human and physical resources into violent, illicit economic activity
- depend upon a greater level of corruption
- indicate the presence of organizations that pose a greater threat to the Mexican state.

In the case of firearms crime, there are also sub-weights for its two sub-indicators. The first sub-indicator, assault with a firearm, is weighted twice as heavily as the second, homicide with a firearm. This sub-weighting is applied to reduce the effects of double-counting with the homicide indicator, as the majority of homicides in Mexico are committed with guns.

After the score for each indicator has been calculated, weights are applied to each of the five indicators in order to calculate the overall MPI score. The overall score is calculated by multiplying each indicator score by its index weight and then summing the weighted indicator scores.

There are many methods for choosing the weights to be applied to a composite index. In order to maintain consistency across IEP's various peace indices, the weights in the MPI mirror those used in the GPI, USPI and UKPI as closely as possible. The weights for the GPI indicators were agreed upon by an international panel of independent peace and conflict experts and are based on a consensus view of their relative importance. To complement this approach and reflect the local context of Mexico, a second expert panel was formed consisting of leading Mexican academics and researchers to determine the weights for the five indicators in the MPI, with minor adjustments in subsequent years.

Information on the MPI's indicators, sub-indicators, weights, and the application of underreporting multipliers are summarized in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1

Composition of the MPI

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT AS % OF OVERALL SCORE	INDICATOR SUB-TYPE	VARIABLES INCLUDED	UNDERREPORTING MULTIPLIER APPLIED	SUB-WEIGHT RELATIVE TO OTHER CRIMES IN THE INDICATOR	SOURCE(S)
Homicide	Intentional homicides per 100,000 people	30%	Homicide	Intentional homicide and femicide	No	-	SESNSP
Violent crime	Assaults, sexual assaults, incidents of family violence, and robberies per 100,000 people	22%	Assault	Intentional battery	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Family violence	Interfamilial violence	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Robbery	Violent robberies or forms of theft based on the threat of robbery	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Sexual violence	Rape and crimes equivalent to rape, sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, incest, other crimes against sexual freedom and security	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
Organized crime	Extortions, kidnappings and cases of human trafficking, retail drug crimes, and federal organized crime offenses per 100,000 people	22%	Extortion	Extortion	Yes	3	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Kidnapping and human trafficking	Kidnapping, human trafficking, trafficking of minors	Yes	5	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Retail drug crimes	Retail drug crimes	No	1	SESNSP
			Major organized crime offenses	Federal drug trafficking crimes, organized crime related offenses committed by 3 or more people	No	20	SESNSP
Firearms crime	Assaults and homicides committed with a firearm per 100,000 people	16%	Firearms crime	Homicide with a firearm	No	1	SESNSP
				Assault with a firearm	No	2	SESNSP
Fear of violence	Percentage of citizens regarding the state they live in as unsafe	10%	Fear of violence	Percentage of citizens regarding the state they live in as unsafe	No	-	ENVIPE

Methodology for Calculating the Economic Impact of Violence

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic activity related to containing, preventing, and dealing with the consequences of violence. The **economic impact of violence** refers to the total cost (direct and indirect) of violence plus an economic peace multiplier. The **economic cost of violence** refers to the direct and indirect costs of violence.

IEP's estimate of the economic impact of violence includes three components:

1. **Direct costs** are the costs of crime or violence to the victim, the perpetrator and the government, including those associated with policing, medical expenses, funerals or incarceration.

2. **Indirect costs** accrue after the fact. These include physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as the consequential lost future income. There is also a measure of the impact of fear on the economy, as people who fear that they may become a victim of violent crime alter their behavior.

3. The **multiplier effect** is a commonly used economic concept that describes the extent to which additional expenditure has flow-on impacts in the wider economy. Injections of new income into the economy will lead to more spending, which will in turn create employment, further income and encourage additional spending, thereby increasing GDP. This mutually reinforcing economic cycle explains the 'multiplier effect', and why a dollar of expenditure can create more than a dollar of economic activity. The multiplier effect calculates the additional economic activity that would have accrued if the direct costs of violence had been avoided. Box 3.1 provides additional detail on the multiplier effect.

CATEGORIES AND INDICATORS INCLUDED IN THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

1. **Violence containment expenditure** refers to the direct and indirect costs associated with preventing or dealing with the consequences of violence. This includes government spending on domestic security, the justice system, and the military and national security.

2. **Protection costs** refer to the personal and business expenses from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) surveys.

3. **Criminal and interpersonal violence costs** refer to the direct and indirect costs associated with homicide, violent crimes and the fear of victimization.

This study uses a cost accounting methodology to measure the economic impact of violence. Expenditures on containing violence are totaled and unit costs are applied to the MPI estimates for the number of crimes committed. A unit cost is also applied to the estimated level of fear of insecurity. The unit costs estimate the direct (tangible) and indirect (intangible) costs of each crime. Direct unit costs include losses to the victim and perpetrator and exclude costs incurred by law enforcement and health care systems, as these are captured elsewhere in the model. The direct costs for violent crime are obtained from household and business surveys undertaken by the Mexican statistical office, which assesses economic and health costs to the victim of a crime.

Indirect unit costs include the physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as lost lifetime wages for homicide victims.

The cost estimates provided in this report are in constant 2025 pesos, which facilitates the comparison of the estimates over time. The estimate only includes elements of violence in which reliable data could be obtained. As such, the estimate can be considered conservative. The items listed below are included in the cost of violence methodology:

1. Homicide
2. Violent crime, which includes assault, violence within the family, sexual violence, firearms and robbery
3. Indirect costs of incarceration
4. Fear of insecurity
5. Protections costs, including private security
6. Federal spending on violence containment, which includes the military, domestic security and the justice system
7. Medical costs

The economic impact of violence excludes:

1. State level and municipal public spending on security
2. The cost of drug trade related crimes such as the production, possession, transport and supply of drugs
3. Population displacement due to violence

Although data is available for some of these categories, it is not fully available either for all states or for each year of analysis.

BOX 3.1

The multiplier effect

The multiplier effect calculates the additional economic activity that would have accrued if the direct costs of violence had been avoided. This effect is likely to be particularly high in the case of violence-related expenditure, as reductions in violence free up resources for more productive areas such as health, business investment, education and infrastructure. There is also strong evidence that violence and the fear of violence can fundamentally alter business incentive. For example, Brauer and Marlin (2009), in an analysis of 730 business ventures in Colombia from 1997 to 2001, found that amid higher levels of violence, new ventures were less likely to survive and profit, suggesting that sustained violence reduces employment and economic productivity over the long term by discouraging job creation and investment.

This study assumes that the multiplier is one, signifying that for every peso saved on violence containment, there will be an additional peso of economic activity. This is a relatively conservative multiplier and broadly in line with similar studies.

ESTIMATION METHODS

Multiple approaches are used to estimate the economic cost of violence to Mexico's economy. The analysis involved two components:

1. Financial information detailing the level of expenditure on items associated with violence was used wherever possible.

2. Unit costs were used to estimate the cost of violent activities. Specifically, an estimate of the economic cost of a violent act was sourced from the literature and applied to the total number of times such an event occurred to provide an estimate of the total cost of categories of violence. MPI data are used for the number of homicides, sexual assaults, violent assaults, and robberies.

IEP uses federal government expenditure data for military and national security, domestic security and the justice system as federal government violence containment costs. Data are sourced from the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP). State and municipal level spending are excluded from the study due to data unavailability.

The federal government expenditure data does not provide details of the spending at the state level. Therefore, a combination of state population size and the state funding allocation from the Public Security Contribution Fund (FASP) is used to estimate the likely distribution between states.

A unit cost approach is used to estimate the economic cost of homicide, violent crime and fear of insecurity. Unit costs for the homicide and violent crimes are based on a study by McCollister (2010) that estimated the tangible and intangible cost of violent crimes in the United States. The McCollister (2010) direct and indirect costs are applied to the number of homicides to calculate the total cost of homicide. Only the McCollister (2010) intangible (indirect) costs are applied to violent crime. The direct costs of violent crime are taken from the nationally representative victimization surveys (ENVIPE and ENVE) administered by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). Both surveys collect data on economic and health-related direct costs due to violent crime.

1. Direct costs or tangible costs of crime include medical expenses, cash losses, property theft or damage, and productivity losses.

2. Indirect costs include physical and psychological trauma as well as long-term costs due to a violent incident.

In addition to the breakdown by tangible and intangible costs, McCollister (2010) offers further details of the costs by victim, perpetrator and justice system. Such itemization enables IEP to exclude the justice system costs to avoid double counting with expenditure data used for the justice system and domestic security.

IEP also uses Dolan and Peasgood's (2006) estimate of the unit cost of fear of crime to calculate the cost of perceptions of insecurity in Mexico.

The equivalent cost in Mexico was then calculated based on purchasing power adjusted GDP per capita in PPP constant 2021 international dollars of $20,987 for Mexico as compared to $60,798 for the United States in 2008, the year for which the unit costs were estimated. This is called the adjusted unit cost.

All the costs are adjusted to constant 2025 pesos using GDP deflator data from the World Bank. The base year of 2025 was chosen because it is the most recent year for which GDP deflator data was available. Estimating the economic impact in constant prices facilitates comparisons over time.

State-level GDP-related analyses use the most recently available GDP data from INEGI, while national GDP analyses use data available from the World Bank.

CALCULATING THE COST OF HOMICIDE AND VIOLENT CRIME

To calculate the cost for the categories of crime used in this study, IEP uses the data from the MPI. Homicides are multiplied by adjusted unit costs to calculate the total cost of homicide in Mexico. For violent crime, the economic costs of each sub-indicator category are calculated using their respective adjusted unit costs.

The direct costs for violent and organized crime are sourced from ENVIPE, a national household survey of victimization and perception of public safety, and from ENVE, a national survey of business victimization. These surveys collect data on the economic and health-related losses to the victim of violent and organized crime.

COST OF FEAR OF INSECURITY

ENVIPE data are used to estimate the perception of insecurity at the state level in Mexico. IEP uses the proportion of respondents who felt insecure, multiplied by the state's population to arrive at the number of people who reported a fear of insecurity. Victimization survey estimates are conducted yearly and are available from 2011 to 2025. Therefore, IEP estimates the fear of insecurity for the years for which data is not available. The unit cost of fear is taken from Dolan and Peasgood (2006), from which the adjusted unit cost is derived.

PROTECTION COSTS

Protection costs represent spending by households and businesses on measures that reduces victimization from violent and organized crime. Both households and businesses take measures such as hiring private security, purchasing firearms or insurance, installing alarms, locks and changing place of residence or business to protect themselves in the face of high levels of crime and violence. This category replaces private security expenditure and the cost of firearms.

Data for protection costs are sourced from INEGI, both for households and businesses. INEGI provides state level summaries of protection costs developed from the ENVIPE (household survey) and ENVE (business survey).

CALCULATING THE INDIRECT COST OF INCARCERATION

The direct cost of incarceration is included in the government expenditure on domestic security and the justice system. Therefore, IEP only includes the indirect cost of incarceration, which is the lost income due to imprisonment. This is calculated using the Mexican minimum wage and the number of inmates that would have been in full-time employment. Data on the minimum wage for Mexico are sourced from the Department of Labor and Social Welfare (STPS). For 2025, the minimum wage of 279 pesos per day is used. This is calculated for a yearly wage of 100,368 pesos (based on the Mexican standard of annual wages representing daily wages across 12 months of 30 days).

Literature suggests that 60 percent of people who were sentenced to prison had full-time employment prior to being in prison and 20 percent of them have some employment inside prison. Based on this, IEP considers that only 50 percent of the inmates would have been in full-time employment, which is conservative. The minimum wage lost is calculated for 50 percent of the prison population in Mexico.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE CONTAINMENT

To estimate the total economic impact of violence, IEP uses a peace multiplier to estimate the additional economic activity that would have resulted if violence was avoided. The conceptual underpinning of the multiplier is the opportunity cost of the resources lost by the victim, perpetrator, and the law enforcement agencies due to the crime. Therefore, the peace multiplier represents the flow-on effects of redirected expenditure from violence containment to more economically enabling activities, such as business investment or education.

Appendices: Results Tables

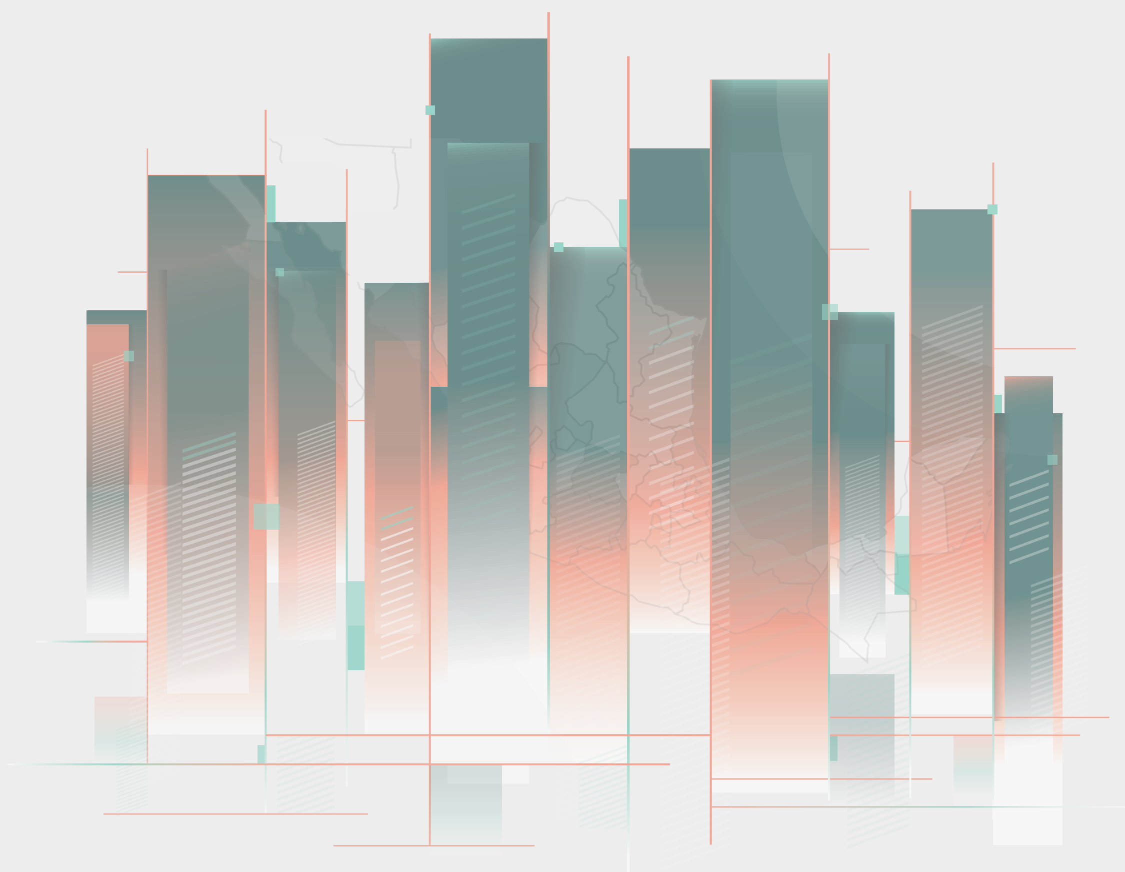


TABLE A

Overall Scores, 2015–2025

A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.

State	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aguascalientes	1.980	1.813	2.151	2.462	2.576	2.509	2.456	2.333	2.387	2.462	2.318
Baja California	3.369	3.411	4.340	4.533	4.617	4.522	4.488	4.483	4.542	4.200	3.712
Baja California Sur	2.856	3.366	4.502	3.347	2.953	2.731	2.689	2.745	2.670	2.980	3.172
Campeche	1.621	1.612	1.589	1.604	2.064	1.669	1.819	2.351	2.418	2.154	1.930
Chiapas	1.931	1.889	1.971	1.998	1.926	1.793	1.876	1.742	1.753	1.952	1.708
Chihuahua	2.913	3.122	3.684	3.812	4.094	4.040	3.967	3.459	3.646	3.649	3.450
Coahuila	2.418	2.022	2.058	2.223	2.305	2.281	2.234	2.229	2.132	2.126	2.051
Colima	2.389	3.703	3.918	4.164	4.468	4.486	4.414	4.728	4.721	4.717	4.579
Durango	2.424	2.362	2.411	2.342	2.401	2.319	2.309	2.243	1.989	1.855	1.868
Guanajuato	2.495	2.552	2.911	3.816	3.958	4.019	4.054	4.112	4.192	4.343	4.269
Guerrero	3.773	4.144	4.104	4.195	3.968	3.447	3.288	3.311	3.343	3.371	3.097
Hidalgo	1.713	1.788	2.016	2.132	2.343	2.212	2.150	2.271	2.384	2.205	2.296
Jalisco	2.524	2.582	2.868	3.204	3.160	3.019	2.901	2.812	2.770	2.712	2.546
Mexico City	2.759	2.827	3.020	3.427	3.505	2.953	2.909	2.763	2.750	2.721	2.908
Mexico State	3.123	2.928	3.075	3.191	3.363	3.462	3.429	3.613	3.533	3.384	2.867
Michoacán	2.497	2.682	2.884	3.051	3.303	3.400	3.604	3.361	3.060	2.969	2.924
Morelos	3.013	3.099	2.943	3.154	3.646	3.489	3.765	3.852	4.159	4.314	4.142
Nayarit	1.736	1.468	2.194	2.510	1.911	1.772	1.835	1.948	2.115	2.102	2.253
Nuevo León	2.546	2.776	2.826	2.859	2.986	2.849	3.191	3.505	3.666	3.591	3.030
Oaxaca	1.644	2.333	2.434	2.772	2.729	2.650	2.669	2.623	2.621	2.547	2.293
Puebla	2.450	2.112	2.245	2.498	2.638	2.364	2.474	2.367	2.391	2.395	2.371
Querétaro	1.843	1.952	2.086	2.313	2.677	2.721	2.704	2.752	2.701	2.720	2.788
Quintana Roo	2.500	2.135	2.796	3.750	4.411	3.527	3.482	3.434	3.745	3.812	3.496
San Luis Potosí	2.018	2.268	2.630	2.745	2.966	3.303	3.192	2.896	2.929	2.918	2.906
Sinaloa	3.231	3.032	3.515	3.120	2.900	2.747	2.633	2.558	2.872	3.283	4.364
Sonora	2.834	2.962	2.664	2.550	3.144	3.492	3.966	3.559	3.332	3.312	3.098
Tabasco	2.483	2.576	2.880	3.601	3.320	2.814	2.544	2.379	2.300	3.145	3.159
Tamaulipas	3.154	3.052	3.282	3.215	2.762	2.512	2.450	2.304	2.385	2.383	2.298
Tlaxcala	1.609	1.617	1.689	1.746	1.783	1.707	1.629	1.659	1.620	1.662	1.728
Veracruz	1.789	2.102	2.558	2.491	2.797	2.528	2.439	2.414	2.414	2.422	2.384
Yucatán	1.540	1.521	1.467	1.354	1.388	1.272	1.285	1.301	1.330	1.269	1.279
Zacatecas	2.488	2.846	3.346	3.612	3.754	4.416	4.480	4.496	3.872	2.948	2.315
NATIONAL	**2.561**	**2.592**	**2.858**	**3.063**	**3.142**	**3.029**	**3.028**	**3.008**	**2.981**	**2.966**	**2.814**

Source: IEP

TABLE B

Economic impact of violence, 2015–2025, billions of constant 2025 pesos

State	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aguascalientes	29.9	28.0	32.2	43.4	50.6	51.7	65.2	41.8	39.8	42.8	38.5
Baja California	146.5	164.9	223.9	262.3	246.8	241.5	249.6	236.9	226.3	220.4	179.8
Baja California Sur	29.3	37.5	67.7	37.0	33.5	30.2	32.3	31.1	29.6	44.4	42.1
Campeche	17.4	20.6	18.2	19.9	22.2	21.6	24.9	34.0	34.3	31.7	27.0
Chiapas	95.7	93.7	91.9	98.2	90.7	86.1	121.2	91.5	104.4	118.9	80.3
Chihuahua	126.9	140.9	175.7	187.7	215.8	216.5	208.5	178.6	191.6	196.7	184.6
Coahuila	73.6	65.4	61.0	64.6	64.6	76.1	57.5	58.5	55.7	62.2	58.9
Colima	23.1	50.0	63.4	59.4	64.1	61.9	56.0	75.1	78.2	75.3	59.1
Durango	52.1	52.4	46.6	43.1	40.9	40.7	43.2	47.8	38.3	36.9	33.5
Guanajuato	166.0	178.4	199.1	325.2	338.8	367.7	300.4	291.7	292.1	305.2	295.6
Guerrero	173.6	188.2	202.0	200.9	166.1	128.8	128.3	126.0	145.4	156.2	139.9
Hidalgo	53.4	58.3	78.5	76.3	87.6	82.6	83.0	85.9	82.0	70.6	76.9
Jalisco	190.5	221.4	270.1	313.3	312.4	289.3	272.8	268.5	263.8	272.8	246.6
Mexico City	231.5	256.2	288.0	355.0	364.4	355.5	353.5	287.9	274.5	257.0	243.3
Mexico State	658.8	582.0	663.8	681.7	654.9	636.6	630.9	649.3	612.6	631.2	527.6
Michoacán	118.0	143.9	150.5	166.5	203.2	229.6	269.0	227.1	176.4	167.8	162.5
Morelos	75.8	85.1	81.0	97.3	110.2	113.6	127.7	129.3	142.8	148.4	117.4
Nayarit	22.3	17.4	32.9	37.1	27.4	27.7	30.6	35.4	43.8	46.2	42.2
Nuevo León	124.5	148.6	149.5	149.9	150.1	152.4	199.7	203.1	276.0	230.2	179.2
Oaxaca	53.6	107.9	113.4	146.3	151.3	139.2	148.6	133.0	117.2	121.9	107.3
Puebla	140.1	134.1	154.0	187.8	206.2	183.8	247.8	174.5	168.8	185.7	175.7
Querétaro	47.8	50.5	52.7	58.1	72.7	81.9	74.1	73.1	78.8	82.2	72.0
Quintana Roo	52.4	40.9	53.5	82.4	90.9	79.0	90.0	88.0	106.2	131.2	84.3
San Luis Potosí	56.3	63.8	76.9	77.1	80.1	90.4	99.4	92.8	87.1	82.7	68.5
Sinaloa	104.3	111.1	136.4	112.9	105.6	97.1	92.7	84.4	88.2	123.1	170.5
Sonora	83.5	94.9	92.1	95.9	125.8	141.2	169.6	158.6	140.5	151.3	130.0
Tabasco	73.5	74.9	81.5	97.4	103.8	87.6	76.8	66.2	60.7	101.7	91.4
Tamaulipas	116.4	122.6	134.5	139.0	125.6	107.0	100.9	83.0	84.5	84.2	66.1
Tlaxcala	24.0	22.9	24.2	26.7	29.5	25.6	26.3	25.7	24.0	30.2	26.1
Veracruz	124.5	169.9	219.9	206.0	217.4	191.0	182.8	173.1	172.3	208.2	210.9
Yucatán	35.6	37.2	39.4	30.9	27.4	25.9	27.1	23.3	23.8	29.1	25.7
Zacatecas	45.3	60.3	65.3	67.1	68.1	90.3	121.9	107.4	104.0	72.9	41.7
NATIONAL	**3,366.4**	**3,623.7**	**4,139.7**	**4,546.4**	**4,648.7**	**4,550.1**	**4,712.2**	**4,382.9**	**4,363.5**	**4,519.2**	**4,005.4**

Source: IEP

ENDNOTES

SECTION 1: RESULTS AND TRENDS

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Executive Summary

Mexico stands at a critical juncture. Peacefulness has long been undermined by diverse security challenges, including large-scale organized criminal activity, pervasive violent crime, and high levels of interpersonal and gender-based violence.

Last year, however, Mexico registered its most substantial improvement in peacefulness in at least a decade, following five years of modest but consistent improvements. This positive trend comes at a time of major disruptions to the country's most powerful criminal organizations, presenting both an opportunity and a risk. The weakening of leading cartels could help consolidate recent peace gains, but they could also trigger a new cycle of cartel fragmentation, thereby leading to renewed violence.

This moment of uncertainty lies at the heart of this 13th edition of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI), produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP). This executive report provides an assessment of peacefulness in Mexico, including key trends in violence and insecurity, as well as estimates of the economic impact of violence. The MPI is based on the Global Peace Index, the world's leading measure of peacefulness, and is constructed from 12 sub-indicators aggregated into five major indicators.

In 2025, Mexico's peacefulness improved by 5.1 percent, marking the sixth year of progress following four years of substantial deteriorations. At the state level, improvements were widespread but uneven. Twenty-two states recorded improvements in peacefulness last year, while 10 deteriorated. Yucatán remained the most peaceful state for the ninth consecutive year, followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche. In contrast, Colima continued to record the lowest levels of peacefulness, followed by Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Morelos, and Baja California.

The national improvement in peacefulness was driven by a sharp reduction in homicides. The homicide rate fell by 22.7 percent in 2025, representing nearly 7,000 fewer deaths compared to the previous year, the largest single-year decline on record. Despite this improvement, violence remains elevated relative to historical levels. Mexico's peace score is still worse than it was a decade ago, and long-term increases in firearms crime, organized crime, and gender-based violence continue to shape the country's security landscape.

Organized crime remains the main driver of extreme violence in Mexico. However, the structure of criminal violence is evolving. The early 2020s saw a partial consolidation of power among major groups, particularly the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), contributing to declines in inter-cartel conflict. Yet this fragile equilibrium has been disrupted by two major developments: the outbreak of sustained internal conflict within the Sinaloa Cartel since late 2024, and the death of the CJNG's long-standing leader in early 2026. While these developments represent major blows to Mexico's leading criminal organizations and could therefore create conditions for continued reductions in violence, they also risk triggering processes of cartel fragmentation that have historically been associated with increases in lethal conflict.

The recent rise in extreme violence in the state of Sinaloa demonstrates this risk. Once a state with low levels of organized criminal violence owing to the virtually unchallenged dominance of the Sinaloa Cartel, the state recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the country in 2025, driven by a sharp increase in homicides linked to cartel infighting. This shift also underscores a broader pattern: while national trends are improving, localized surges in violence continue to emerge where criminal structures fragment or come under pressure.

Early indications suggest that Mexico's evolving security strategy may be contributing to recent gains. Since taking office in October 2024, the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum and its security leadership have placed a renewed emphasis on intelligence-led

policing, institutional coordination, and targeted enforcement. There has also been a marked increase in arrests and detentions, reflected in a sharp rise in the incarcerated population during 2025. While these developments appear to have supported short-term reductions in high-impact crimes, their long-term effectiveness will depend on judicial capacity, due process, and broader institutional strengthening.

Trends in transnational crime also appear to be shifting. Over the past two years, both the volume and frequency of drug seizures at the Mexico–US border have declined for most major drug categories, particularly fentanyl. These trends coincide with falling overdose deaths in the United States and may indicate a contraction of cross-border drug flows. At the same time, domestic drug markets in Mexico have expanded, with retail drug crimes continuing to rise and playing an increasingly important role in organized criminal activity.

Despite improvements in lethal violence in Mexico, other forms of insecurity remain persistent or have worsened in recent years. Family violence and sexual violence have increased substantially over the past decade, with family violence becoming the most common form of violent crime in Mexico in 2025. In parallel, the number of missing persons continues to rise, reflecting the ongoing use of disappearance as a tool of control by criminal groups, a practice that contributes to widespread fear and public concern.

The weakening of leading cartels could help consolidate recent gains, but they could also trigger a new cycle of fragmentation, thereby leading to renewed violence.

The economic impact of violence in Mexico remains substantial, although it declined significantly in 2025. The total cost of violence fell to four trillion pesos (US$220 billion), equivalent to around 11 percent of GDP, marking the largest annual reduction on record. This improvement was driven largely by the reduction in homicides, though costs associated with the fear of violence, protection, and incarceration continue to place a heavy burden on the economy.

Mexico's justice system remains a critical constraint on further improvements in peacefulness. The country has an average of just two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, one-seventh the global average. This limited judicial capacity contributes to large backlogs of unsolved cases, high levels of impunity, and large numbers of unsentenced detainees. Compared to global and regional averages, both judicial and domestic security institutions are underfunded in Mexico, and this lack of investment undermines the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts.

While recent peace gains are significant, Mexico's trajectory remains uncertain. The interaction between evolving criminal dynamics, shifting security strategies, and broader social and institutional factors will determine whether the country consolidates recent progress or faces a renewed cycle of violence. Strengthening institutions, reducing impunity, and addressing the underlying drivers of violence will be essential to sustaining improvements in peacefulness over the long term.

Key Findings

SECTION 1: RESULTS AND TRENDS

- In 2025, peacefulness in Mexico improved by 5.1 percent, the largest improvement in the history of the MPI. Three MPI indicators registered sizable improvements, while two recorded minor deteriorations.
- Twenty-two states improved in peacefulness last year, while 10 deteriorated.
- The substantial improvement in peacefulness in 2025 can be attributed to a large reduction in the homicide rate, which fell by 22.7 percent, equivalent to nearly seven thousand fewer deaths than in 2024.
- In contrast to national trends, Sinaloa had the most substantial deterioration in peacefulness in the country last year, recording the third largest deterioration in the history of the MPI.
- As the epicenter of the highly lethal violence between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel since the end of 2024, Sinaloa experienced large increases in its homicide and firearms crime rates.
- Colima remained the least peaceful state in the country for the fourth consecutive year. Despite a large drop in homicides in 2025, the state once again recorded the worst homicide rate in the country, with 74.1 deaths per 100,000 people.
- After Colima, the least peaceful states in Mexico last year were Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Morelos, and Baja California.
- Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country for the ninth year in a row, followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche.
- In 2025, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness. This was the third year in a row it recorded the largest improvement, following substantial increases in violence between 2015 and 2022.
- Last year marked the sixth consecutive year that Mexico improved in peacefulness, following sharp deteriorations between 2015 and 2019. As a result, peace levels are now close to returning to levels last seen in the mid-2010s.
- As of 2025, Mexico's peace score is still 9.9 percent worse than it was in 2015. However, since violence peaked in 2019, the country has shown an improvement of 10.4 percent.
- All five of the MPI indicators have experienced overall deteriorations since 2015.
- Since 2015, firearms crime has experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 41.2 percent. This change is driven by deteriorations in both the homicide with a firearm and assault with a firearm sub-indicators.
- In the past ten years, the national homicide rate has increased by 19.7 percent, rising from 15.1 to 18.1 deaths per 100,000 people. Overall, there were over 5,700 more deaths in 2025 than in 2015.
- Mexico has seen increasing numbers of missing persons in recent years, with many cases believed to involve forced disappearances by criminal organizations. In the past twenty years, Jalisco has recorded both the highest number of missing persons and the most bodies recovered from clandestine graves.
- The national rate of violent crimes has risen by 12.4 percent since 2015, driven by a 176 percent increase in sexual violence and a 107 percent increase in family violence.
- With approximately 720 incidents per 100,000 people, family violence became the most common type of violent crime for the first time in 2025, surpassing both robbery and assault, which each had rates of around 660 incidents per 100,000 people. Robberies have declined notably in the past decade, while assaults have remained largely unchanged.
- Since 2015, the organized crime rate has risen 92.5 percent. This can be attributed to a nearly threefold increase in the rate of retail drug crimes and a doubling of the extortion rate. In contrast, the kidnapping and human trafficking rate has fallen by 70.8 percent and recorded instances of major organized crime offenses have fallen by 33.5 percent.
- Over the past two years, both the number and volume of illegal drug seizures at the Mexico–US border have fallen for most major drug categories, particularly fentanyl.
- Despite an improvement in peacefulness, fear of violence remains high, with 75.6 percent of the population regarding the state in which they live as unsafe in 2025. This is a nearly two percentage point increase from 2024.
- Colima has recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness since 2015. It has experienced deteriorations across all MPI indicators, with the rates of some increasing more than fivefold.

- After Colima, the largest deteriorations in peacefulness since 2015 were recorded in Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Morelos, and Quintana Roo.
- In the same period, Tamaulipas recorded the largest overall improvement in its peace score, followed by Guerrero, Durango, Coahuila, and Yucatán.
- Overall, 23 states have deteriorated in peacefulness since 2015, while nine states have improved.

SECTION 2: ECONOMIC VALUE OF PEACE

- Last year, the economic impact of violence in Mexico was four trillion pesos (US$220 billion), or around 11 percent of the country's GDP.
- The economic impact of violence fell by 11.4 percent in 2025, equivalent to 514 billion pesos.
- In relative and absolute terms, this is the greatest reduction in the cost of violence in the history of the MPI.
- Last year, the largest declines in the economic impact of violence were from the total cost of homicides, which fell by 382 billion pesos, and from reduced spending on national security and the military, which fell by 89 billion pesos.
- Since 2015, the total cost of violence has increased by 19 percent, or 639 billion pesos.
- From 2015 to 2025, spending on domestic security fell by 31.8 percent, while justice system spending declined by 8.4 percent.
- Mexico has only about two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, around one-seventh of the global average, severely limiting judicial capacity and contributing to case backlogs and unsentenced detainees.
- However, across categories of public expenditure on violence containment, spending on the justice system was the only one to record an increase in 2025.
- Over the course of 2025, the incarcerated population in Mexico rose by more than 20,000 inmates, or 8.9 percent. In both absolute and relative terms, this is the largest increase on record.
- By December 2025, the total incarcerated population exceeded 256,000, the highest end-of-year figure ever recorded. The economic impact of this increase, both on public spending and on lost economic activity, will be more fully reflected in future cost estimates.
- Violent crime accounted for 35.5 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, equivalent to 1.4 trillion pesos.
- Protection costs peaked in 2020, though they remained 7.6 percent higher in 2025 than in 2015.
- At 30,036 pesos per person in 2025, the economic impact of violence was nearly double the average monthly salary in Mexico.
- The economic impact of violence stood out in Guerrero and Morelos, where it represented more than a third of the states' GDPs.
- The per capita economic impact varied considerably across states, ranging from 10,785 pesos in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos in Colima.
- Since 2015, 24 states have seen the economic impact of violence increase, on average by 50.6 percent, while just eight states recorded decreases, with an average decline of 23.8 percent.

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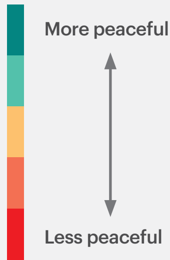
Explore the data on the interactive Mexico Peace Index map: see how peace changes over time, compare levels of peace between states and discover how the states fare according to each indicator of peace.

2026 Mexico Peace Index

A Snapshot of the State of Peace in Mexico

MPI SCORE



RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	Yucatán	1.279
2	Chiapas	1.708
3	Tlaxcala	1.728
4	Durango	1.868
5	Campeche	1.930
6	Coahuila	2.051
7	Nayarit	2.253
8	Oaxaca	2.293
9	Hidalgo	2.296
10	Tamaulipas	2.298
11	Zacatecas	2.315
12	Aguascalientes	2.318
13	Puebla	2.371
14	Veracruz	2.384
15	Jalisco	2.546
16	Querétaro	2.788
17	Mexico State	2.867
18	San Luis Potosí	2.906
19	Mexico City	2.908
20	Michoacán	2.924
21	Nuevo León	3.030
22	Guerrero	3.097
23	Sonora	3.098
24	Tabasco	3.159
25	Baja California Sur	3.172
26	Chihuahua	3.450
27	Quintana Roo	3.496
28	Baja California	3.712
29	Morelos	4.142
30	Guanajuato	4.269
31	Sinaloa	4.364
32	Colima	4.579

TAMAULIPAS
QUERÉTARO
HIDALGO
MEXICO CITY
TLAXCALA
MEXICO STATE
MORELOS
PUEBLA
VERACRUZ
OAXACA
TABASCO
CHIAPAS
CAMPECHE
YUCATÁN
QUINTANA ROO

1 Results and Trends

Key Findings

The substantial improvement in peacefulness in 2025 can be attributed to a large reduction in the homicide rate, which fell by 22.7 percent, equivalent to nearly seven thousand fewer deaths than in 2024.

22 ↖ **10** ↘

Twenty-two states improved in peacefulness last year, while 10 deteriorated.

In contrast to national trends, Sinaloa had the most substantial deterioration in peacefulness in the country last year, recording the third largest deterioration in the history of the MPI.

As the epicenter of the highly lethal violence between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel since the end of 2024, Sinaloa experienced large increases in its homicide and firearms crime rates.

Sexual violence 176% ↖

Family violence 107% ↖

The national rate of violent crimes has risen by 12.4 percent since 2015, driven by a 176 percent increase in sexual violence and a 107 percent increase in family violence.

5.1%

In 2025, peacefulness in Mexico improved by 5.1 percent, the largest improvement in the history of the MPI. Three MPI indicators registered sizable improvements, while two recorded minor deteriorations.

Colima remained the least peaceful state in the country for the fourth consecutive year. Despite a large drop in homicides in 2025, the state once again recorded the worst homicide rate in the country, with 74.1 deaths per 100,000 people.

After Colima, the least peaceful states in Mexico last year were Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Morelos, and Baja California.

Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country for the ninth year in a row, followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche.

In 2025, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness. This was the third year in a row it recorded the largest improvement, following substantial increases in violence between 2015 and 2022.

As of 2025, Mexico's peace score is still 9.9 percent worse than it was in 2015. However, since violence peaked in 2019, the country has shown an improvement of 10.4 percent.

All five of the MPI indicators have experienced overall deteriorations since 2015.

Since 2015, firearms crime has experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 41.2 percent. This change is driven by deteriorations in both the homicide with a firearm and assault with a firearm sub-indicators.

MPI RANK	STATE	OVERALL SCORE	HOMICIDE	ORGANIZED CRIME	VIOLENT CRIME	FIREARMS CRIME	FEAR OF VIOLENCE	OVERALL CHANGE 2024–2025	
1	Yucatán	1.279	1.112	1.206	1.087	1.031	2.760	0.010	-
2	Chiapas	1.708	1.405	1.715	1.261	1.266	4.290	-0.245	↖2
3	Tlaxcala	1.728	1.545	1.580	1.223	1.276	4.434	0.066	↘1
4	Durango	1.868	1.207	2.133	2.261	1.297	3.319	0.014	↘1
5	Campeche	1.930	1.704	1.826	1.563	1.665	4.063	-0.224	↖2
6	Coahuila	2.051	1.154	2.698	3.013	1.129	2.677	-0.075	-
7	Nayarit	2.253	1.915	2.490	2.392	1.648	3.408	0.151	↘2
8	Oaxaca	2.293	2.303	1.747	1.917	2.385	4.150	-0.254	↖5
9	Hidalgo	2.296	1.580	2.034	3.138	1.834	3.913	0.091	↘1
10	Tamaulipas	2.298	1.412	3.011	2.559	1.284	4.440	-0.085	↘1
11	Zacatecas	2.315	1.543	2.284	2.716	1.651	4.882	-0.633	↖7
12	Aguascalientes	2.318	1.426	3.010	2.708	1.970	3.176	-0.143	-
13	Puebla	2.371	1.829	1.878	3.013	1.868	4.475	-0.024	↘3
14	Veracruz	2.384	1.703	2.205	2.617	2.162	4.661	-0.038	↘3
15	Jalisco	2.546	1.867	2.263	3.058	2.320	4.439	-0.166	↘1
16	Querétaro	2.788	1.423	4.206	3.481	1.979	3.537	0.068	↘1
17	Mexico State	2.867	1.534	2.876	4.029	2.481	4.902	-0.517	↖8
18	San Luis Potosí	2.906	1.448	4.792	3.119	1.826	4.389	-0.012	↘1
19	Mexico City	2.908	1.619	3.542	3.935	2.136	4.359	0.187	↘3
20	Michoacán	2.924	2.605	2.813	2.467	3.257	4.598	-0.045	↘1
21	Nuevo León	3.030	1.767	4.633	3.036	2.571	4.013	-0.561	↖5
22	Guerrero	3.097	3.226	2.548	2.500	3.484	4.610	-0.275	↖2
23	Sonora	3.098	3.212	3.558	2.407	2.535	4.163	-0.214	-
24	Tabasco	3.159	2.630	2.737	3.235	3.480	4.993	0.014	↘3
25	Baja California Sur	3.172	1.959	4.619	4.656	1.736	2.662	0.192	↘5
26	Chihuahua	3.450	3.872	2.564	3.376	3.525	4.179	-0.199	↖1
27	Quintana Roo	3.496	1.996	4.885	4.832	1.890	4.569	-0.316	↖1
28	Baja California	3.712	3.773	4.143	3.520	2.946	4.228	-0.488	↖1
29	Morelos	4.142	4.332	3.697	4.257	3.701	5	-0.173	↖1
30	Guanajuato	4.269	3.445	5	3.963	4.815	4.933	-0.074	↖1
31	Sinaloa	4.364	4.274	4.073	4.271	4.928	4.580	1.081	↘9
32	Colima	4.579	5	5	3.551	4.605	4.608	-0.138	-
	National	**2.814**	**2.118**	**3.027**	**3.105**	**2.459**	**4.358**	**-0.153**	

Source: IEP

2025 Results and 2015–2025 Trends

Peacefulness in Mexico has deteriorated by 9.9 percent since 2015. However, the past decade has been marked by two distinct trends, with sharp deteriorations between 2015 and 2019, followed by consistent improvements thereafter. Last year, Mexico experienced its most substantial reduction in violence on record, with peacefulness improving by 5.1 percent.

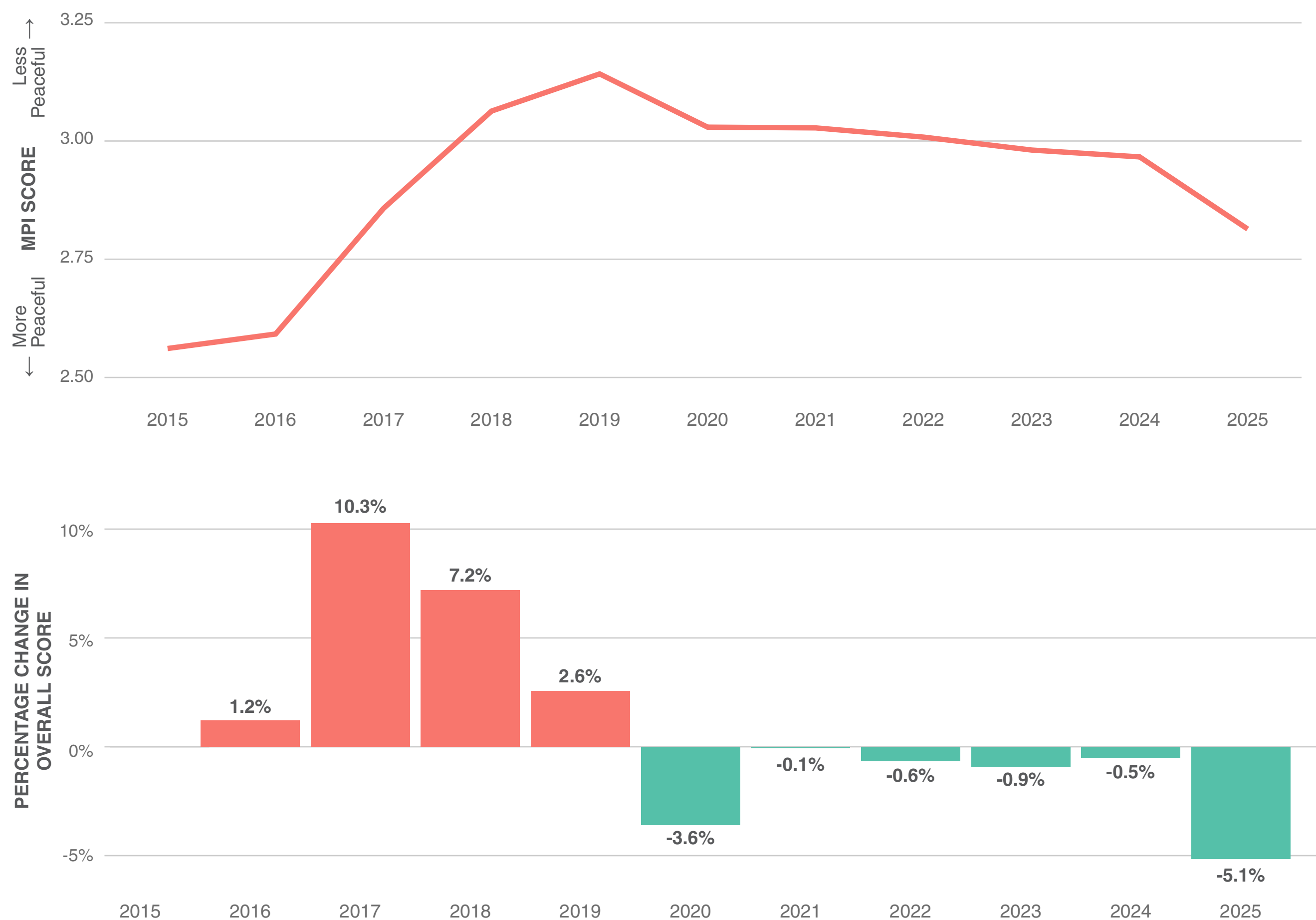
Figure 1.1 illustrates the changes in overall peacefulness in Mexico since 2015. The largest single-year change occurred in 2017, when peacefulness deteriorated by 10.3 percent. Although the score continued to worsen over the following two years, the pace of deterioration slowed.

In 2020, the country experienced a reversal of this trend, with peacefulness improving by 3.6 percent, driven primarily by reductions in commonplace forms of violent crime associated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was followed by more modest improvements over the next four years. Last year's substantial improvement resulted in Mexico recording its best peace score since 2016.

FIGURE 1.1

Change in overall peacefulness, 2015–2025

Peacefulness has improved in each of the past six years, with last year marking the largest improvement on record. This follows substantial deteriorations in peacefulness in the late 2010s.



Source: IEP

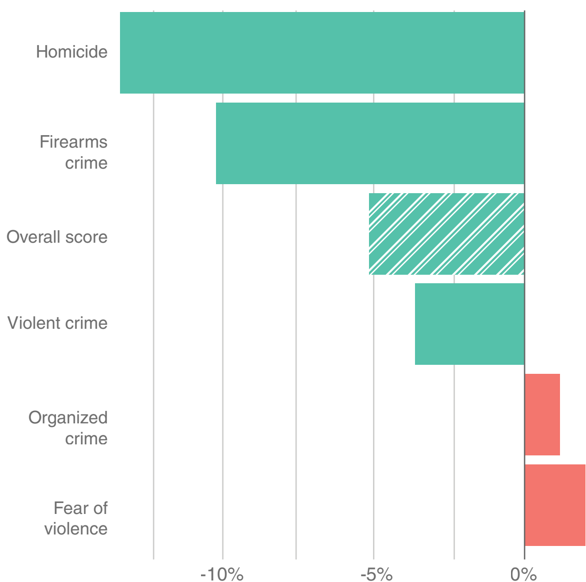
The deterioration in peacefulness over much of the past decade was driven largely by increases in homicide and firearms crime. Although both indicators peaked in 2019 and have since improved significantly, they remain above their pre-deterioration levels. Over the past 11 years, firearms crime has experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 41.2 percent. This rise reflects increases in both firearm-related assaults and homicides. Since 2015, the rate of homicides involving firearms has risen by more than 50 percent, while assaults committed with firearms have increased by over 20 percent.

In 2025, three of the five main indicators of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI) improved, with the largest gains recorded in the homicide and firearms crime indicators, as shown in Figure 1.2. At the state level, 22 states recorded improvements in peacefulness last year, while 10 experienced deteriorations.

FIGURE 1.2

Score changes in peacefulness by indicator, 2024–2025

Three peace indicators improved substantially in 2025, and the other two deteriorated marginally. A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.



Source: IEP

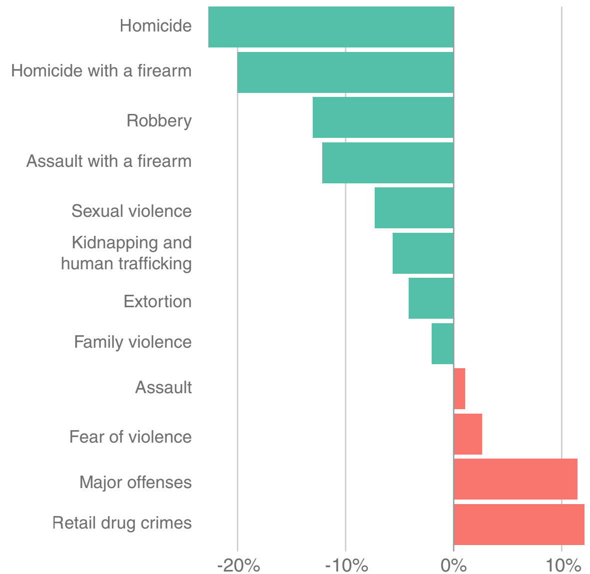
Figure 1.3 depicts the changes in rates of all sub-indicators last year, as well as the changes in rates of homicide and fear of violence, which have no underlying sub-indicators. Eight of the 12 categories improved, while the other four recorded deteriorations. Total homicides and homicides with a firearm were the two indicators to experience the largest improvements in 2025, with the rate of total homicides falling by 22.7 percent and the rate of homicides with a firearm falling by 20 percent.

In contrast, the rates of two organized crime categories – retail drug crime and major offenses – both rose by over 10 percent last year. Major offenses include federal drug trafficking crimes and criminal offenses committed by three or more people. Retail drug crime has experienced increases each year since 2016, and its rate has tripled in that time. While Mexico has traditionally been seen as a producer or transit point for drugs destined for the United States, its internal drug market has been growing in recent years. The trend in retail drug crimes reflects the increasing reliance of drug traffickers on sales to local consumers.

FIGURE 1.3

Rate changes in peacefulness by sub-indicator, 2024–2025

In 2025, most peace sub-indicators improved, led by homicides, robberies, and firearms crimes. However, drug-related crimes and fear of violence levels saw increases.



Source: IEP

According to national survey data, the prevalence of illegal drug use among the general population increased from 9.9 percent in 2016 to 13.1 percent in 2025. However, drug use among adolescents declined over the same period, falling from 6.2 percent to 4.1 percent. On this note, the average age of a person first starting illegal drug use rose, from 17.5 years in 2016 to 19 years in 2025. Overall, cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug, with the prevalence of its use rising from 8.6 to 12 percent over the period. In 2025, the reported rate of drug addiction was 0.6 percent – representing one percent of men and 0.3 percent of women. Among individuals who reported using drugs in 2025, 9.9 percent had received treatment for addiction at some point in their lives.[1]

Last year marked the first time since the index's inception that the rates of family violence improved. However, the improvement was marginal after nearly a decade of deterioration. In 2025, the family violence rate fell by two percent after rising by 112 percent between 2015 and 2024. The increase in family violence has followed a similar trend to sexual violence, which has experienced an even steeper rise over the past decade, despite showing more annual variation in rates. Between 2015 and 2025, sexual violence rose by 176 percent.

For the third consecutive year, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness, with its score improving by 21.5 percent last year and by 48.5 percent since violence in the state peaked in 2022. Improvements in the state continued to be driven by its falling homicide rate, which dropped by 70.5

percent last year. There were only 151 murders recorded in the state in 2025, compared to over 1,600 in 2021.

Sinaloa, by contrast, recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the country last year, marking the third largest decline ever observed in the MPI. The state has long served as the base of operations for the Sinaloa Cartel, which over the past decade has been one of the two most powerful criminal organizations in Mexico. The cartel's criminal hegemony over the state led to a relative infrequency of turf wars and cartel violence, and Sinaloa recorded marked improvements in peacefulness between 2015 and the early 2020s. However, in September 2024, the eruption of major armed clashes in Sinaloa between factions of the cartel has reversed this trend.2 This ongoing conflict drove significant increases in both homicide and firearms crime in the state last year.

Since 2015, peacefulness has deteriorated in 23 states, while only nine have recorded improvements. Over the past decade, Tamaulipas has experienced the largest overall improvement in peacefulness, driven by gains across all indicators. The most significant reductions occurred in homicide and firearms crime, both of which fell by around 70 percent. As a result of these improvements, Tamaulipas climbed 19 places in the MPI rankings, rising from 29th in 2015 to become the 10th most peaceful state in the country in 2025. Following Tamaulipas, the states that recorded the largest improvements in peacefulness were Guerrero, Durango, Coahuila, and Yucatán.

Colima has recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness since 2015, with its rates of organized crime and violent crime increasing more than fivefold, its rate of firearms crime increasing more than threefold, and its homicide rate also nearly tripling. The states with the next most significant deteriorations in peacefulness were Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Morelos, and Quintana Roo. Except for Quintana Roo, all these states recorded dramatic increases in their homicide rates.

In 2025, Colima was once again the least peaceful state in the country, a spot that it has occupied since 2022. The state's poor performance was driven by its extremely high homicide rate. With 74.1 deaths per 100,000 people, last year was the fourth consecutive year in which Colima registered the country's most extreme homicide rate. Despite this, its 2025 rate represented a substantial improvement from the previous three years, when it recorded over 100 homicides per 100,000 people. For the second year in a row, the port city of Manzanillo – a major entry point for precursor chemicals for producing fentanyl – had the highest homicide rate of any major municipality in Mexico.

Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country in 2025, marking its ninth consecutive year in the top spot. It was followed by Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Durango, and Campeche. Since the index's inception, Yucatán has consistently recorded the lowest homicide rate in the country. In 2025, its rate of 1.8 deaths per 100,000 people was ten times lower than the national rate of 18.1 per 100,000 people.

TABLE 1.1

States recording the largest improvements and deteriorations in peacefulness, 2024–2025

Sinaloa recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness last year, while Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement.

STATE	CHANGE IN SCORE	2024 RANK	2025 RANK	CHANGE IN RANK
		LARGEST IMPROVEMENTS		
Zacatecas	-0.633	18	11	↖7
Nuevo León	-0.561	27	21	↖5
Mexico State	-0.517	26	17	↖8
Baja California	-0.488	30	28	↖1
Quintana Roo	-0.316	29	27	↖1
		LARGEST DETERIORATIONS		
Sinaloa	1.081	23	31	↘9
Baja California Sur	0.192	21	25	↘5
Mexico City	0.187	16	19	↘3
Nayarit	0.151	5	7	↘2
Hidalgo	0.091	8	9	↘1

Source: IEP

Cartel Fragmentation and Mexico's Prospects for Peace

Organized criminal actors undermine peacefulness in Mexico in countless ways, but their most extreme impact is reflected in the high homicide rates the country has experienced for much of the past two decades. While many ordinary citizens have fallen victim to this type of violence, the primary targets have typically been members of rival criminal groups. Turf wars between groups have thus been the principal drivers of Mexico's most extreme forms of violence in recent years. They have also been key determinants of the rises and falls in the country's peace scores.

Since at least 2007, the changes in levels of homicide have been driven by organized criminal groups. Drawing on figures from Lantia Intelligence, the annual number of killings estimated to be linked to organized crime has risen more than fourfold in that time, while all other homicides doubled. This relationship is shown in Figure 1.4.

Since 2015, the trend appears particularly consistent. While there has been considerable annual variation in the numbers of killings associated with organized crime, the number of other types of homicide has tended to hover around 13,000 per year, only once diverging by more than 10 percent from that figure.

Mexico's organized criminal landscape is composed of dozens of groups, and recent studies have estimated that these groups have between 160,000 and 185,000 members.[3] While certain national cartels have dominated the landscape in recent years, even these are not monoliths. Rather, they are multifaceted organizations composed of and supported by diverse networks of individuals, cells, factions, and local allies. The individuals and subgroups that make up these organizations span different states and contexts, participate in cartel activities in diverse ways, and do so for different periods of time and with different motivations.

As such, Mexico's criminal organizations and networks are far from static in their composition; they continuously shift and evolve in response to changing local conditions and new opportunities for gains in power and profit. Because of this, the question of cartel violence is not limited to violence between organizations; violence within groups can be just as common. Infighting and cartel fragmentation have been major drivers of Mexico's overall decline in peacefulness in the past two decades.

The sustained high levels of conflict between organized crime groups in Mexico followed the splintering of Mexican cartels

FIGURE 1.4

Annual homicides, overall and estimated number associated with organized crime, 2007–2025

Organized crime has been the driver in the annual increases and decreases in homicide levels across Mexico.

Source: INEGI; Lantia Intelligence; SESNSP
Note: Overall homicide statistics from 2007 to 2024 are sourced from INEGI, while the 2025 value is sourced from SESNSP.

after the launch of the war on drugs in 2006. This offensive employed what is known as the kingpin strategy, which sought to combat criminal organizations by targeting their leadership. While drug trafficking operations were formerly controlled by a handful of organizations, in several instances the kingpin strategy contributed to those organizations breaking up into smaller but more violent groups. Throughout the 2010s, this trend was seen, for example, in the emergence of Los Caballeros Templarios as an offshoot of La Familia Michoacana, the independence of Los Zetas from the Gulf Cartel, and the breakdown of the alliance between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel.[4] With a larger number of organized crime groups, the country experienced a surge in disputes over territory and power, which led to a greater number of turf wars and casualties across Mexico.

While allegiances are continuously shifting, by the early 2020s Mexico's criminal landscape appeared to be entering a period of partial reconstitution. This followed an aggressive national expansion campaign by the CJNG, much of it directed against the Sinaloa Cartel. This rivalry, and the CJNG's rapid territorial expansion, were key drivers of the surge in extreme homicide rates recorded across the country in the late 2010s.

But as of a few years ago, these two groups had clearly emerged as the dominant criminal actors in Mexico, and levels of inter- and intra-cartel violence began to decline. According to the records of Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), deaths from cartel conflict peaked in 2021 at around 15,000 deaths, with most of these associated with either the CJNG, the Sinaloa Cartel, or both. By 2024, the latest year on record, the recorded number of such deaths had fallen below 11,000.

However, two major developments in the past two years have disrupted the partial balance that had appeared to emerge by the early 2020s. The first was the initiation of open warfare between the two main factions of the Sinaloa Cartel in September 2024, which followed years of simmering rivalry and sporadic violence. The second was the 22 February 2026 death of Nemesio 'El Mencho' Oseguera Cervantes, leader of the CJNG, following a raid by the Mexican military. The immediate aftermath of his death was extreme, with widespread retaliatory violence. However, after calm appeared to return within a few days, the longer-term consequences of the CJNG's loss of its leader remain unclear.

Sinaloa infighting

The Sinaloa Cartel is one of Mexico's oldest cartels. It rose to prominence in the 1990s and 2000s under the leadership of Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán through the production and trafficking of drugs such as marijuana and heroin from a region known as the Golden Triangle, a mountainous area stretching between the states of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Durango.[5] However, after several instances of arrests and escapes from custody, the 2016 arrest of El Chapo weakened the cartel's central leadership and contributed to growing internal tensions. Over time, these fissures grew and led to the emergence of two main rival factions within the organization: the Mayiza and the Chapitos.

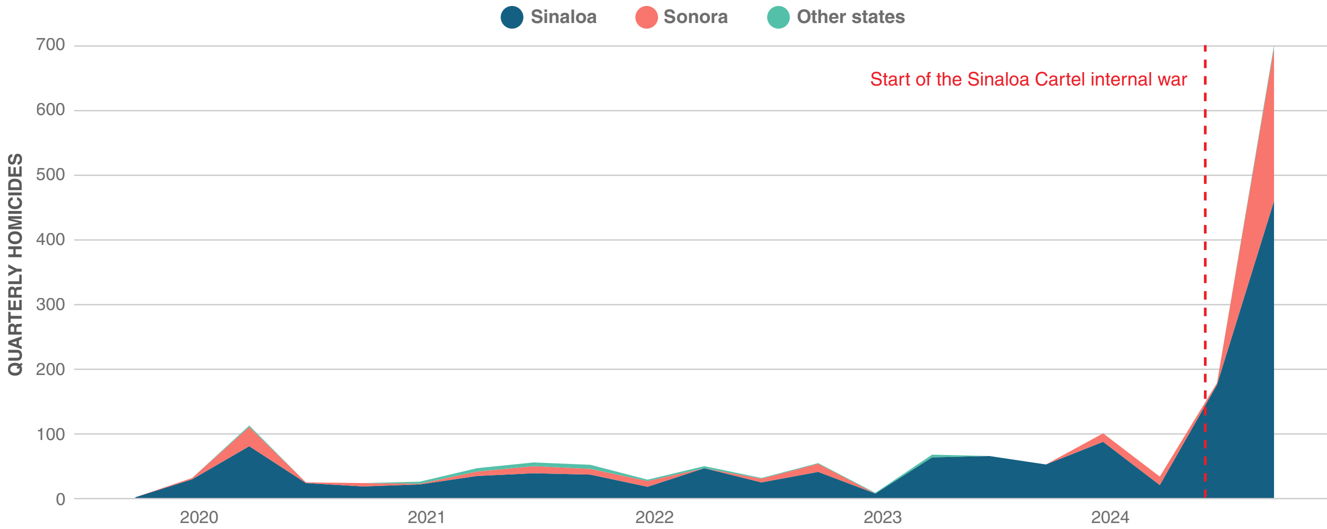
The Chapitos are affiliated with El Chapo's sons, while the Mayiza faction is affiliated with El Chapo's former partner, Ismael 'El Mayo' Zambada. After several years of deadly but mostly low-intensity infighting, the rivalry escalated dramatically following the 25 July 2024 arrest of Zambada at an airport in the United States. Zambada was reportedly betrayed and forcibly handed over to US authorities by Joaquín Guzmán López, a leading member of the Chapitos faction, who also surrendered to US authorities on the same day.[6] Following Zambada's arrest, the leadership of the Mayiza faction reportedly fell to his son, Ismael 'El Mayito Flaco' Zambada Sicairos.[7]

On 9 September 2024, less than two months after these arrests, armed clashes involving the two factions, as well as government security forces, erupted across Culiacán, the capital of Sinaloa and the stronghold of the Sinaloa Cartel. In the days that followed, Culiacán and neighboring municipalities experienced widespread violence, with cartel gunmen establishing roadblocks, inspecting civilians' cell phones for contacts linked to rival factions, and engaging in kidnappings and executions.[8] Based on the records of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the dramatic escalation of the fighting can be seen in Figure 1.5.

FIGURE 1.5

Quarterly conflict deaths from Sinaloa Cartel infighting, by state, late 2019 to 2024

Homicides attributed to the Chapitos–Mayiza conflict were limited until the onset of open warfare between the two factions in September 2024.



Source: UCDP

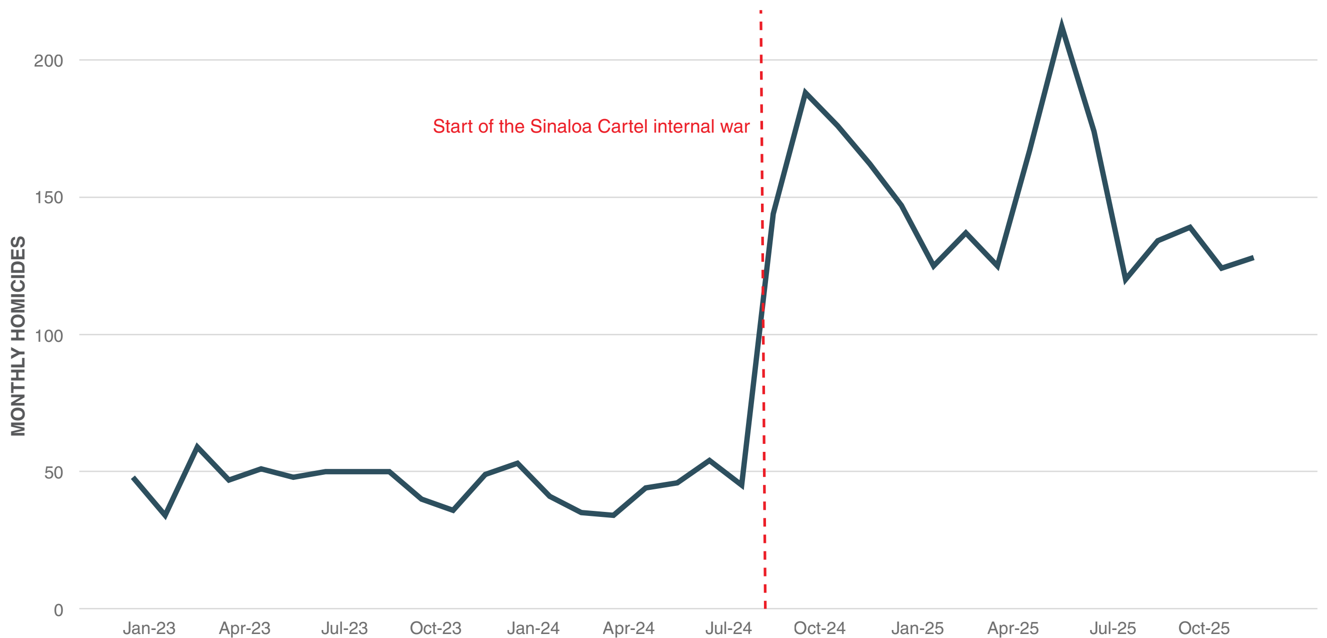
Despite the deployment of about 11,000 security personnel to Culiacán,[9] murders remained prevalent for the remainder of 2024 and throughout 2025. As shown in Figure 1.6, between January 2023 and August 2024, there were consistently between 30 and 55 homicides in Sinaloa per month, with an overall average of 45. Since the onset of the Sinaloa Cartel's internal war, however, the number of monthly homicides has ranged from 120 to 212, with an overall average of 150.

In 2025, even as much of the rest of the country recorded marked improvements in peacefulness, this conflict drove Sinaloa to record one of the sharpest deteriorations in the history of the MPI. The state's total homicide count rose from 1,022 in 2024 to 1,732 in 2025. Moreover, the vast majority of the deaths in Sinaloa in 2024, around 670 in total, occurred after the eruption of the cartel's internal war.

FIGURE 1.6

Monthly homicides, Sinaloa, 2023–2025

After the onset of the Sinaloa Cartel's internal war in September 2024, the monthly homicide rate in the state of Sinaloa more than tripled.



Source: SESNSP

The conflict has produced gruesome scenes across the state, with bodies frequently discovered in vehicles, coolers, and public areas, reflecting a strategy of rival groups to intimidate opponents and local populations.[10] The intensity of the conflict appears to have peaked in June 2025, but high levels of violence continued throughout the year, with authorities registering an average of 3.5 homicides per day in December, alongside renewed reports of roadblocks and shootings targeting individuals caught in the resulting traffic.[11]

Although the Sinaloa Cartel is no stranger to infighting, as seen in a bloody 2008 schism with the Beltrán Leyva Organization and the 2017 split with Dámaso López 'Licenciado' Núñez, experts argue that the current confrontation has been by far the longest-lasting and the one with the most profound economic impact.[12] The costs have been substantial for the state, especially in Culiacán and surrounding communities, with some estimates suggesting losses equivalent to two to three percent of the state's gross domestic product.[13]

Throughout 2025, law enforcement pressure also appears to have contributed to weakening the Chapitos faction. Arrests of key operators and increased security operations disrupted elements of the group's structure, and by the end of the year only two of its leaders, Iván Archivaldo Guzmán and his brother Jesús Alfredo, remained at large.[14]

The internal conflict also appears to have shifted the Sinaloa Cartel's attentions away from its longstanding rival, the CJNG, and toward internal consolidation and survival. As resources, personnel, and operational focus have likely been redirected toward the Chapitos–Mayiza confrontation, the intensity of inter-cartel conflict between the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG has declined relative to its peak in the early 2020s.

According to UCDP records, since 2015, the rivalry between the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG has been associated with some 30,000 confirmed deaths. However, the true number is probably substantially higher, especially as this figure may not fully take into account battles waged by affiliate gangs and other allied groups. Nevertheless, at nearly 29 percent of the total count of cartel conflict deaths, the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict has been by far the most lethal in Mexico in the past decade. By comparison, the next two most lethal conflicts, the CJNG's fight with the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel's fight with the Juárez Cartel, respectively represent about 18 and 13 percent of the total.

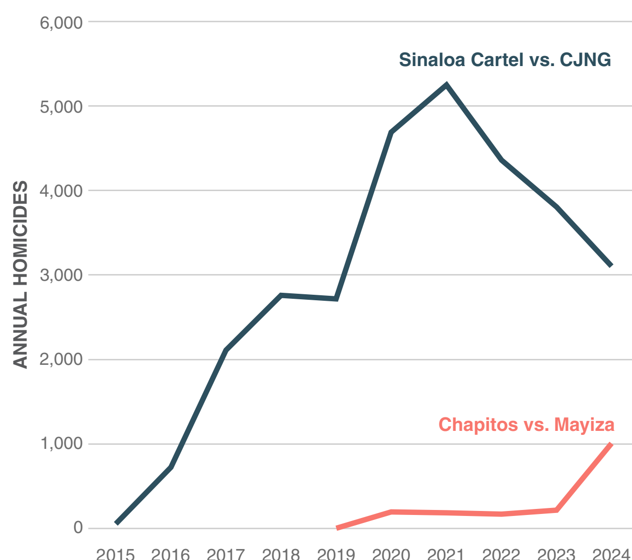
UCDP records also indicate that the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict has unfolded in at least 19 states since 2015, with the primary battleground being Baja California, representing 55 percent of the total deaths. This state is followed by Zacatecas (14.9 percent of the total), Colima (11.4 percent), Jalisco (9.5 percent), and Quintana Roo (4.1 percent).

As with the overall cartel conflict deaths, killings associated with the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict peaked in 2021 and declined over the next several years, as shown in Figure 1.7. This decline has coincided with the gradual rise in deaths attributed to the Chapitos–Mayiza conflict, which rose from two in 2019 to 215 in 2023, before jumping to 1,005 in 2024.

FIGURE 1.7

Annual deaths, Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG conflict and the Chapitos–Mayiza conflict, 2015–2024

As the intensity of the infighting between the Chapitos and Mayiza factions has risen, deaths linked to the Sinaloa Cartel–CJNG rivalry have declined.



Source: UCDP

The shift in rivalries appears to have been cemented by the emergence of a reported alliance between the Chapitos and the CJNG by May 2025. Such a partnership could increase each group's territorial reach and access to resources.[15] It also represents a striking development in Mexico's organized criminal landscape, given that the rivalry between the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG has been one of the principal drivers of cartel violence over much of the past decade.

The killing of 'El Mencho'

With the outbreak of open hostilities within the Sinaloa Cartel in 2024, the CJNG appeared poised to capitalize on the fragmentation of its main rival. As the Sinaloa Cartel's internal divisions intensified, the CJNG had greater opportunity to consolidate its position in contested territories and expand into areas where Sinaloa's control had weakened. However, these strategic gains were thrown into jeopardy by the death of El Mencho on 22 February 2026.

While his death dealt a major blow to the CJNG, it also risks triggering a renewed surge of violence across Mexico. Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, was quickly plunged into chaos as the cartel retaliated against law enforcement and citizens, with violence spreading to cities and beach resorts across the country as gunmen set fire to stores and banks.[16] At least 25 National Guard personnel were killed in Jalisco following the outbreak of the violence.[17] Narco-blockades and roadblocks were also reported across 19 Mexican states, including in Baja California, Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Tamaulipas.[18] According to a March report, retail sales fell by 6.5 percent due to blockades, mobility disruptions, and insecurity across the country.[19]

However, the initial outburst of violence appeared to be relatively short-lived, and a degree of calm quickly returned in many affected areas.[20] According to the records of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) monitor, political violence events spiked on the day of El Mencho's death, as shown in Figure 1.8. They rose more than tenfold from the day before, while the number of deaths from such events more than doubled. Yet by the following day, the number of recorded events and deaths fell back to their previous levels and continued at those levels through the end of March.

Given the size and geographic reach of the CJNG, the death of its leader raises the possibility of internal fragmentation and succession struggles within the organization. El Mencho's grip over the organization was unusually centralized, with the CJNG revolving more tightly around its leader than many other large criminal groups in Mexico.

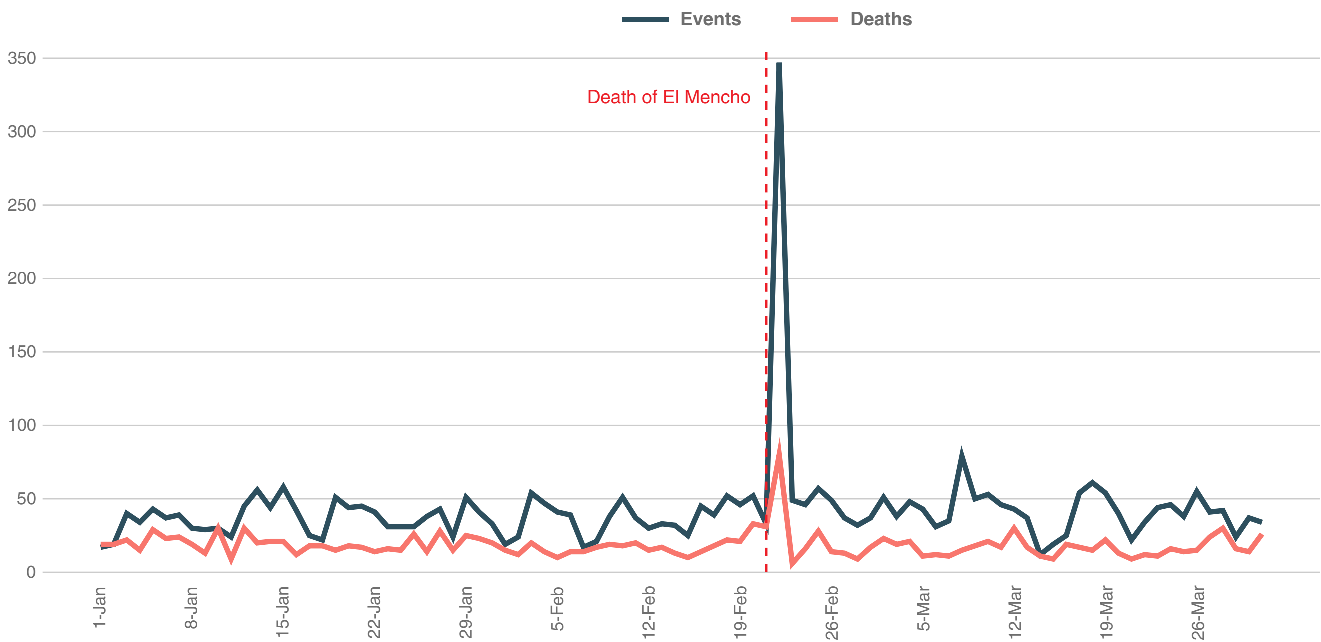
As of March 2026, reports suggest that the CJNG may already have settled on a new leader in Juan Carlos Valencia González, El Mencho's California-born stepson. According to reporting, Valencia González appears to command considerable internal legitimacy within the organization and is seen by some officials and analysts as the figure best placed to ensure continuity and prevent a violent rupture within the cartel's hierarchy. His rise would also reinforce the role of the Valencia family network, long central to the CJNG's financial and organizational structure.[21]

If this transition holds, it lowers the risk of succession war within the organization. If, however, his authority is contested or proves insufficient to hold together the cartel's far-flung network of operatives and regional commanders, the CJNG could still fragment, with significant implications for violence across multiple parts of the country. Moreover, the future of the reported alliance between the CJNG and the Chapitos faction of the Sinaloa Cartel remains uncertain, since it was reportedly brokered under El Mencho's supervision.[22] If internal competition within the CJNG coincides with shifting alliances elsewhere in the criminal landscape, Mexico could see a resurgence of the very turf wars that drove the dramatic deterioration in peacefulness in the late 2010s.

FIGURE 1.8

Daily political violence events and fatalities in Mexico, January to March 2026

Violent events and fatalities spiked immediately after the death of El Mencho but returned to prior levels within days.



Source: ACLED

Homicide

Over the past decade, more than 325,000 people have been murdered in Mexico. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of homicides rose rapidly, with the national rate climbing from 15.1 to 28.2 deaths per 100,000 people. Over the past six years, however, there has been a steady decline in killings, with last year seeing the most substantial drop on record. The 2025 rate of 18.1 deaths per 100,000 people was the lowest since 2015.

Figure 1.9 depicts the national monthly trend in homicide rate since January 2015. Following three years of significant increases, the monthly homicide rate peaked in July 2018 at 2.52 deaths per 100,000 people, after which it gradually but evenly declined over the next six years. In mid-2024, however, the rate entered a period of steep decline, falling to 1.25 deaths per 100,000 people in December 2025. This was the lowest rate since October 2015.

Geographic concentration of homicides

Mexico's high levels of homicide are primarily driven by violence in a relatively small number of urban centers. In 2025, a quarter of all homicide cases were recorded in just 10 municipalities. However, relative to population sizes, high levels of homicide are present in urban, semi-urban, and rural settings across the country.

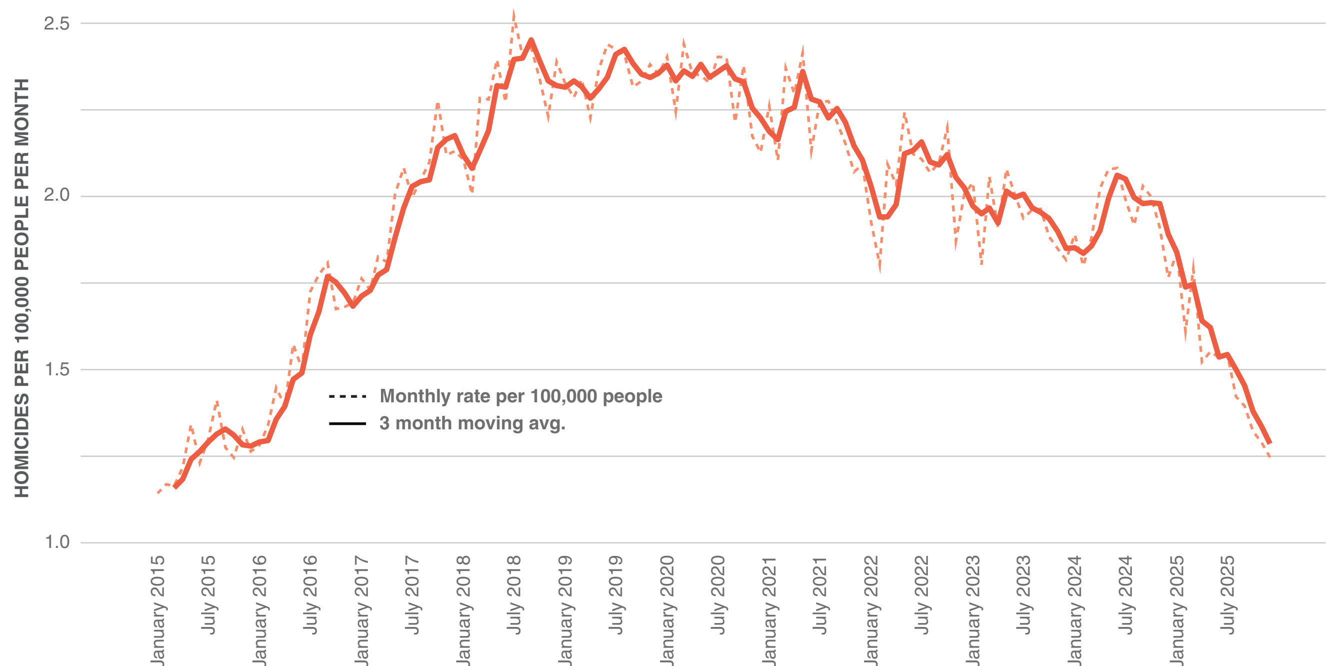
The map in Figure 1.10 depicts the homicide rate across Mexico's municipalities. At the municipal level, Mexico's National System for Public Security (SESNSP) only provides the number of homicide cases, which is often distinct from the number of homicide victims, as a single homicide case may involve multiple victims. However, both figures are provided at the state level. To estimate the municipal homicide rate, therefore, each municipal homicide case rate has been adjusted based on the level of state-wide discrepancy between victims and cases – differences which range widely across states.

In Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Yucatán, for example, every homicide victim in 2025 was associated with a unique case and there were therefore no discrepancies. In contrast, Jalisco, Zacatecas, and Guanajuato had the highest discrepancies between the two figures, with the total number of victims in each state being 20 percent higher than the total number of cases.

FIGURE 1.9

Monthly homicide rate, 2015–2025

In mid-2024, homicides began declining rapidly.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Encouragingly, for crime statistics from 2026 onward, the National Crime Incidence Registry (RNID) has introduced a new methodology that shifts away from aggregated reporting to record cases, crimes, and victims separately and link them using unique identifiers. Among other improvements, this will allow the number of homicide victims to be measured directly at the municipal level, which will significantly improve the precision of subnational homicide estimates.

Out of Mexico's 2,462 municipalities,[23] there were about 210 with an estimated homicide rate of at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people in 2025, meaning that approximately eight percent nationally experienced extreme levels of homicidal violence. In contrast, about 1,200 had a rate of less than five deaths per 100,000 people, including about 1,040 with zero deaths, meaning that nearly half of municipalities had either no or relatively few recorded murders last year. The remaining municipalities fall within the moderate to very high homicide level ranges: about 22 percent of all municipalities recorded a rate of 5-15 deaths per 100,000 people, about 14 percent recorded a rate of 15-30, and about seven percent recorded a rate of 30-50.

Municipalities experiencing extreme levels of homicidal violence are often clustered together in the same geographic area. These clusters commonly represent strategic places for the production or trafficking of illegal drugs. They tend to be in areas in dispute by two or more criminal organizations, whose turf wars drive up homicide rates.

There were six states where at least 30 percent of municipalities recorded extreme homicide rates in 2025. With the exception of Morelos, all of these states are located in the western and northwestern regions of the country, which have long served as important corridors for drug trafficking. Colima, the most violent state in the country, continued to have the highest proportion of municipalities with extreme homicide rates, with seven of its ten municipalities exceeding 50 deaths per 100,000 people. It was followed by Morelos, Baja California Sur, Baja California, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa, all of which saw at least three in ten municipalities record extreme rates.

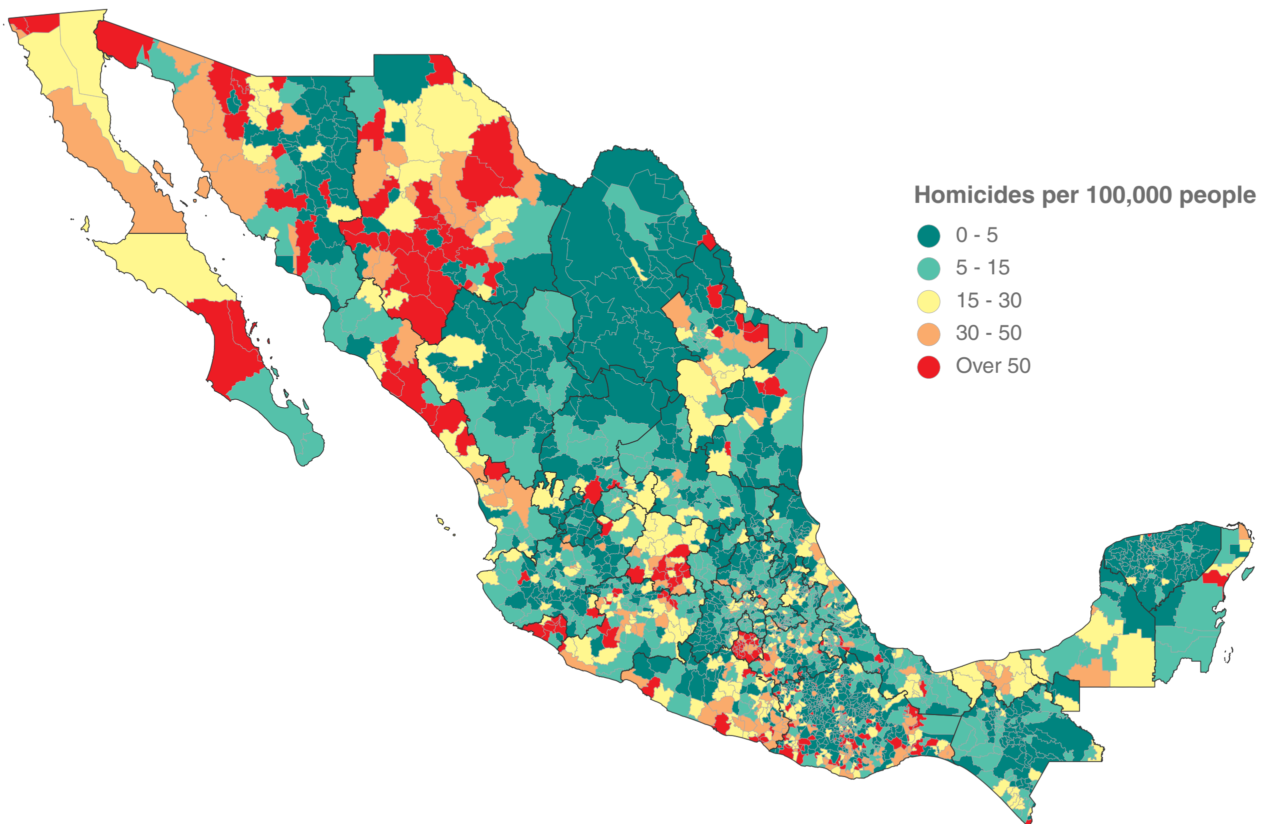
The case of Sinaloa is particularly striking. Not only did the number of municipalities registering extreme homicide rates rise from four to six, but the homicide rate increased in all 20 municipalities, rising by an average of roughly 70 percent over the previous year. These jumps can largely be attributed to the ongoing internal conflict between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel that erupted in September 2024. The capital of Culiacán, for example, experienced a dramatic surge in violence. Between 2024 and 2025, its estimated homicide rate climbed from 64 to 107 deaths per 100,000 people, giving it the second highest rate in the country last year.

While Sinaloa's criminal economy historically developed in rural areas dedicated to marijuana and opium poppy cultivation, the current generation of cartel leaders has increasingly brought violent conflict into major urban centers. Newer actors within the cartel have backgrounds shaped by the immense wealth

FIGURE 1.10

Municipal homicide rates, 2025

About eight percent of municipalities have a homicide rate of at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

generated by earlier trafficking operations and have tended to operate from urban environments such as Culiacán, where criminal networks are now deeply embedded in local business and financial activities.[24]

However, such violence is not limited to urban centers. In Chihuahua, for example, more than one-third of municipalities recorded extreme homicide rates in 2025. Most of Chihuahua's 67 municipalities are rural, with populations of fewer than 20,000 people. With the exception of the cities of Juárez and Cuauhtémoc, all the municipalities with extreme homicide rates in the state have small populations, and most are rural.

A large cluster of extreme homicide rates stretches from southwestern Chihuahua into central Sinaloa, overlapping with the Golden Triangle region, which has historically been known for heroin and marijuana production.[25] In recent years, the decriminalization of marijuana across much of the United States and the growing shift from heroin to synthetic opioids have reduced demand for the cultivation of the plant-based drugs from this region. Nevertheless, the Golden Triangle – considered the birthplace of the Sinaloa Cartel – has remained a stronghold for the organization into the 2020s.

Table 1.2 lists the 20 mid-sized and large-population municipalities with the highest homicide rates in 2025, along with the 20 with the lowest rates.[26] Collectively, the highest homicide municipalities accounted for one-third of all homicide cases in Mexico. The port city of Manzanillo, which is a highly strategic location for the import of precursor chemicals for synthesizing fentanyl, recorded the highest homicide rate in the country. Its rate has been above 90 deaths per 100,000 people each year since 2016. However, for the eighth consecutive year, Tijuana had the highest number of homicides overall, with about 1,090 registered cases, though this is about 500 fewer than it had in 2024.

TABLE 1.2

Municipalities with the highest and lowest homicide rates, 2025

Homicide rates in Mexican cities range from fewer than one to as many as 140 deaths per 100,000 people.

HIGHEST HOMICIDE RATES				
RANK	MUNICIPALITY	STATE	HOMICIDE CASES	HOMICIDE RATE*
1	Manzanillo	Colima	242	140
2	Culiacán	Sinaloa	908	107
3	San Luis Río Colorado	Sonora	187	105
4	Colima	Colima	139	97.7
5	Valle de Santiago	Guanajuato	122	97.3
6	Zamora	Michoacán	171	96.1
7	Cajeme	Sonora	368	94.0
8	Salamanca	Guanajuato	201	88.0
9	Acapulco de Juárez	Guerrero	485	73.5
10	Cuautla	Morelos	114	67.4
11	Tijuana	Baja California	1090	62.7
12	Juárez	Chihuahua	791	61.1
13	Cuauhtémoc	Chihuahua	87	56.2
14	Celaya	Guanajuato	241	55.4
15	Pénjamo	Guanajuato	70	54.1
16	San Miguel de Allende	Guanajuato	73	50.0
17	Irapuato	Guanajuato	239	48.3
18	Uruapan	Michoacán	142	45.8
19	San Martín Texmelucan	Puebla	57	41.3
20	Chilpancingo de los Bravo	Guerrero	98	40.9

LOWEST HOMICIDE RATES				
RANK	MUNICIPALITY	STATE	HOMICIDE CASES	HOMICIDE RATE*
1	Ciudad Madero	Tamaulipas	1	0.52
2	Tampico	Tamaulipas	3	1.09
3	Lerdo	Durango	2	1.30
4	Ixtlahuaca	Mexico State	2	1.41
5	Mérida	Yucatán	16	1.61
6	Saltillo	Coahuila	15	1.70
7	Tepatitlán de Morelos	Jalisco	3	2.40
8	Acuña	Coahuila	4	2.45
9	Ciudad Valles	San Luis Potosí	4	2.47
10	Torreón	Coahuila	18	2.50
11	Monclova	Coahuila	6	2.52
12	Gómez Palacio	Durango	9	2.56
13	Nuevo Laredo	Tamaulipas	11	2.79
14	Benito Juárez	Mexico City	12	3.06
15	Ocosingo	Chiapas	7	3.33
16	Comitán de Domínguez	Chiapas	5	3.35
17	Durango	Durango	22	3.39
18	Toluca	Mexico State	30	3.73
19	Veracruz	Veracruz	21	3.94
20	Coyoacán	Mexico City	24	4.33

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Note: The municipal homicide rate* has been estimated by adjusting the municipal homicide case rate based on state-wide discrepancies between the recorded numbers of victims and cases. Only includes municipalities with a population of at least 150,000.

In contrast, there are several major cities and municipalities across Mexico that recorded low homicide rates in 2025. With just one recorded case of intentional homicide, Ciudad Madero in Tamaulipas had the lowest homicide rate in the country for the second year in a row. Ciudad Madero is part of the Tampico metropolitan area, and the neighboring municipality of Tampico itself had the country's second lowest homicide rate, with 1.1 deaths per 100,000 people respectively.

Mérida in Yucatán had the lowest homicide rate of any state capital, with about 1.6 homicides per 100,000 people. Other capitals with low homicide rates include Campeche City (Campeche), Saltillo (Coahuila), and Toluca (Mexico State), while two of Mexico City's 16 boroughs were also among the municipalities with the lowest homicide rates.

Homicide rates disaggregated by sex

Looking at the dynamics of homicides by the sex of the victims highlights the necessity for tailored approaches to address distinct patterns of violence affecting men and women in Mexico. Overall, men are much more likely than women to be victims of homicide in Mexico, consistently accounting for nearly nine in ten victims. Male homicides are more likely to be linked to organized crime trends, while female deaths are more likely to be associated with intimate partner violence.[27] Since 2015, for example, nearly one in five female homicides occurred in the home, compared to one in 13 for male homicides.[28]

Table 1.3 shows that since 2015 male homicides have risen by nearly 40 percent, increasing by a larger percentage than female homicides. However, both male and female homicides peaked in 2019, as the two categories of killings have fallen since. Male homicides have declined 32.6 percent over the past five years, while female homicides have declined by 27.3 percent.

Femicides, the murder of a woman for gender-based reasons,[29] have become a major concern across Latin America in recent years. In most cases, this crime is committed by current or former intimate partners, highlighting the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence within the family sphere.[30] In Mexico, the murder of a woman or girl is considered gender based and included in femicide statistics when one of seven criteria is met, including evidence of sexual violence prior to the victim's death; a sentimental, affective, or trusting relationship with the perpetrator; or the victim's body being displayed in public.[31]

Recorded cases of femicide in Mexico have risen significantly in the past decade, from 428 reported victims in 2015 to 721 in 2025, a 68.5 percent increase. While femicides are usually included in female homicide figures, not all female homicides are considered femicides. In this analysis, femicide data is presented as separate from female homicide to assess the different dynamics of reported femicides compared to female homicide.

As a relatively new crime category that requires added levels of investigation and analysis to identify, femicides have not been uniformly classified as such by different law enforcement institutions since the category's introduction. At present, about one in four female killings in Mexico is classified as a femicide. However, the rates at which the murders of women are classified as femicides vary substantially across states. In 2025, for example, 73.1 percent of the murders of women in Sinaloa were classified as femicides, compared to only 6.4 percent in Guanajuato. It is therefore difficult to determine with certainty the true number of femicides in different states and over time.[32]

Feminicides, male homicides, and non-femicide female homicides also show different patterns in terms of weaponry. While male homicides and non-femicide female homicides show

TABLE 1.3

Homicides by sex, 2015–2025

Both male and total female homicides peaked in 2019, while femicides peaked in 2021.

YEAR	TOTAL HOMICIDES	MALE HOMICIDES	FEMALE HOMICIDES	% MALE	% FEMALE	FEMICIDES	% FEMALE HOMICIDES CLASSIFIED AS FEMICIDES
2015	18,312	15,158	2,161	87.5%	12.5%	428	*19.8%*
2016	23,188	20,007	2,834	87.6%	12.4%	648	*22.9%*
2017	29,636	25,898	3,301	88.7%	11.3%	769	*23.3%*
2018	34,662	30,422	3,682	89.2%	10.8%	924	*25.1%*
2019	35,694	31,013	3,846	89.0%	11.0%	973	*25.3%*
2020	35,548	30,903	3,780	89.1%	10.9%	976	*25.8%*
2021	34,380	29,696	3,769	88.7%	11.3%	1,021	*27.1%*
2022	31,969	27,277	3,787	87.8%	12.2%	983	*26.0%*
2023	30,585	26,596	3,434	88.6%	11.4%	853	*24.8%*
2024	30,915	26,806	3,414	88.7%	11.3%	853	*25.0%*
2025	24,095	20,909	2,795	88.2%	11.8%	721	*25.8%*
% Change, 2015-2025	**31.6%**	**37.9%**	**29.3%**	**-**	**-**	**68.5%**	**-**

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Note: Female homicides includes femicides. Total homicides include homicides where the sex of the victim is unknown, but the male and female percentages do not.

very similar trends, with three-quarters being carried out with guns in both cases, femicides are far less likely to involve firearms. Nearly a quarter of femicide victims were killed with knives, while the largest share – more than two-fifths – were killed by 'other means'. These latter cases likely include beatings and strangulations, though official records do not provide additional detail.

Missing persons

Mexico has experienced a growing number of reported disappearances in recent years. Some of these cases are likely linked to homicides, suggesting that the country's official homicide rate may be lower than the true figure. In response to longstanding concerns about unreliable data on missing and disappeared persons, the Mexican government created the National Search Commission (CNB) in 2017 to improve tracking and documentation of these cases.[33]

Disappearances represent a grim reality in Mexico. They are devastating to families, as they leave loved ones without a sense of closure or justice. Concerns that some missing persons are homicide victims have intensified with the growing discovery of clandestine and unmarked graves across Mexico. Organized crime groups frequently use forced disappearance as a tool of social control, eliminating perceived threats while avoiding the attention that overt killings might attract. By secretly disposing of victims' bodies, these groups conceal the scale of their violence and reinforce fear and uncertainty within local communities.[34]

Between 2006 and 2021, authorities discovered 4,839 clandestine graves containing 8,278 bodies.[35] With more than 5,600 graves identified by mid-2023, the total number of bodies recovered nationwide likely exceeds 9,500. Jalisco has been the most affected state: between late 2018 and late 2021, roughly one-third of the 3,335 bodies exhumed from clandestine graves across Mexico were found there.[36]

In March 2025, national attention focused on a ranch near Teuchitlán, Jalisco, where citizens searching for missing relatives uncovered what appeared to be a large killing site linked to the CJNG. Investigators found hundreds of items of clothing, around 200 pairs of shoes, and three alleged cremation sites, sparking nationwide protests over authorities' failure to prevent such violence and locate victims.[37]

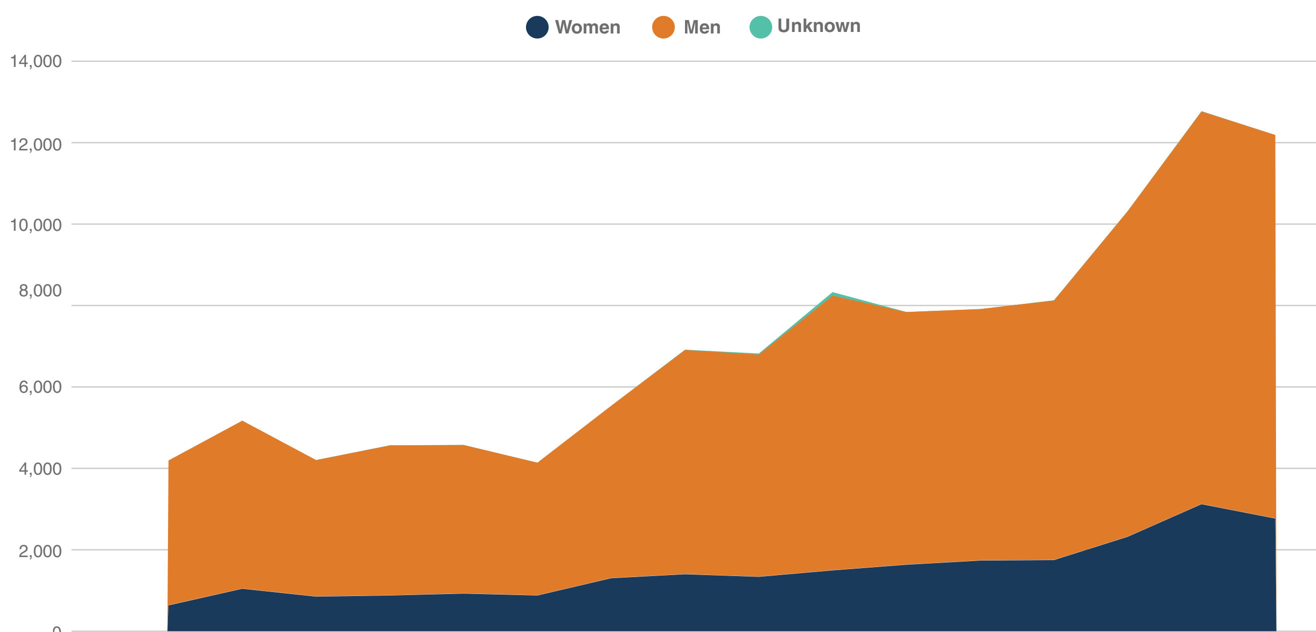
After Jalisco, the states of Sinaloa and Colima have recorded the largest numbers of exhumed bodies in recent years – areas that are also strongholds of the CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel. In Colima, the municipality of Tecomán has been a particularly violent battleground between the two groups. Although its homicide rate has declined since reaching the highest level among Mexican municipalities with over 100,000 residents in 2017, Tecomán remains a major site of clandestine graves, accounting for 7.3 percent of those discovered nationwide between 2018 and mid-2023.[38]

While it is not known how many missing people end up as victims of homicide, there have been similarly alarming increases in disappearances in recent years. Since 2010, more than 113,000 people have been reported missing in Mexico and have not been found. More than half of these cases are from the past six years, as the number has been steadily climbing since 2015, as shown in Figure 1.11. Last year, nearly 35,500 people were reported missing, of which over 12,000 have not been found.

FIGURE 1.11

Missing or disappeared people, by sex, 2010–2025

In 2025, over 12,000 people were reported missing and have not been found, a decline from the all-time high of 2024.



Source: Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda
Note: Figures accurate as of 10 March 2026.

Figure 1.12 depicts the number of people reported missing by state since 2020, along with the outcomes to date of such cases. With nearly 30,000 cases over the past six years, Mexico State has had by far the highest number of people reported missing. In absolute terms, it has also had the largest number of people that have never been found or been found dead. However, the vast majority of the cases in Mexico State, around 21,000 people, have eventually been found alive.

In contrast, in Baja California, only 14.6 percent of missing cases have resulted in the person being found alive since 2020. More than 80 percent have not been found, and four percent have been found dead. Chihuahua and Guerrero have respectively the second and third highest rates of missing persons cases going unresolved. In terms of the rates at which missing persons are eventually found dead, Colima, Querétaro, Guanajuato, and Jalisco have had the worst rates since 2020, with more than nine percent of cases in each recording this outcome since 2020.

Yucatán is the state to have recorded the fewest missing cases in the past six years, with just over 700. It also recorded the fewest people that were not eventually found. The neighboring state of Campeche has also registered relatively few cases since 2020, with just over 1,250. Campeche has registered the lowest number of instances – and the lowest rate – of missing persons eventually being found dead; there have been only 26 such cases, equivalent to 2.1 percent of those reported missing.

Previous IEP analysis has found that there are divergences in missing person dynamics across Mexico on the basis of sex.[39] Most women are eventually found alive, but this is not the case for men. Over the past 15 years, nearly four out of five missing women have been located alive, and only around two percent have been found dead. In the case of men, who account for about 60 percent of all cases, just under half have been found alive, while more than two-fifths have never been found, and around seven percent have been found dead.

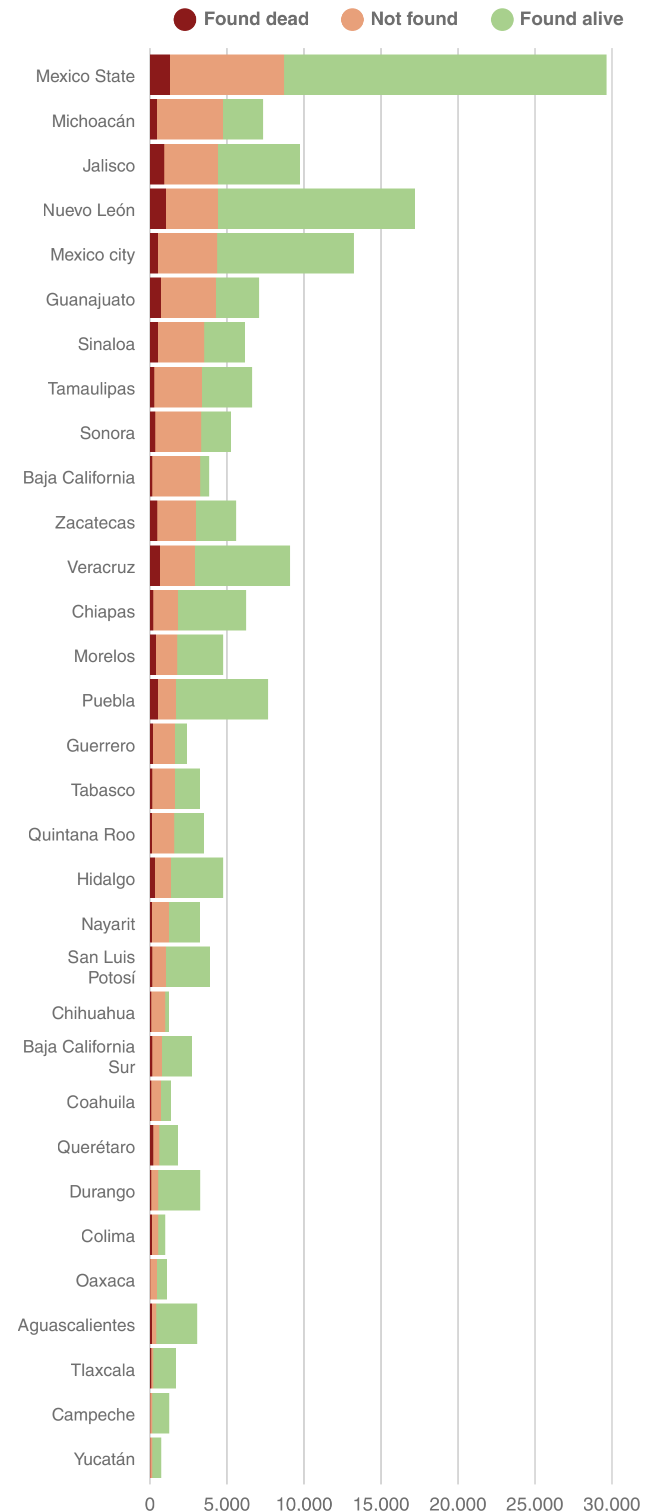
The divergences based on geography and sex in the prevalence and outcomes of missing person cases are undoubtedly the result of a wide range of factors. Among these is likely the degree of dominance of organized criminal groups in different areas and such groups' favored methods of using violence to assert control.

This can be seen in the fact that more men than women are associated with unresolved or deadly disappearances. Women in Mexico are more likely to be the victims of interpersonal and domestic violence. As such, a larger portion of female disappearances may be temporary measures to flee abuse from a known assailant, rather than enforced disappearances by an armed group. The influence of organized crime also appears evident in the large overall number of cases in states with a historically strong presence of criminal groups, as well as in the higher presumed or confirmed lethality of cases in these places.

FIGURE 1.12

Missing person cases and outcomes, by state, 2020–2025

In the past six years, Mexico State has recorded the highest total number of people reported missing, but most of these have been eventually found alive. In some states, missing person cases are more likely to go unresolved or result in the person being found dead.



Source: Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda
Note: Figures accurate as of 10 March 2026.

Organized Crime

There are four sub-indicators that make up the overall measure of organized crime: extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking, retail drug crimes, and major organized crime offenses. Major offenses include federal drug trafficking crimes and criminal offenses committed by three or more people.

Since 2015, the overall rate of organized crime has nearly doubled. However, this rise has been entirely driven by increases in retail drug crimes and extortions, as shown in Figure 1.13. In contrast, the rate of kidnapping and human trafficking as well as the rate of major organized crime offenses have both dropped markedly. Because of these diverging trends, the overall indicator score was only 12.5 percent worse in 2025 than in 2015.

In 2025, the two states with by far the lowest rate of organized crime were Yucatán and Tlaxcala, whose rates were respectively 11 and six times lower than the national rate. In contrast, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Colima had the highest rates, each around three times higher than the national rate. Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Colima were also the states to have seen the largest deteriorations in rates since 2015.

Over the past decade, the decline in the rate of kidnappings and incidents of human trafficking has been striking. In 2015, there were 13.8 instances of these crimes per 100,000 people, but this rate has fallen in most of the past 10 years, including last year. As of 2025, the rate stood at just four instances per 100,000 people.

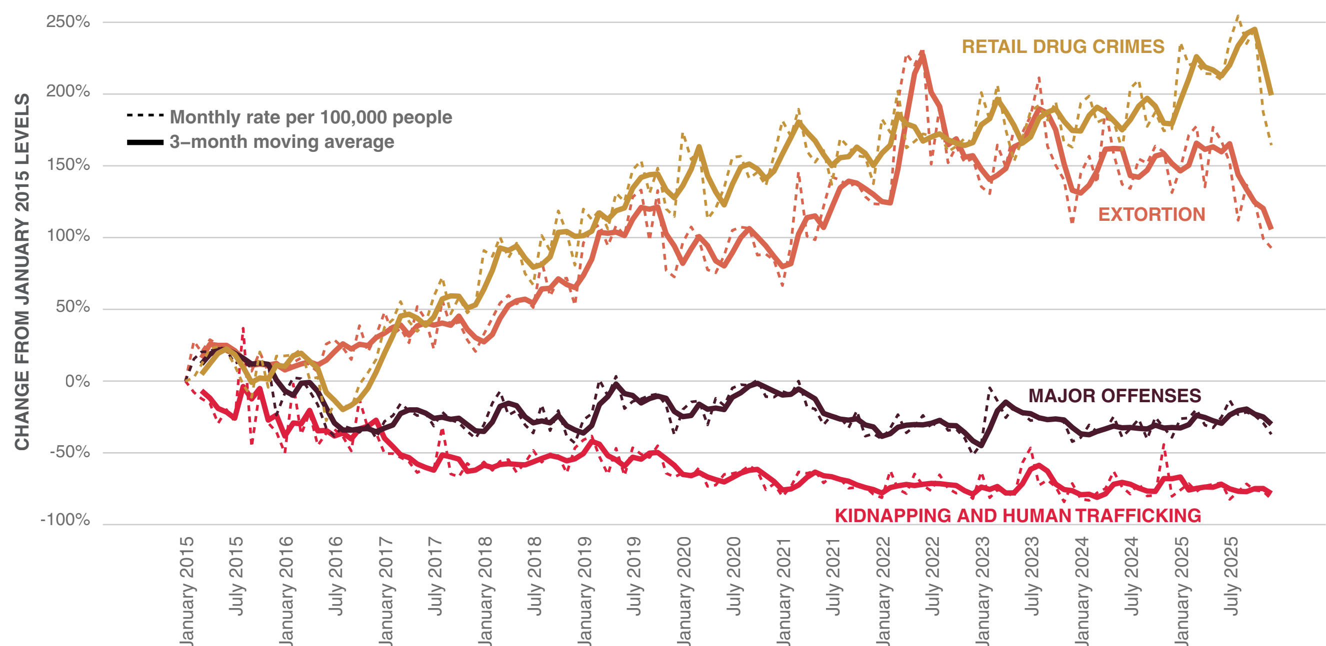
This improvement has been broad based, with 26 out of Mexico's 32 states recording reductions in kidnappings and human trafficking incidents. Coahuila, Puebla, and Tamaulipas have registered the largest rate improvements, as their rates fell from over 50 instances per 100,000 people in 2015 to between 1.4 and 4.4 last year. In absolute terms, these states – along with Mexico City and Chiapas – also had the largest drops in total cases. Together, these five states had more than 21,000 kidnapping and human trafficking crimes in 2015, but they recorded only around 1,000 in 2025.

Major offenses, which tend to be coordinated drug trafficking activities, have also experienced a noteworthy drop across Mexico. Over the past decade, the rate has fallen by 33.5 percent. However, much of this decline is the result of the baseline year of comparison, 2015, having recorded an unusually high number of crimes, at around 9,700 nationally. In each of the years since, the number of documented offenses of this kind has oscillated between about 6,200 and 8,100.

FIGURE 1.13

Indexed change in organized crime offenses, 2015–2025

Since 2015, retail drug crimes and extortions have risen substantially, while the rates of major offenses and kidnapping and human trafficking have declined.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Part of this improvement since the mid-2010s may be the result of changes in the types of drugs that are produced and trafficked in the country. The increased prevalence of drugs like fentanyl, which are sold as small pills and can be chemically synthesized in small spaces, may be easier to covertly produce and traffic than plant-based drugs. Marijuana and heroin, for example, which used to dominate the market, require large tracts of land to grow and are bulkier to move, making them more difficult to hide from authorities.

Often owing to their location along key drug trafficking routes, the states of Colima, Baja California, Querétaro, Sinaloa, and Sonora had the five highest rates of major offenses in 2025, with rates ranging between 15.8 and 44.1 recorded offenses per 100,000 people. In contrast, the southern, eastern, and central states of Veracruz, Mexico State, and Tabasco recorded the lowest rates, with between 0.6 and 1.3 recorded offenses per 100,000 people. Since 2015, Colima has been the state to record the largest deterioration in its rate of major offenses, while Tamaulipas experienced the most significant improvement.

Over the past decade, the national extortion rate has more than doubled. However, the rate peaked in 2022, and in the past three years has experienced modest declines, falling by 12 percent over the period. According to national survey data, monetary losses from the average extortion appear to have risen over the past decade, from around 1,300 pesos per extortion to roughly 6,700 pesos per extortion.[40]

However, this survey data confirms that most instances of extortion result in minimal to no financial losses to the victims. For example, only 10.7 percent of extortion victims report damages that were principally economic, while 51.6 percent report no damages and 36.6 percent report primarily psychological damages.[41]

A major reason for this is that the overwhelming majority of extortions in Mexico are committed through fraudulent phone calls.[42] Such extortions often take the form of 'virtual kidnappings', in which offenders cold-call victims, falsely claim to have a loved one held hostage, and demand a ransom payment. While extortion via phone call is the most prevalent form of extortion, most recipients of these calls are not deceived, with one study finding just a 5.4 percent success rate for criminals.[43]

In contrast, business protection rackets, known as 'cobro de piso', succeed in roughly two-thirds of reported cases.[44] Estimates indicate that approximately one in four small business owners are affected. Victims are typically required to make weekly payments averaging about 500 pesos, with street vendors and market traders particularly vulnerable.[45] Failure to pay on time often leads to intimidation or armed violence.[46]

Another major local revenue source for criminal groups is domestic drug sales. While Mexico has traditionally been seen as a producer or transit point for drugs destined for the United States, its internal drug market has been growing in recent years. Among other metrics, this trend can be seen in the steep rise in its rate of retail drug crimes over the past decade.

Since 2015, retail drug crimes have experienced the largest increase of any indicator in the MPI. It is also the only indicator to have consistently risen each year since 2016. Although the pace of growth appeared to be gradually slowing, in 2025, the rate jumped by 12.1 percent, the most significant uptick since 2019. As such, Mexico recorded a retail drug crimes rate of 78.1 crimes per 100,000 people last year, nearly three times the rate of 26.7 in 2015.

The vast majority of states recorded deteriorations in this sub-indicator, with only six recording improvements. San Luis Potosí recorded by far the worst rate of retail drug crimes in 2025, with 417 crimes per 100,000 people. This represents an 80-fold increase over its rate in 2015. San Luis Potosí's rate is also substantially worse than that of Guanajuato, the second worst performing state, which had the highest rate from 2021 to 2024.

These trends are also reflected in national survey data on drug consumption. Between 2016 and 2025, the share of Mexicans aged 12 to 65 who reported having used any drug at least once in their lifetime increased from 10.3 to 14.4 percent, while lifetime use of illegal drugs rose from 9.9 to 13.1 percent. Cannabis is by far the most widely used illicit drug, with 12 percent of Mexicans reporting using it at some point in their lives, up from 8.6 percent in 2016.[47]

These increases were driven primarily by adults rather than adolescents. Among people aged 18 to 65, lifetime illegal drug use rose from 10.6 percent in 2016 to 14.6 percent in 2025, whereas among adolescents it fell from 6.2 percent to 4.1 percent. Drug use also followed marked regional patterns, with the highest rates concentrated in the northern border regions as well as Mexico City, suggesting that domestic consumption is becoming more entrenched in specific local markets.[48]

Violent Crime

The violent crime indicator comprises four sub-indicators: robbery, assault, family violence, and sexual violence. Since 2015, Mexico's violent crime rate has risen by 12.4 percent, driven by significant increases in the rates of sexual violence and family violence.

As shown in Figure 1.14, violent crime in Mexico peaked in 2018 at a rate of around 2,600 incidents per 100,000 people. In the context of the restrictions on public interactions caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the violent crime rate experienced a sharp decline in 2020 but largely rebounded between 2021 and 2024. However, it once again dropped notably in 2025, falling to a rate of around 2,300 crimes per 100,000 people.

This decline in the violent crime rate was entirely the result of reductions in the frequency of robberies. After rising between 2015 and 2018, they declined in each of the next seven years. By 2025, they had fallen to less than half of their 2018 levels. This trend is confirmed by national survey data, which shows robberies have declined markedly over the past seven years. Historically, robberies on the street or on public transportation were the most common form of crime that Mexicans reported experiencing in their everyday lives.[49]

Mexico State has recorded the highest robbery rate in the country for most of the past 11 years, including each year since 2020. Much of this crime takes place in the greater Mexico City area, as Mexico City itself has also consistently recorded among the top three worst robbery rates in the country. Despite Mexico State registering a 20 percent decline in robberies last year, its rate was more than 14 percent higher than the state with the second highest rate, Sinaloa, whose rate jumped by 73.5 percent last year.

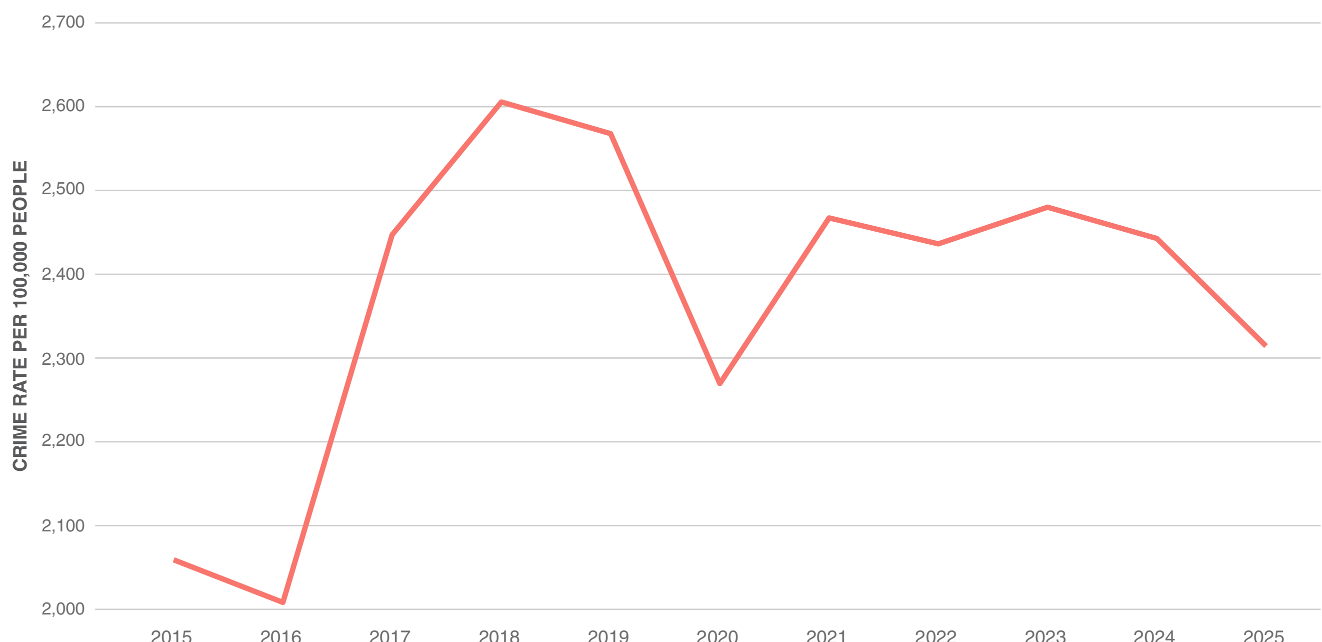
For the sixth year in a row, Yucatán recorded the best violent crime score in the country. This was driven by it registering the lowest robbery and assault rates, and the second lowest family violence and sexual violence rates. In contrast, the neighboring state of Quintana Roo recorded the worst violent crime score for the third year in a row. This was the result of it recording the highest sexual violence rate in the country, the third highest family violence and assault rates, and the sixth highest robbery rate.

As shown in Figure 1.15, robbery used to be by far the most prevalent type of violent crime in Mexico. However, as a result of the substantial reductions over the past seven years, coupled with a doubling of the family violence rate since 2015, family

FIGURE 1.14

Overall violent crime rate, 2015–2025

The national rate of violent crime dropped by 5.3 percent in 2025, a change driven by the continued decline in the robbery rate.



Source: SESNSP, INEGI, IEP calculations

violence became the most common type of violent crime for the first time in 2025. There were approximately 720 family violence crimes per 100,000 people last year, while robbery and assault each had rates of around 660 incidents per 100,000 people.

Family violence and sexual violence represent the two violent crime sub-indicators most associated with violence against women. Gender-based violence in Mexico is deeply rooted in *machismo*, impunity, and socio-cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination against women.[50]

Family violence and sexual violence have both seen troubling trends over the past decade. While the family violence rate has more than doubled, the sexual violence rate experienced even more dramatic increases, rising by 176 percent since 2015.

National survey data indicates that seven in ten women over the age of 15 report experiencing some form of violence in their lifetimes, including 39.9 percent who had suffered abuse from a partner. Half of women aged 15 and older reported experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lives, and 23.3 percent in the 12 months prior to the survey. Young girls are also disproportionately victimized by these types of crimes, with girls between the ages of five and nine being three times more likely to be sexually abused than boys, while girls between 15 and 17 years old are abused eight times more often than boys of the same age.[51]

Impunity and weak institutional responses remain major obstacles to preventing and prosecuting gender-based violence in Mexico. Around 93 percent of sexual violence cases are either not reported or do not lead to an investigation. Many victims choose not to file complaints due to fears of retaliation and a lack of trust in authorities.[52] In addition to perceptions of institutional inefficiency or indifference, documented cases show that gender bias within law enforcement and prosecutors' offices can hinder access to justice by placing blame on victims rather than holding perpetrators accountable.[53]

Despite the severity of violence against women in Mexico, some positive developments have emerged in recent years. Although the rate of family violence has more than doubled since 2015, last year marked the first improvement in this sub-indicator since the index was created, declining by two percent. Furthermore, despite the sharp rise in sexual violence over the past decade, the rate peaked in 2021 and has gradually declined since, falling by 15.4 percent overall.

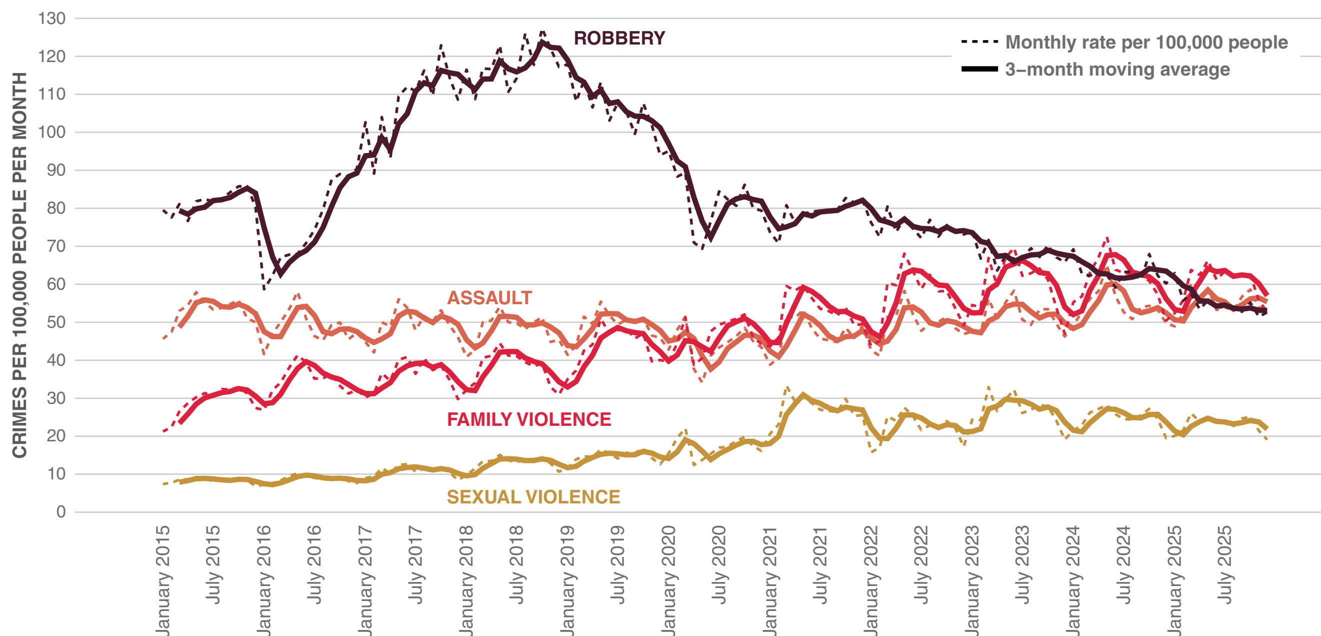
Significant recent gains in women's representation in government have also improved prospects for stronger institutional responses to gender-based violence. The country has implemented reforms to strengthen protections for women, including measures addressing violence, pay discrimination, and other forms of vulnerability. Some reforms require public security and investigative institutions to operate with a gender perspective and mandate that public prosecutors' offices establish specialized units to handle cases involving violence against women.[54]

While these developments are encouraging, regional bodies have recommended additional reforms and innovations to more effectively address violence against women. These include improving data collection and information systems, strengthening prevention through greater investment in education and public awareness campaigns that challenge harmful gender norms, expanding access to protection and support services, and reducing impunity through better resourced and more effective investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial processes.[55]

FIGURE 1.15

Monthly violent crime rates, by sub-indicators, 2015–2025

In the late 2010s, the rate of family violence was significantly lower than the assault rate and far lower than the robbery rate. In 2025, however, family violence surpassed both these categories to become the most common form of violent crime.



Source: SESNSP, INEGI, IEP calculations

Firearms Crime

Firearms have been a principal driver of Mexico's widespread increases in homicides over the past decade. More than 225,000 people have been killed with guns in the past decade. However, last year saw the largest improvement in firearms crime on record.

The firearms crime indicator comprises two sub-indicators: homicides committed with a firearm and assaults committed with a firearm. It is noteworthy that the deterioration of the firearms crime indicator has been primarily driven by homicides and much less by assaults. Since 2015, the rate of homicides with a firearm has increased by 54.5 percent, while the rate of assaults with a firearm has increased by only 22.5 percent. These trends are reflected in Figure 1.16.

These trends align with the fact that lethal, firearm-powered cartel conflicts have led to Mexico's major deteriorations in peacefulness in the past decade, while more commonplace forms of crime and violence – whether involving guns or not – have shown less change.56 The proportion of homicides committed with a firearm has increased substantially, from 57.4 percent in 2015 to 74.1 percent in 2025, the highest rate on record.

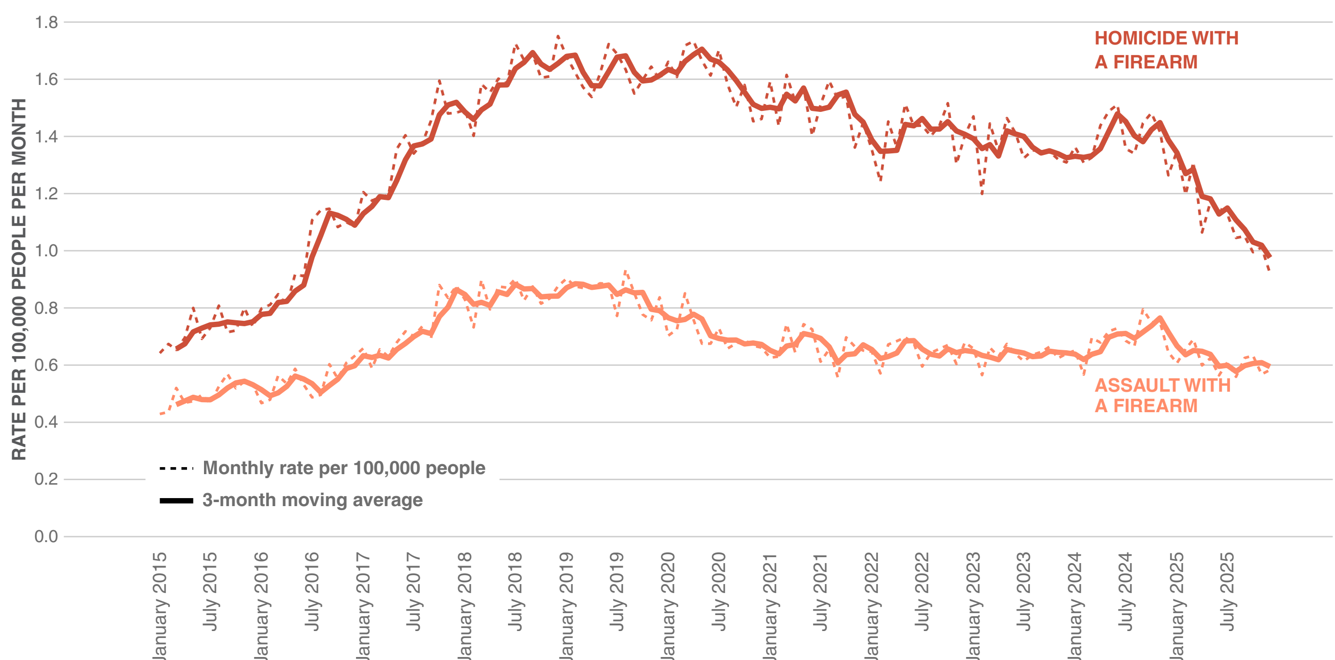
While Mexico has seen long-term deteriorations in its firearms crime score, this indicator has generally been marked by distinct trends over the past 11 years. Between 2015 and 2019, firearms crimes increased precipitously, but the next four saw modest but consistent decreases. In 2024, the rate again saw an uptick of 4.5 percent, but last year it resumed its downward trajectory, falling by 17.4 percent, the largest drop since the inception of the index. This was driven by notable declines in both homicides and assaults involving firearms.

Despite registering a 27 percent reduction last year, Colima had the highest rate of firearms crime in the country for the fourth year in a row, with 68.9 incidents per 100,000 people. Virtually all of these crimes were homicides, as Colima actually had one of the lowest assault with a firearm rates in the country. More than nine in ten killings in Colima were carried out with guns last year, the highest proportion of any state. Colima is also the state that experienced the largest deterioration in firearms crime in the past 11 years.

FIGURE 1.16

Monthly firearms crime rates, 2015–2025

Despite recently recording large declines, homicides with a firearm remain more common than assaults with a firearm.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

For the ninth year in a row, Yucatán had the lowest firearms crime rate in Mexico. With just 0.3 incidents per 100,000 people, its rate was more than 60 times lower than the national rate and more than four times lower than the rate of the second-best ranking state, Coahuila. This was driven by Yucatán's low number of homicides with a firearm. The state had the lowest overall homicide rate in Mexico last year, and only 4.7 percent of these killings were carried out with guns, the smallest proportion in the country.

Durango has experienced the largest improvement in firearms crime since 2015; its rate fell by 75.7 percent. Last year, Chiapas experienced the largest relative decline in firearms crime rate of any state, after experiencing an upsurge of gun violence in 2024. Its rate fell from 12.4 to 4.4 firearms crimes per 100,000 people, a 64.9 percent decline.

A major factor contributing to the prevalence of firearms crime in Mexico is the illicit trafficking of guns from the United States. While civilian gun ownership is legally permitted in Mexico, it is highly restricted and regulated, with background checks required and only a single store in the country authorized to sell firearms to civilians.[57] To bypass these controls, criminal networks rely on trafficking pipelines in which intermediaries in the United States purchase weapons legally and then transfer them to cartel representatives.58 Mexican authorities have estimated that at least half a million firearms are smuggled across the border each year,[59] including military-grade weapons that have intensified cartel conflicts and confrontations with security forces.[60]

Tracing conducted by the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has consistently found that at least two-thirds of firearms recovered at Mexican crime scenes were trafficked from the United States.[61] Roughly three-quarters of these originate in southwestern border states such as Texas and Arizona, and they are often moved south along established drug smuggling corridors into states like Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, and Guanajuato.[62] The growing availability of trafficked firearms has coincided with Mexico's sharp increases in lethal violence over the past decade.

Fear of Violence

The fear of violence indicator measures the extent to which citizens view the state where they live as unsafe. The indicator draws on the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE), which annually surveys more than 100,000 Mexican households on a range of issues related to their experiences and perceptions of crime and public safety.

Since 2015, roughly three-quarters of Mexicans have reported feeling unsafe in their state, although this share has fluctuated over time, as illustrated in Figure 1.17. Perceptions of insecurity reached their highest level in 2018. After declining gradually for several years, they rose again in 2025, when 75.6 percent of citizens reported feeling unsafe.

In the past decade, levels of fearfulness rose in 21 states and fell in 11 states. Coahuila has had the largest improvement since 2015; the number of residents who regard the state as unsafe has halved, falling from 74.9 to 37.7 percent of the population. The second largest improvement occurred in Baja California Sur, where feelings of unsafety fell by 24.4 percentage points. These two states recorded the best fear of violence scores in the country in 2025.

In contrast, Colima and Guanajuato have seen the largest increases in fearfulness in the past decade, each seeing 24-25 percentage point rises since 2015. Last year, Sinaloa saw by far the greatest increase in fear levels, with the proportion of residents regarding the state as unsafe rising from 54.9 to 80.5 percent.

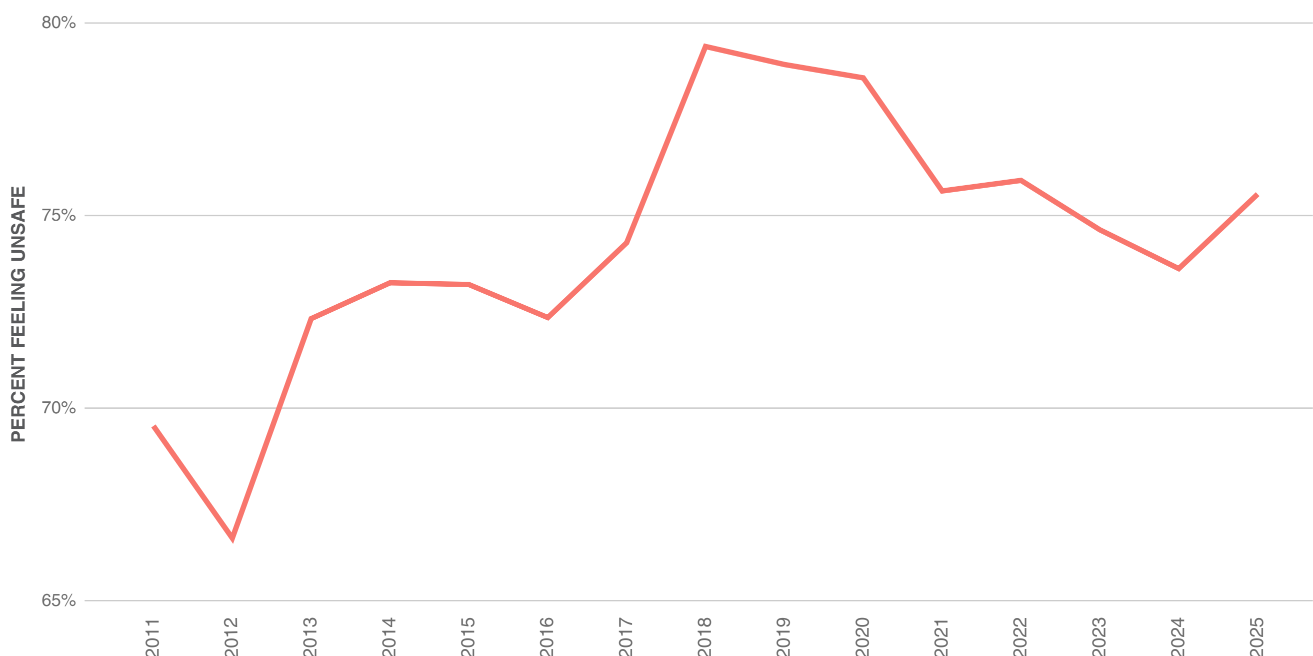
National trends in perceptions of insecurity have generally – though not exactly – followed changes in the country's overall peace score. Like the overall peace score in Mexico, the fear of violence score in Mexico got rapidly worse beginning in 2016, deteriorating by 7.4 percent in the next two years and then gradually improving after 2018. This reciprocal relationship is reflective of IEP's underlying definition of peace, which comprises both the absence of external manifestations of violence as well as the absence of fearfulness about violence.[63]

Figure 1.18 shows states by their fear of violence scores in 2025, along with their overall MPI scores. For the past three years, Baja California Sur has had the best fear of violence score in the country; in 2025, only 37.4 percent of residents reported that they felt unsafe in the state. From 2015 to 2022, Yucatán topped the list, but it is now ranked third after Coahuila.

FIGURE 1.17

Percentage of people fearing violence in their state of residence, 2011–2025

The proportion of people feeling unsafe peaked in 2018 at 79.4 percent and has fallen in the years since.

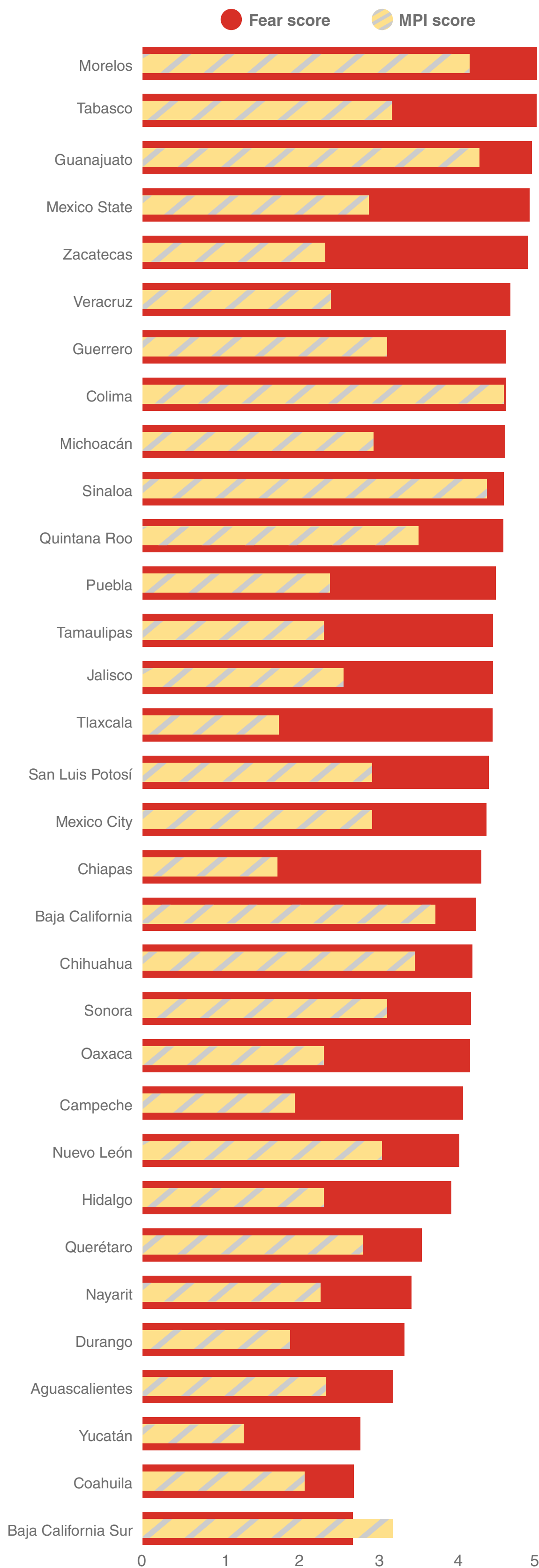


Source: INEGI

FIGURE 1.18

Peace scores and fear of violence, by state, 2025

Baja California Sur is the only state whose peace score is worse than its fear of violence score. Last year, Tlaxcala recorded the largest discrepancy between the two, with a fear of violence score of 4.4 and an overall MPI score of 1.7.



Source: IEP
Note: A higher score denotes a lower level of peacefulness.

For the second year in a row, Morelos recorded the highest fear of violence levels, with 90.1 percent of the population regarding the state as unsafe. It was followed by Tabasco, with 89.8 percent. Other states with extremely high fear of violence levels are Guanajuato, Mexico State, and Zacatecas, with more than 87 percent of the residents of each regarding their state as unsafe.

The figure also demonstrates that states' fear of violence scores tend to be worse than their overall peace scores, with only one state – Baja California Sur – registering worse MPI scores. There is generally a strong correlation between lower levels of peacefulness and higher levels of fear. However, several states score notably worse in this indicator than in overall peace, suggesting that citizens' perceptions of insecurity are substantially higher than recorded levels of crime and violence.

With a fear of violence score of 4.4 and an overall MPI score of 1.7, Tlaxcala recorded the largest discrepancy on this front. Last year, Tlaxcala experienced the second largest rise in fear levels of any state, with the rate jumping from 63.3 to 77.3 percent of the population. After Tlaxcala, Chiapas had the next largest discrepancy, though fear levels declined slightly in the state last year.

Despite recording very large improvements in peacefulness since 2022, Zacatecas had the third largest discrepancy between fear of violence levels and overall peace levels. This dynamic suggests that reductions in the outward manifestations of violence may take time to translate into improved perceptions of safety, with residents continuing to feel unsafe even as objective conditions improve. In the case of Zacatecas, several years of extreme violence – particularly between 2020 and 2022 – have likely created durable perceptions of insecurity, meaning public sentiment may remain pessimistic even after some conditions appear to improve.

The role of the media in intensifying perceptions of insecurity cannot be overlooked. Multiple studies have demonstrated that coverage of violent crime by the news media often misrepresents its true prevalence, as well as the actual threat of victimization. As a result, a significant relationship has been found between consumption of media and fear of violence. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that organized crime groups exploit the media's fixation on violence to promote their activities and purposefully spread fear.[64]

The relationship between overall levels of peacefulness and perceptions of safety is a multifaceted one. Global survey data has revealed, for example, that across an array of domains with the potential to cause a person harm – including road accidents, severe weather, food and water risks, and workplace hazards – violence elicits the most disproportionate levels of worry relative to actual experience. Research has shown that threats that are perceived as unpredictable or uncontrollable tend to elicit higher levels of fear than those over which people feel a greater sense of control and agency. This helps explain why violent crime, more than other potential sources of harm, generates higher levels of fear.[65]

2 | Economic Value of Peace

Key Findings

Last year, the economic impact of violence in Mexico was four trillion pesos (US$220 billion), or around 11 percent of the country's GDP.

The economic impact of violence fell by 11.4 percent in 2025, equivalent to 514 billion pesos.

In relative and absolute terms, this is the greatest reduction in the cost of violence in the history of the MPI.

19% ↖

Since 2015, the total cost of violence has increased by 19 percent, or 639 billion pesos.

Last year, the largest declines in the economic impact of violence were from the total cost of homicides, which fell by 382 billion pesos, and from reduced spending on national security and the military, which fell by 89 billion pesos.

Domestic security **31.8%** ↘

Justice system **8.4%** ↘

From 2015 to 2025, spending on domestic security fell by 31.8 percent, while justice system spending declined by 8.4 percent.

Over the course of 2025, the incarcerated population in Mexico rose by more than 20,000 inmates, or 8.9 percent. In both absolute and relative terms, this is the largest increase on record.

Mexico has only about two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, around one-seventh of the global average, severely limiting judicial capacity and contributing to case backlogs and unsentenced detainees.

However, across categories of public expenditure on violence containment, spending on the justice system was the only one to record an increase in 2025.

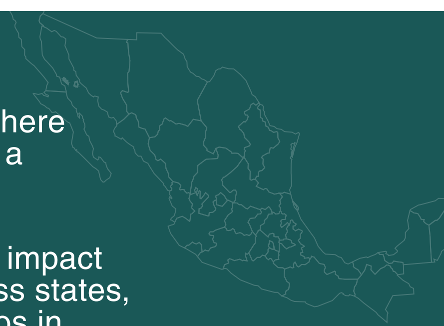
By December 2025, the total incarcerated population exceeded 256,000, the highest end-of-year figure ever recorded. The economic impact of this increase, both on public spending and on lost economic activity, will be more fully reflected in future cost estimates.

Violent crime accounted for 35.5 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, equivalent to 1.4 trillion pesos.

Protection costs peaked in 2020, though they remained 7.6 percent higher in 2025 than in 2015.

30,036 pesos

At 30,036 pesos per person in 2025, the economic impact of violence was nearly double the average monthly salary in Mexico.



The economic impact of violence stood out in Guerrero and Morelos, where it represented more than a third of the states' GDPs.

The per capita economic impact varied considerably across states, ranging from 10,785 pesos in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos in Colima.

24 states ↖ **8** states ↘

Since 2015, 24 states have seen the economic impact of violence increase, on average by 50.6 percent, while just eight states recorded decreases, with an average decline of 23.8 percent.

Economic Impact of Violence in 2025

The economic disruptions stemming from violence and the fear of violence are substantial. Violent incidents give rise to costs in the form of property damage, physical injury and psychological trauma. Fear of violence also alters economic behavior, primarily by changing investment and consumption patterns, which diverts public and private resources away from productive activities and towards protective measures. These generate significant losses in the form of productivity shortfalls and foregone earnings. Therefore, measuring the scale and cost of violence has important implications for assessing its effects on economic activity.

In 2025, Mexico's estimated economic impact of violence amounted to four trillion pesos (US$220 billion). This figure is equivalent to about 11 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP), or 30,036 pesos per person, nearly double the average monthly salary in Mexico.[1]

Last year, the economic impact of violence fell by 11.4 percent, or 514 billion pesos. In relative and absolute terms, this is the greatest reduction in the cost of violence in the history of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI). The peak of the economic impact of violence occurred in 2021, at approximately 4.7 trillion pesos. An overview of the economic costing model is provided in Box 2.1, and a full explanation is provided in Section 3.

BOX 2.1

The economic impact of violence definition and model

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic effect related to containing, preventing, and responding to the consequences of violence. It comprises the **economic cost of violence** – both direct and indirect – plus a multiplier effect (Table 2.1).

- The total economic impact of violence includes:
- The direct cost of violence
- The indirect cost of violence
- The multiplier effect

Direct costs are incurred by the victim, the perpetrator and the government. These include medical expenses, policing costs and expenses associated with the justice system. **Indirect costs** accrue after the fact and include the current value of long-term costs arising from incidents of crime, such as lost future income and physical and psychological trauma.

The **multiplier effect** represents the economic benefits that would have been generated if all relevant expenditure had been directed into more productive alternatives.

TABLE 2.1

Components of the economic impact of violence model

The economic impact of violence comprises the economic cost of violence plus a multiplier effect.

IMPACT			COMMENTARY
Economic impact of violence	Economic cost of violence	i) Direct costs	Costs directly attributable to violence or its prevention
		ii) Indirect costs	Medium- and long-term losses arising from acts of violence
	iii) Multiplier effect		Economic benefits forgone by investing in violence containment and not in other more productive activities.

Source: IEP

TABLE 2.2

The economic impact of violence, billions of pesos, 2025

Last year, the total economic impact from violence amounted to four trillion pesos.

INDICATOR	DIRECT	INDIRECT	MULTIPLIER EFFECT	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE
Homicide	157.7	1,035.9	157.7	1,351.2
Violent crime	260.1	900.8	260.1	1,420.9
Fear of violence	-	63.3	-	63.3
Protection costs	221.2	-	221.2	442.4
Military and national security spending	172.1	-	172.1	344.3
Domestic security spending	54.7	-	54.7	109.4
Justice system and incarceration spending	131.6	10.8	131.6	273.9
Total	**997.4**	**2,010.7**	**997.4**	**4,005.4**

Source: IEP

A full breakdown of the 2025 economic impact of violence estimates is presented in Table 2.2. This outlines the direct costs, the indirect costs, and the multiplier effect for each indicator that, combined, gives the total economic impact of violence.

Last year's reduction in the economic impact of violence was driven by the steep drop in the number of homicides. As a result, costs associated with homicides fell by 22.1 percent, or 382 billion pesos. Because of this decline, the violent crime category became the costliest component of the model for the first time since 2015, despite it also registering a 4.5 percent drop in cost.

Of the seven components of the model, three – homicides, national security spending, and violent crime – recorded sizable decreases in cost last year. Three others – justice system and incarceration spending, protection costs, and fear of violence – recorded modest increases, while domestic security spending remained virtually unchanged.

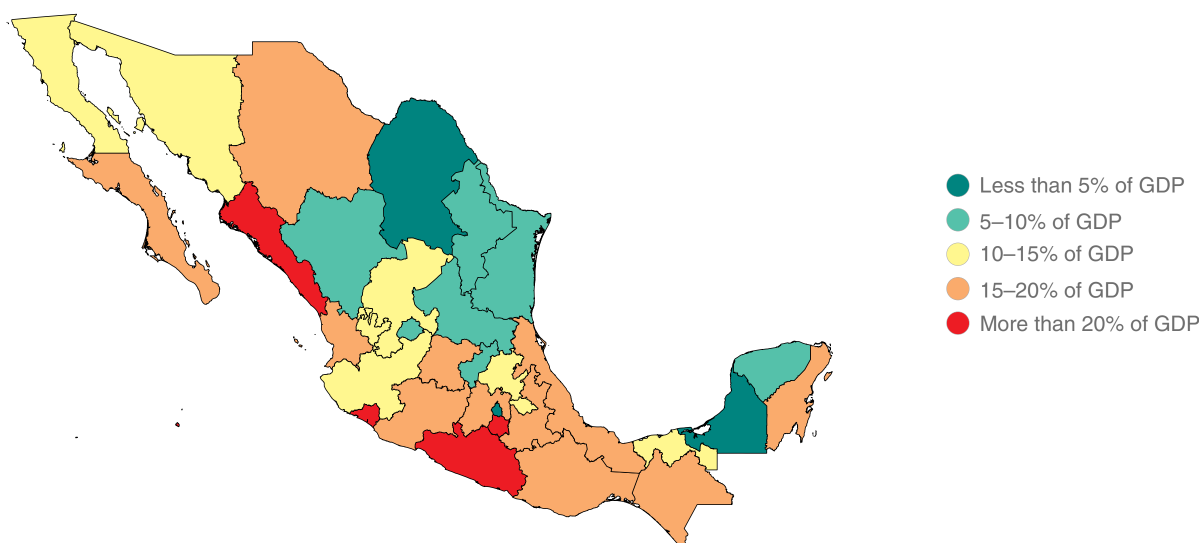
It is noteworthy that costs associated with protection and the fear of violence continued to rise, despite the substantial improvement in peacefulness last year. This likely reflects how both perceptions of safety and risk-mitigation behaviors are shaped more by longer-term experiences of insecurity than by immediate conditions.

As shown in Figure 2.1, there is substantial variation in the economic impact of violence as a percentage of state GDP. Four states – Guerrero, Morelos, Colima, and Sinaloa – had economic impacts equivalent to more than 20 percent of their GDPs. In contrast, in Campeche, Coahuila, and Mexico City, the cost represented less than five percent of state GDP.

FIGURE 2.1

Economic impact of violence by state, percentage of state's GDP, 2025

The economic impact of violence ranges from 4.3 percent of GDP in Campeche to 33.8 percent in Guerrero and Morelos.



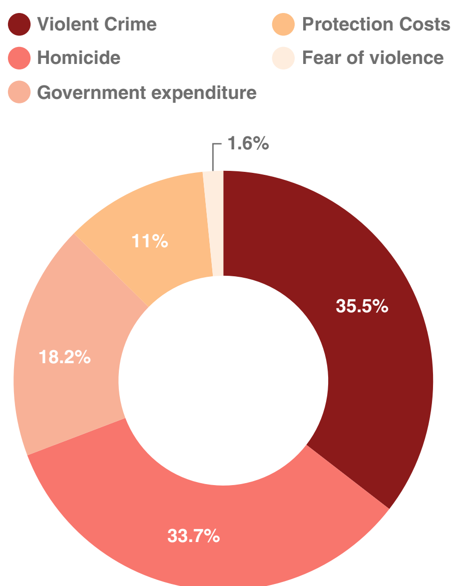
Source: IEP

The share of the total economic impact of violence in 2025 by category is illustrated in Figure 2.2. The costs associated with homicide and violent crime in Mexico are significantly greater than government expenditure on violence containment. In 2025, 29.2 percent of Mexico's economic impact from violence was in government expenditures and private protection expenditures, while 70.8 percent was associated with homicide, violent crime, and the fear of violence. This differs significantly from global metrics, in which around four-fifths of the economic impact stems from government and private expenditures on containing and preventing violence.[2] Moreover, federal spending on violence containment in Mexico (358 billion pesos) represents just 5.2 percent of all federal government spending. In contrast, healthcare and education represent, respectively, 13.7 and 15.4 percent of federal government spending.

FIGURE 2.2

Breakdown of the economic impact of violence, 2025

Homicide, violent crime, and the fear of violence represent more than 70 percent of the economic impact of violence.



Source: IEP

Violent crime – including robbery, assault, sexual violence, and firearm crimes – accounted for 35.5 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, costing the country over 1.4 trillion pesos. This is equivalent to 4.4 percent of Mexico's GDP. By contrast, in the global economic impact of violence model, violent crime accounted for 3.1 percent of the total, or about 0.4 percent of global GDP.[3]

Similarly, homicide in Mexico represented 33.7 percent of the economic impact of violence in 2025, costing the country just under 1.4 trillion pesos, or 4.2 percent of GDP. But in the global model, homicide accounted for 5.7 percent of the total economic impact of violence, or 0.7 percent of global GDP.

Federal government spending on activities aimed at reducing violence – domestic security, the military, and the justice system – amounted to 728 billion pesos, or 18.2 percent of the total economic impact. Also included in government spending is the economic impact of incarceration, calculated as the lost wages of those imprisoned. Prisoners' lost wages are assumed to equal the Mexican minimum wage of 100,368 pesos per year in 2025. In 2025, the indirect cost of incarceration was estimated at 10.8 billion pesos.

Also captured in the economic impact model are the costs households and businesses incur in protecting themselves from crime and violence. Protection costs amounted to 442 billion pesos in 2025, or 11 percent of the total economic impact.[4] This indicator includes insurance, private security spending, the cost of firearms for protection, changing place of residence or business due to violence, and the installation of alarms, locks, doors, windows, bars and fences. Protection costs peaked in 2020 and have fallen over the past several years.

Fear of violence accounts for the remaining 1.6 percent of economic losses. Fear of violence affects consumer and business behavior, which in turn causes economic losses. These losses were calculated at 63 billion pesos in 2025.[5]

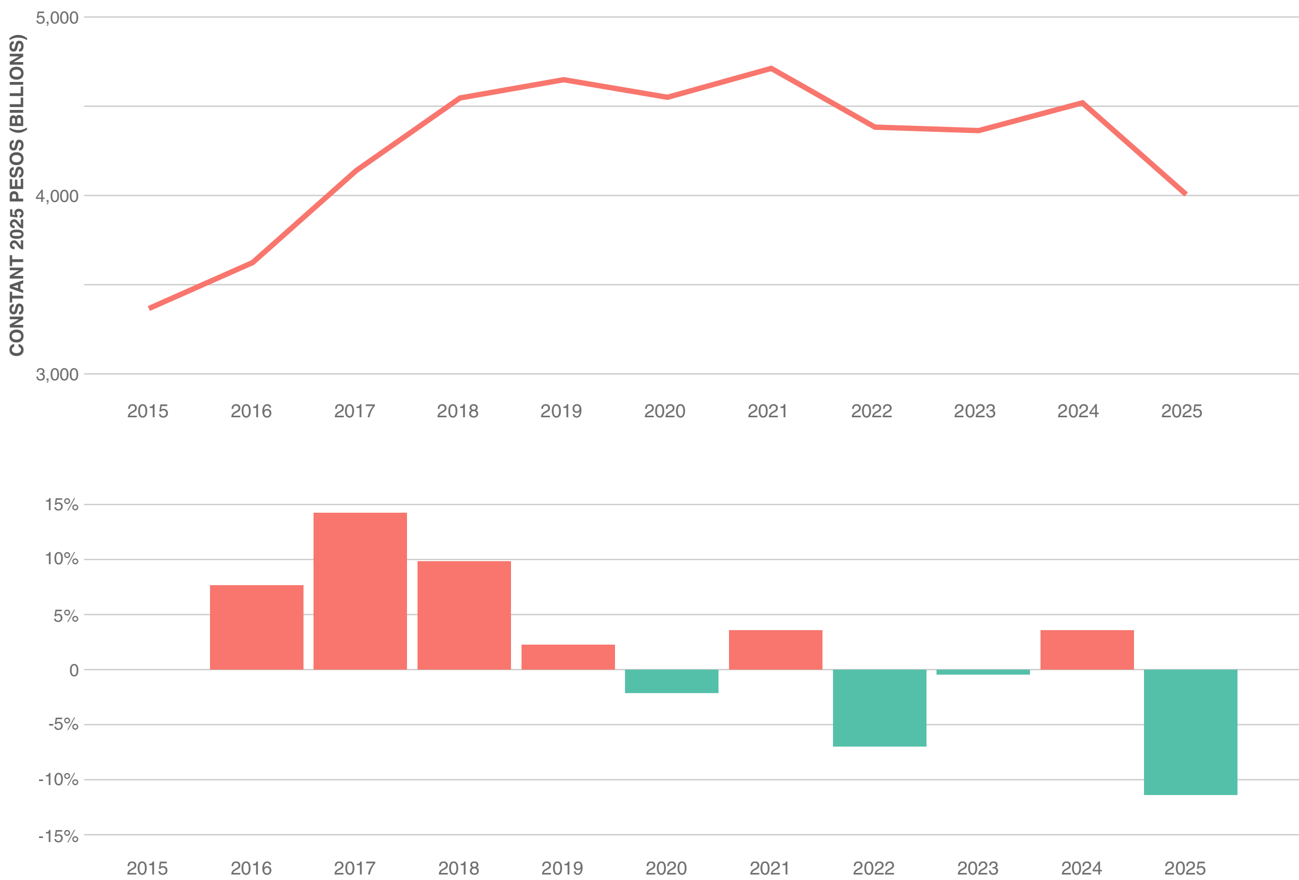
Trends in the Economic Impact of Violence

Since 2015, the economic impact of violence in Mexico has risen by 19 percent, reflecting the overall deterioration in peacefulness in Mexico over the same period. However, as shown in Figure 2.3, the economic impact has fallen since its 2021 peak, dropping by 15 percent in the past four years. The trends by cost category are illustrated in Table 2.3.

FIGURE 2.3

Trend in the economic impact of violence and year-on-year percentage changes, 2015–2025

Last year marked the largest decline on record in the cost of violence in Mexico.



Source: IEP

TABLE 2.3

Trend in the economic impact of violence, billions of pesos, 2015–2025

Costs associated with homicides and violent crime have seen the largest increases over the past decade, while domestic security and judicial system expenses were the only cost items to decline since 2015.

INDICATOR	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	ABSOLUTE CHANGE: 2015–2025	PERCENTAGE CHANGE: 2015–2025
Homicide	1,027	1,300	1,662	1,944	2,002	1,994	1,928	1,793	1,715	1,734	1,351	324	31.6%
Violent Crime	1,093	1,042	1,267	1,365	1,366	1,253	1,505	1,410	1,518	1,488	1,421	328	30.0%
Fear of violence	55	55	57	61	62	62	61	62	61	61	63	8	14.3%
Protection Costs	411	465	465	463	509	525	476	418	405	429	442	31	7.6%
National security spending	320	295	279	284	322	344	390	353	317	433	344	24	7.5%
Domestic security spending	161	142	125	126	109	103	94	87	88	110	109	51	31.8%
Justice system spending and incarceration	299	324	285	303	279	269	259	261	259	264	274	25	8.4%
TOTAL	3,366	3,624	4,140	4,546	4,649	4,550	4,712	4,383	4,364	4,519	4,005	639	19.0%

Source: IEP
Note: Values are in constant 2025 pesos.

The costs of violence in Mexico can be grouped into three broad categories: government expenditure on violence containment, criminal and interpersonal violence costs, and personal and business protection costs. Figure 2.4 traces the trends across these three categories. The category that experienced by far the biggest increase in cost was criminal and interpersonal violence, which includes violent crime, homicides, and the fear of violence. Between 2015 and 2021, criminal and interpersonal violence costs rose by 60.6 percent, but since that peak, they have fallen by 18.8 percent. On balance, they rose 30.3 percent over the course of the decade.

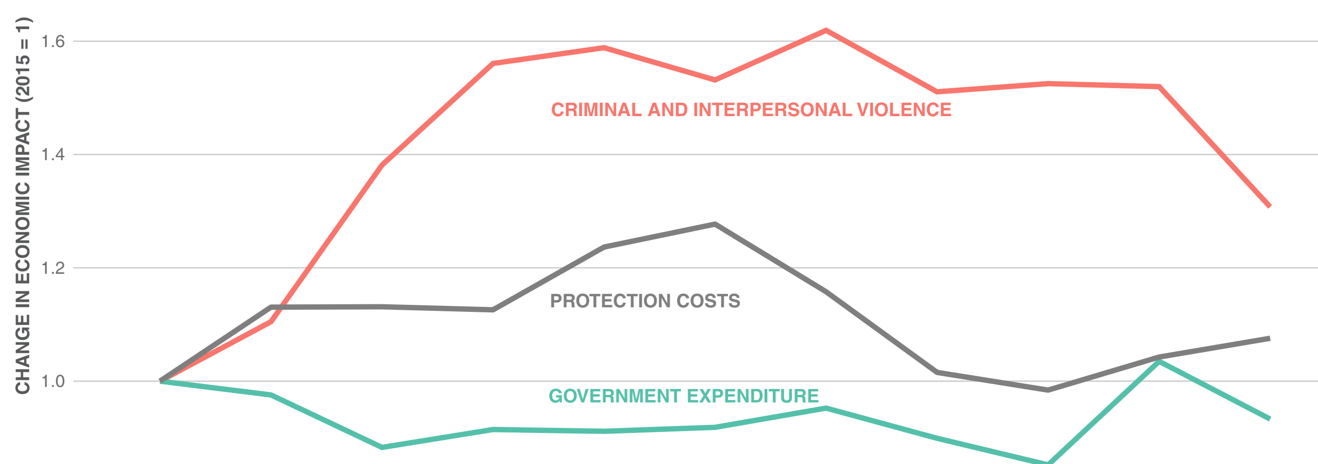
Until 2023, federal government spending on violence containment remained below its 2015 level. In 2024, a major uptick in military and national security spending caused government spending to surpass this level. However, last year, national security spending dropped back down again, driving an overall decline in government expenditure.

Protection costs have also risen in economic impact terms, increasing by 7.6 percent since 2015. However, since peaking in 2020, they have dropped significantly. Protection costs are an aggregate of surveyed responses on expenditures made by businesses and citizens to protect themselves and are sourced from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE). Business expenditures include higher insurance premiums and installing additional locks, alarms, video surveillance cameras and tracking devices.

FIGURE 2.4

Indexed trend in the economic impact of violence, 2015–2025

Costs associated with criminal and interpersonal violence dropped dramatically last year, despite remaining substantially higher than their 2015 levels.



Source: IEP

Economic Impact of Violence by State

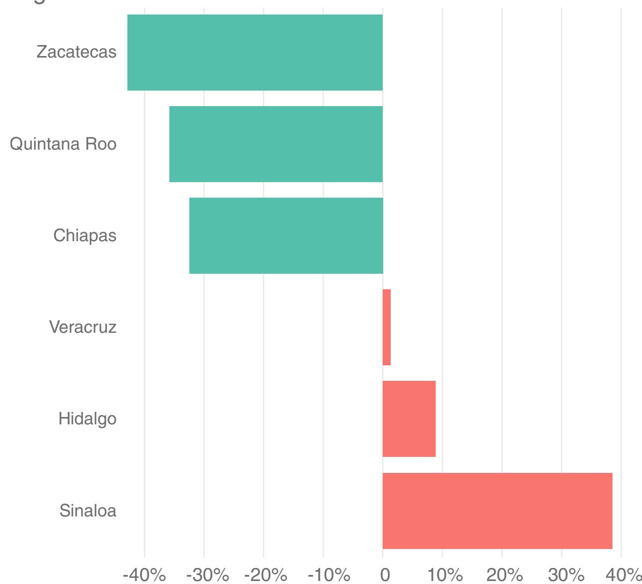
Last year, only three states recorded increases in the economic impact of violence, while 29 recorded decreases. As shown in Figure 2.5, Sinaloa registered by far the most substantial increase, with a 38.5 percent rise. This was driven by the dramatic increase in homicides in the state last year. It was followed by Hidalgo and Veracruz, where the economic impact of violence rose by 8.9 and 1.3 percent, respectively.

In contrast, for the second year in a row, Zacatecas recorded the most substantial decline in the economic impact of violence, with a 42.8 percent decline. This change was also driven by a change in homicides, with Zacatecas's homicide rate falling by more than 70 percent last year. Quintana Roo had the second most significant reduction in the economic impact of violence, with a 35.7 percent drop, and Chiapas had the third, with a 32.4 percent drop.

FIGURE 2.5

Largest state-level increases and decreases in the economic impact of violence, 2024–2025

Only three states recorded increases in the economic impact of violence last year, with Sinaloa recording the largest rise.



Source: IEP calculations

Considerable variation exists in the economic impact of violence between states. Of the 32 Mexican states, Guerrero and Morelos recorded the highest impact as a percentage of their economic output, equivalent to 33.8 percent of the states' respective GDPs. Morelos had the second highest homicide rate in the country last year, while Guerrero had the seventh highest rate. It should also be noted that Guerrero and Morelos are among the poorer states in Mexico, with Guerrero in particular having the second lowest GDP per capita in the country. Table 2.4 lists the five states where the economic impact of violence represents the largest share of state GDP, and the five where it represents the smallest.

Campeche, Coahuila, and Mexico City were the states where the cost of violence was smallest relative to their economic output. In each, the economic impact of violence represented five percent or less of their GDPs. Each of these states ranks in the top half of the MPI in relation to homicide rates. Moreover, each ranks among the five wealthiest states in the country, as measured by GDP per capita.

TABLE 2.4

States most and least economically impacted by violence, 2025

The states most economically impacted by violence are among the least peaceful in the country.

STATE	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (PERCENTAGE OF STATE GDP)
Guerrero	33.8%
Morelos	33.8%
Colima	29.8%
Sinaloa	24.7%
Guanajuato	19.9%
Campeche	4.3%
Coahuila	4.7%
Mexico City	5.0%
Yucatán	5.2%
Tamaulipas	6.6%

Source: IEP

On this note, evaluating the economic impact of violence on a per capita basis reveals a distinct but related pattern. In 2025, the per capita cost ranged from just 10,785 pesos in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos in Colima, meaning that the cost of violence in the country's least peaceful state was nearly seven times higher than in its most peaceful state. Other states with particularly high per capita impacts included Morelos (54,767 pesos), Sinaloa (52,083 pesos), and Baja California Sur (47,632 pesos), reflecting concentrations of violence in smaller populations. In absolute terms, however, the economic impact of violence is concentrated in the country's largest states. Mexico State recorded by far the highest total cost, at 527.6 billion pesos, followed by Guanajuato

(295.6 billion pesos), Jalisco (246.6 billion pesos), and Mexico City (243.3 billion pesos). These figures reflect both population size and economic scale, meaning that even states with moderate per capita costs can incur substantial total losses.

Since 2015, the economic impact of violence has increased in most states, although the scale of change varies significantly. The most significant increases were recorded in Colima (up 156.2 percent), Oaxaca (100.3 percent), and Nayarit (89.1 percent), reflecting sharp deteriorations in violence over the past decade. In contrast, a smaller number of states experienced notable reductions, including Tamaulipas (-43.2 percent), Yucatán (-27.9 percent), and Coahuila (-20 percent), consistent with broader improvements in security conditions. These divergent trends highlight the uneven evolution of violence across Mexico, with some states making sustained progress while others continue to face elevated costs.

TABLE 2.5

Per capita economic impact of violence, 2025

The per capita economic impact of violence varies significantly across states, from 10,785 pesos per person in Yucatán to 70,123 pesos per person in Colima.

RANK	STATE	PER CAPITA ECONOMIC IMPACT (PESOS)	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE: 2015–2025
1	Yucatán	10,785	25.7	-27.9%
2	Chiapas	13,102	80.3	-16.1%
3	Tlaxcala	17,932	26.1	8.7%
4	Durango	17,258	33.5	-35.6%
5	Campeche	25,019	27.0	55.1%
6	Coahuila	17,189	58.9	-20.0%
7	Nayarit	30,762	42.2	89.1%
8	Oaxaca	25,282	107.3	100.3%
9	Hidalgo	23,629	76.9	43.9%
10	Tamaulipas	17,440	66.1	-43.2%
11	Zacatecas	24,251	41.7	-8.0%
12	Aguascalientes	25,233	38.5	28.6%
13	Puebla	25,500	175.7	25.4%
14	Veracruz	24,083	210.9	69.4%
15	Jalisco	28,061	246.6	29.5%
16	Querétaro	29,125	72.0	50.7%
17	Mexico State	28,928	527.6	-19.9%
18	San Luis Potosí	23,170	68.5	21.8%
19	Mexico City	27,264	243.3	5.1%
20	Michoacán	32,658	162.5	37.7%
21	Nuevo León	29,984	179.2	43.9%
22	Guerrero	37,762	139.9	-19.4%
23	Sonora	39,991	130.0	55.6%
24	Tabasco	33,820	91.4	24.4%
25	Baja California Sur	47,632	42.1	43.7%
26	Chihuahua	46,545	184.6	45.4%
27	Quintana Roo	44,189	84.3	60.8%
28	Baja California	46,090	179.8	22.7%
29	Morelos	54,767	117.4	54.8%
30	Guanajuato	45,678	295.6	78.1%
31	Sinaloa	52,083	170.5	63.4%
32	Colima	70,123	59.1	156.2%
National		**30,036**	**4,005.4**	**19.0%**

Source: IEP
Note: Values are in constant 2025 pesos.

Increases and Decreases in the Economic Impact of Violence

Over the past decade, only eight states have seen the economic impact of violence decrease, while 24 have recorded increases. This has led to the national economic impact of violence being 19 percent higher in 2025 than in 2015. The increases in the economic impact of violence have been much larger in states that were less peaceful to begin with, which has led to an increase in the 'economic impact gap' between the most peaceful and least peaceful states.

Only nine states have recorded improvements in the MPI since 2015, while all remaining states saw their peace scores decline. Table 2.6 displays the economic impact in 2015 and 2025 for the five states with the greatest improvements and the five states with the greatest deteriorations in the MPI over the past decade.

The largest improvement since 2015 was seen in Tamaulipas, which achieved a 43.2 percent reduction in the economic impact of violence. Despite historically being an epicenter of organized crime and a major transport site for drugs into the United States, the state's decline in levels of organized crime drove its improvement in overall peacefulness. Tamaulipas ranked as the fourth least peaceful state in 2015 and as the 10th most peaceful state in 2025. Taken together, the five states with the greatest improvements in peacefulness recorded an average decrease of 29.2 percent in their economic impact of violence since 2015.

In contrast, Colima, Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Morelos, and Quintana Roo were the five states that recorded the largest deteriorations in the MPI. On average, the economic impact of violence in these states increased by 82.7 percent. Colima recorded the largest deterioration and ranks as the least peaceful state in the MPI. Since 2015, its economic impact of violence has increased by more than 150 percent.

TABLE 2.6

The economic impact in the states with the largest improvements and deteriorations in peacefulness, billions of pesos, 2015–2025

On average, the impact of violence fell by an average of 29.2 percent across the five states with the largest improvements in the MPI, while rising by 82.7 percent in the states with largest deteriorations.

STATE	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE			
	2015 (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	2025 (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	ABSOLUTE CHANGE (BILLIONS OF PESOS)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
LARGEST IMPROVEMENTS IN PEACEFULNESS				
Tamaulipas	116.4	66.1	-50.4	-43.2%
Guerrero	173.6	139.9	-33.6	-19.4%
Durango	52.1	33.5	-18.6	-35.6%
Coahuila	73.6	58.9	-14.7	-20.0%
Yucatán	35.6	25.7	-9.9	-27.9%
LARGEST DETERIORATIONS IN PEACEFULNESS				
Colima	23.1	59.1	36.1	156.2%
Guanajuato	166.0	295.6	129.6	78.1%
Sinaloa	104.3	170.5	66.2	63.4%
Morelos	75.8	117.4	41.5	54.8%
Quintana Roo	52.4	84.3	31.9	60.8%

Source: IEP
Note: Values are in constant 2025 pesos.

Government Expenditure on Violence Containment

Accounting for 18.2 percent of Mexico's economic impact, federal government expenditure on containing and responding to violence totaled 728 billion pesos in 2025. Violence containment spending comprises government expenditures in three areas: domestic security, the justice system, and the military and national security. In 2025, expenditure across these three areas fell by 9.8 percent from the previous year.

After accounting for inflation, federal violence containment expenditure has decreased by 6.7 percent since 2015. While government expenditure on the military has risen overall in that time, it experienced a steep decline last year, dropping more than 20 percent from its all-time high in 2024, as shown in Figure 2.6. However, domestic security and judicial system spending have changed less dramatically over the period, though both have experienced reductions in the past decade. Domestic security spending dropped by 31.8 percent since 2015, and judicial system spending dropped by 8.4 percent.

This primarily upward trend in military spending between 2018 and 2024 is notable in that it largely coincided with the expanded use of the military to combat organized crime, which has been a point of concern in recent years.[6] Despite this, as of 2025, Mexico's expenditure on the military is equivalent to about 1.1 percent of its GDP, well under the global average of 2.5 percent.[7]

Mexican public spending on the justice system and domestic security is similarly well below regional and international levels. Mexico spent 0.5 percent of its GDP on the justice system and domestic security in 2025, less than a third of the OECD average, which currently stands at 1.7 percent of GDP. Moreover, the Latin American average on public order and safety spending is 1.5 percent of GDP, also three times that of Mexico.

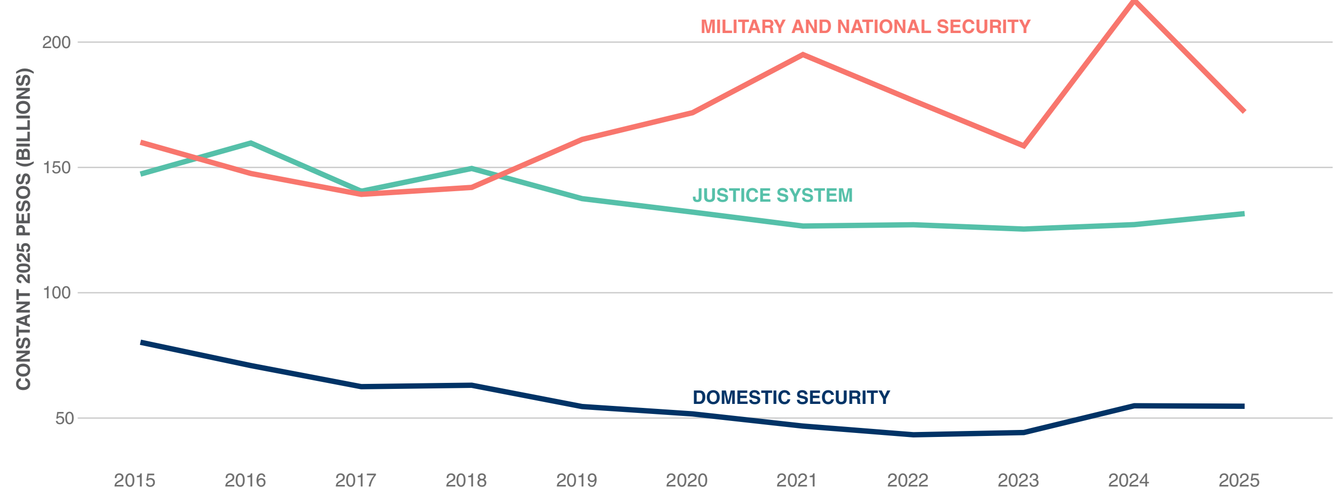
While the two categories associated with security measures may be underfunded, it is investment in the judicial system that appears to be particularly insufficient. Mexico has an average of two judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, one-seventh the global average.[8] This deficit limits the judicial system's capacity to process cases, creating backlogs of unsolved cases and unsentenced detainees. Through greater investment in the judiciary to increase the number of judges, the capacity of Mexico's legal system may improve, leading to reductions in overcrowding in prisons and the number of those incarcerated without sentences. This particularly pressing given that, last year, Mexico experienced a marked rise in incarcerations. The context and drivers of this rise, as well as its future economic implications, are discussed in Box 2.2.

Federal expenditure on domestic security and the justice system by state does not align with the levels of violence as captured by state MPI scores. States such as Sinaloa, Guanajuato, Baja California, and Chihuahua experience high levels of violence, yet they receive below-average per capita funding on domestic security and the justice system. In contrast, Tlaxcala, Durango, Campeche, and Nayarit are comparatively peaceful, yet they receive above-average levels of per capita funding in these areas. Figure 2.7 shows the level of peacefulness and per capita domestic security and justice system expenditure by state.

FIGURE 2.6

Trends in federal government spending on violence containment, 2015–2025

Mexico's expenditure on violence containment peaked in 2024, driven by increases in military spending.

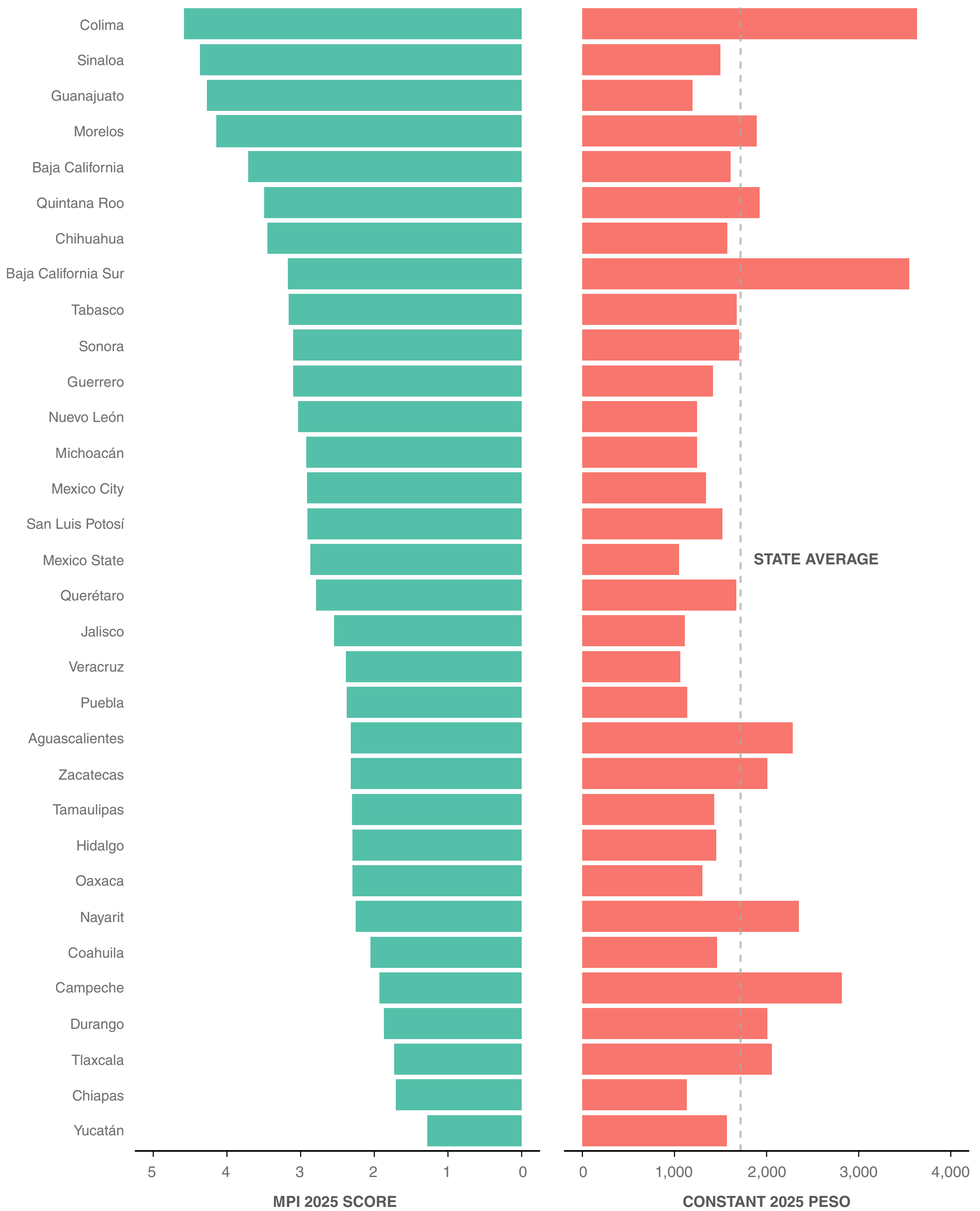


Sources: Mexican Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), IEP calculations

FIGURE 2.7

State MPI scores and per capita expenditure on domestic security and justice, 2025

States that experience the lowest levels of peace do not necessarily receive more federal funding on domestic security and the justice system.



Sources: INEGI, IEP

BOX 2.2

The rise in incarceration in Mexico in 2025

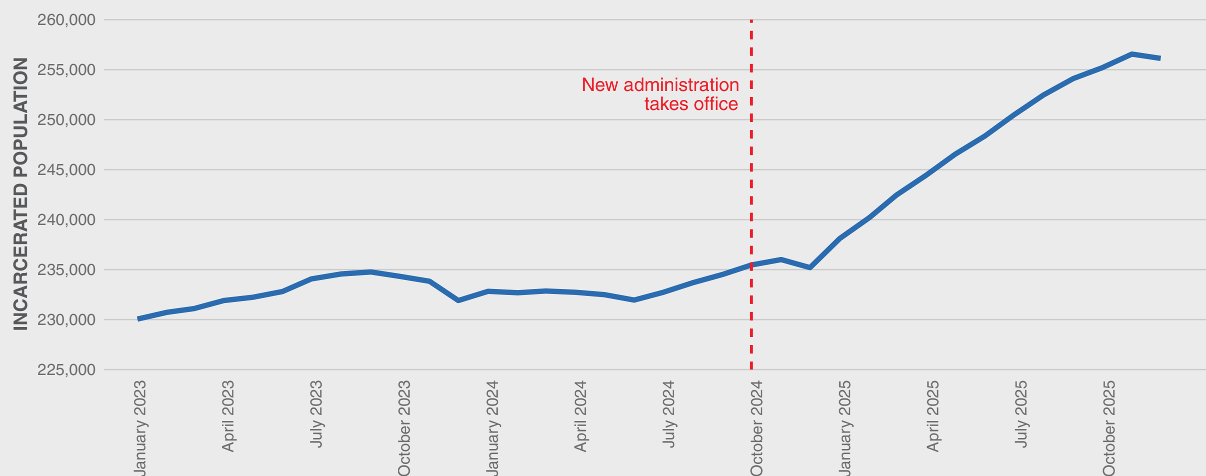
Mexico's prison population rose sharply in 2025, increasing by nearly 21,000 people to exceed 256,000 by year's end, the highest figure on record. As shown in Figure 2.8, the increase began in early 2025, marking a clear break from prior trends. This surge coincided with a broader recalibration of security policy following the transition in federal leadership.

In her first year in office, President Claudia Sheinbaum introduced a strategy focused on strengthening the National Guard, expanding intelligence gathering, improving investigative capacity, and coordinating federal institutions more closely in order to reduce murders, kidnappings, and extortion.[9] The new federal strategy and security leadership contributed to the rise in arrests and detentions over the course of the year.[10]

FIGURE 2.8

Monthly incarcerated population in Mexico, 2023–2025

Starting at the beginning of last year, there was a marked rise in the number of people incarcerated or detained across the country.



Source: Órgano Administrativo Desconcentrado Prevención y Reinserción Social

The increase in incarceration occurred alongside mounting external pressure, specifically from the United States under the Trump administration. This included a push to investigate political links to organized crime, under threat of expanded tariffs on Mexican exports.[11] Such pressure contributed to an environment in which enforcement actions were intensified, particularly against priority cross-border targets.

One of the most visible manifestations of this shift was the launch of 'Operación Frontera Norte' in February 2025. The operation, which focused on combating drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and organized crime in northern border states, resulted in a rapid increase in detentions. Within its first days, authorities reported over one hundred arrests, with the total surpassing 10,000 by December 2025.[12]

At the same time, institutional dynamics within the justice system also contributed to the increase. Following the 2024 judicial reform, which introduced the direct election of judges beginning in 2025, prison admissions substantially exceeded releases last year. It has been suggested that direct elections may favor the selection of judges perceived as less likely to authorize releases, while also increasing ongoing political influence on judicial decision-making around pretrial detention and sentencing.[13]

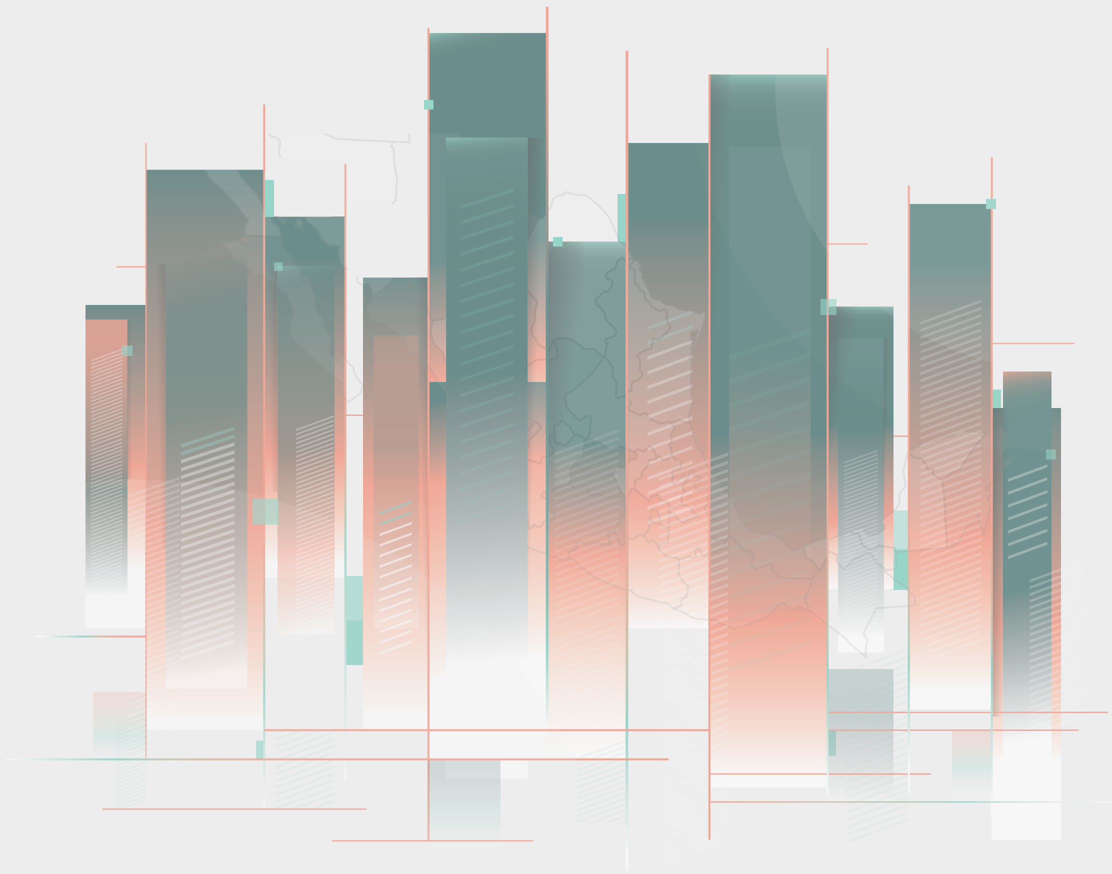
The rapid increase in the incarcerated population carries important economic implications. Current cost estimates are based on incarceration levels at the beginning of the year and therefore do not fully capture the financial impact of the recent surge. However, preliminary analysis suggests that maintaining an additional 21,000 inmates would result in at least one billion pesos in lost economic output annually through forgone labor. Moreover, this does not include the additional direct costs that processing and incarcerating offenders and alleged offenders will entail for the judicial system and domestic security apparatus.

3 | 2026 Mexico Peace Index Methodology

The Mexico Peace Index (MPI) is based on the concepts and framework of the Global Peace Index (GPI), the leading global measure of peacefulness, produced annually by IEP since 2007. As an internal analysis of a single country, the MPI adapts the GPI methodology for a sub-national application. Both indices measure negative peace – that is, the 'absence of violence or fear of violence'.

The 2026 edition is the 13th iteration of the MPI and uses data published by the Executive Secretary of the National System for Public Security (SESNSP), along with the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE) published by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI).

The MPI measures peacefulness at the state level in Mexico. A key reason for choosing this unit of analysis is that Mexico's state governments have wide-ranging autonomous powers, allowing them to have a significant impact on the levels of violence within their states. The response to violence may therefore differ significantly from state to state.



2026 MPI INDICATORS

The MPI is composed of five indicators. The homicide and violent crime indicators are based on those used in the IEP's United Kingdom Peace Index (UKPI) and United States Peace Index (USPI), using the US Federal Bureau of Investigation's standard definition of violent crime. The organized crime indicator is specific to Mexico because of the problems the country faces with organized criminal activity. The firearms crime indicator represents gun use and availability, using the best available data. Lastly, the fear of violence indicator in the MPI captures the degree to which citizens feel unsafe in the states in which they reside.

All crime data used to calculate the MPI comes from government bodies in Mexico. IEP then uses survey data collected by the national statistics office to adjust certain crime figures for underreporting.

DATA SOURCES

The MPI is composed of the following five indicators, scored between 1 and 5, where 1 represents the most peaceful score and 5 the least peaceful. Population data is used for estimating rates per 100,000 people. The data runs from 2015 to 2025.

Homicide

The number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

Violent Crime

The number of cases of robbery, sexual violence, and family violence, and the number of violent assault victims per 100,000 people, adjusted for underreporting. Robbery cases must meet one of two criteria to be included:

- types of robbery that rely on the threat of violence, such as a mugging, or
- robbery incidents where the database indicates violence was used.

Source: SESNSP

Organized Crime

The number of extortions, drug trade related crimes, and kidnapping or human trafficking investigations per 100,000 people. Extortion rates and kidnapping and human trafficking rates are adjusted for underreporting. Drug trade and major organized crime offenses include:

- the federal crimes of production, transport, trafficking, trade, supply, or possession of drugs or other crimes under the Crimes Against Public General Health Law, retail drug crimes, as a proxy indicator of the size of the market fueled by illegal drug production and distribution, and
- crimes classed under the Law Against Organized Crime, which includes all of the above crimes when three or more people conspire to commit them.

Source: SESNSP

Firearms Crime

The number of victims of an intentional or negligent homicide or assault committed with a firearm per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

Fear of Violence

The percentage of people that perceive the state in which they reside as unsafe.

Source: ENVIPE

Population data

The estimated population of each state in each year. Population data is used to calculate the rate per 100,000 people for homicide, violent crime, organized crime and firearms crime.

Source: National Population Council (CONAPO)

UNDERREPORTING

Only about ten percent of crimes in Mexico are reported to the authorities. As such, two of the MPI indicators – violent crime and organized crime – are adjusted for underreporting. IEP uses ENVIPE data to calculate underreporting rates for each state and adjusts the official statistics for robbery, assault, family violence, sexual violence, extortion, and kidnapping and human trafficking to better reflect actual rates of violence. This approach helps to counterbalance the high rates of underreporting in Mexico.

IEP calculated the underreporting rates for each state and crime based on the information from ENVIPE. The survey asks each respondent if they were a victim of a particular type of crime and whether or not they reported it to the authorities. To calculate underreporting rates, IEP uses a rolling five-year window of ENVIPE survey data – for example, 2015 crime data is adjusted using 2011–2015 survey data, 2016 using 2012–2016, and so on through to 2025. IEP totals the number of each crime reported by survey respondents and the number of those crimes that respondents said they reported to the authorities across the five-year window, then divides the former by the latter to produce a multiplier for adjusting the official statistics. The adjustments are made for the crimes of robbery, assault, family violence, sexual violence, extortion, and kidnapping and human trafficking.

The underreporting rates use five years of data because, in some states, there were crimes where none of the victims reported the crime to the authorities. If none of the crimes were reported, a reporting rate of zero percent cannot be used to adjust the police-recorded numbers. Additionally, combining data over a rolling window smooths out large fluctuations in underreporting rates that may result from complex and imperfect surveying methodologies, rather than reflecting a true change in reporting behaviour. Reporting rates have not changed significantly in Mexico over the study period.

Underreporting rate

Definition: Number of crimes reported by victims on the victimization survey divided by the number of those crimes that victims stated they reported to the authorities.

Source: ENVIPE

INDICATOR SCORE AND OVERALL CALCULATIONS

The MPI indicators are scored between 1 and 5, with 5 being the least peaceful score and 1 being the most peaceful score. Banded indicator scores are calculated by normalizing the range of raw values based on each state's average value over the period 2015 to 2025.

First, the average value for each state over all the years of the study is calculated. Then the outliers are removed from the range of average state values in order to identify the minimum and maximum of normally distributed average values. Outliers in this case are defined as data points that are more than three standard deviations greater than the mean. Next, the values for each year are normalized using the minimum and maximum of the normal range and are banded between 1 and 5. The calculation for banded scores is:

$$Banded\ score_x = \left(\frac{raw\ value_x - \ min_{sample}}{max_{sample} - \ min_{sample}} *4 \right) + 1$$

Finally, if any of the banded values are above 5, the state is assigned a score of 5 and if any values are below 1, the state is assigned a score of 1.

There is one additional step used to calculate the organized crime and firearms crime scores. In these cases, the raw values of each crime sub-indicator are multiplied by a sub-weight before being aggregated into the indicator score. The sub-weights are used so that the indicator score reflects the more serious societal impact of particular crimes and to correct for the uneven distribution of offenses. In 2025, extortion and retail drug crimes made up over 90 percent of crimes, which means that the trend in these offenses would overshadow any changes in kidnapping, human trafficking, or major drug crime rates.

Major organized crime offenses, such as drug trafficking and kidnapping and human trafficking have the highest weights in the organized crime score. These crimes reflect more severe acts of violence and provide an indication of the strength and presence of major criminal organizations. Retail drug crimes serve as a proxy indication of the size of the drug market. However, some portion of the retail drug market will represent small individual sellers or reflect personal drug use, both of which are of less concern. Human trafficking and major drug trafficking offenses are more destabilizing to Mexican society because these crimes:

- reflect large revenue sources for criminal organizations
- absorb more human and physical resources into violent, illicit economic activity
- depend upon a greater level of corruption
- indicate the presence of organizations that pose a greater threat to the Mexican state.

In the case of firearms crime, there are also sub-weights for its two sub-indicators. The first sub-indicator, assault with a firearm, is weighted twice as heavily as the second, homicide with a firearm. This sub-weighting is applied to reduce the effects of double-counting with the homicide indicator, as the majority of homicides in Mexico are committed with guns.

After the score for each indicator has been calculated, weights are applied to each of the five indicators in order to calculate the overall MPI score. The overall score is calculated by multiplying each indicator score by its index weight and then summing the weighted indicator scores.

There are many methods for choosing the weights to be applied to a composite index. In order to maintain consistency across IEP's various peace indices, the weights in the MPI mirror those used in the GPI, USPI and UKPI as closely as possible. The weights for the GPI indicators were agreed upon by an international panel of independent peace and conflict experts and are based on a consensus view of their relative importance. To complement this approach and reflect the local context of Mexico, a second expert panel was formed consisting of leading Mexican academics and researchers to determine the weights for the five indicators in the MPI, with minor adjustments in subsequent years.

Information on the MPI's indicators, sub-indicators, weights, and the application of underreporting multipliers are summarized in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1

Composition of the MPI

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT AS % OF OVERALL SCORE	INDICATOR SUB-TYPE	VARIABLES INCLUDED	UNDERREPORTING MULTIPLIER APPLIED	SUB-WEIGHT RELATIVE TO OTHER CRIMES IN THE INDICATOR	SOURCE(S)
Homicide	Intentional homicides per 100,000 people	30%	Homicide	Intentional homicide and femicide	No	-	SESNSP
Violent crime	Assaults, sexual assaults, incidents of family violence, and robberies per 100,000 people	22%	Assault	Intentional battery	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Family violence	Interfamilial violence	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Robbery	Violent robberies or forms of theft based on the threat of robbery	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Sexual violence	Rape and crimes equivalent to rape, sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, incest, other crimes against sexual freedom and security	Yes	1	SESNSP, ENVIPE
Organized crime	Extortions, kidnappings and cases of human trafficking, retail drug crimes, and federal organized crime offenses per 100,000 people	22%	Extortion	Extortion	Yes	3	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Kidnapping and human trafficking	Kidnapping, human trafficking, trafficking of minors	Yes	5	SESNSP, ENVIPE
			Retail drug crimes	Retail drug crimes	No	1	SESNSP
			Major organized crime offenses	Federal drug trafficking crimes, organized crime related offenses committed by 3 or more people	No	20	SESNSP
Firearms crime	Assaults and homicides committed with a firearm per 100,000 people	16%	Firearms crime	Homicide with a firearm	No	1	SESNSP
				Assault with a firearm	No	2	SESNSP
Fear of violence	Percentage of citizens regarding the state they live in as unsafe	10%	Fear of violence	Percentage of citizens regarding the state they live in as unsafe	No	-	ENVIPE

Methodology for Calculating the Economic Impact of Violence

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic activity related to containing, preventing, and dealing with the consequences of violence. The **economic impact of violence** refers to the total cost (direct and indirect) of violence plus an economic peace multiplier. The **economic cost of violence** refers to the direct and indirect costs of violence.

IEP's estimate of the economic impact of violence includes three components:

1. **Direct costs** are the costs of crime or violence to the victim, the perpetrator and the government, including those associated with policing, medical expenses, funerals or incarceration.

2. **Indirect costs** accrue after the fact. These include physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as the consequential lost future income. There is also a measure of the impact of fear on the economy, as people who fear that they may become a victim of violent crime alter their behavior.

3. The **multiplier effect** is a commonly used economic concept that describes the extent to which additional expenditure has flow-on impacts in the wider economy. Injections of new income into the economy will lead to more spending, which will in turn create employment, further income and encourage additional spending, thereby increasing GDP. This mutually reinforcing economic cycle explains the 'multiplier effect', and why a dollar of expenditure can create more than a dollar of economic activity. The multiplier effect calculates the additional economic activity that would have accrued if the direct costs of violence had been avoided. Box 3.1 provides additional detail on the multiplier effect.

CATEGORIES AND INDICATORS INCLUDED IN THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

1. **Violence containment expenditure** refers to the direct and indirect costs associated with preventing or dealing with the consequences of violence. This includes government spending on domestic security, the justice system, and the military and national security.

2. **Protection costs** refer to the personal and business expenses from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) surveys.

3. **Criminal and interpersonal violence costs** refer to the direct and indirect costs associated with homicide, violent crimes and the fear of victimization.

This study uses a cost accounting methodology to measure the economic impact of violence. Expenditures on containing violence are totaled and unit costs are applied to the MPI estimates for the number of crimes committed. A unit cost is also applied to the estimated level of fear of insecurity. The unit costs estimate the direct (tangible) and indirect (intangible) costs of each crime. Direct unit costs include losses to the victim and perpetrator and exclude costs incurred by law enforcement and health care systems, as these are captured elsewhere in the model. The direct costs for violent crime are obtained from household and business surveys undertaken by the Mexican statistical office, which assesses economic and health costs to the victim of a crime.

Indirect unit costs include the physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as lost lifetime wages for homicide victims.

The cost estimates provided in this report are in constant 2025 pesos, which facilitates the comparison of the estimates over time. The estimate only includes elements of violence in which reliable data could be obtained. As such, the estimate can be considered conservative. The items listed below are included in the cost of violence methodology:

1. Homicide
2. Violent crime, which includes assault, violence within the family, sexual violence, firearms and robbery
3. Indirect costs of incarceration
4. Fear of insecurity
5. Protections costs, including private security
6. Federal spending on violence containment, which includes the military, domestic security and the justice system
7. Medical costs

The economic impact of violence excludes:

1. State level and municipal public spending on security
2. The cost of drug trade related crimes such as the production, possession, transport and supply of drugs
3. Population displacement due to violence

Although data is available for some of these categories, it is not fully available either for all states or for each year of analysis.

BOX 3.1

The multiplier effect

The multiplier effect calculates the additional economic activity that would have accrued if the direct costs of violence had been avoided. This effect is likely to be particularly high in the case of violence-related expenditure, as reductions in violence free up resources for more productive areas such as health, business investment, education and infrastructure. There is also strong evidence that violence and the fear of violence can fundamentally alter business incentive. For example, Brauer and Marlin (2009), in an analysis of 730 business ventures in Colombia from 1997 to 2001, found that amid higher levels of violence, new ventures were less likely to survive and profit, suggesting that sustained violence reduces employment and economic productivity over the long term by discouraging job creation and investment.

This study assumes that the multiplier is one, signifying that for every peso saved on violence containment, there will be an additional peso of economic activity. This is a relatively conservative multiplier and broadly in line with similar studies.

ESTIMATION METHODS

Multiple approaches are used to estimate the economic cost of violence to Mexico's economy. The analysis involved two components:

1. Financial information detailing the level of expenditure on items associated with violence was used wherever possible.

2. Unit costs were used to estimate the cost of violent activities. Specifically, an estimate of the economic cost of a violent act was sourced from the literature and applied to the total number of times such an event occurred to provide an estimate of the total cost of categories of violence. MPI data are used for the number of homicides, sexual assaults, violent assaults, and robberies.

IEP uses federal government expenditure data for military and national security, domestic security and the justice system as federal government violence containment costs. Data are sourced from the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP). State and municipal level spending are excluded from the study due to data unavailability.

The federal government expenditure data does not provide details of the spending at the state level. Therefore, a combination of state population size and the state funding allocation from the Public Security Contribution Fund (FASP) is used to estimate the likely distribution between states.

A unit cost approach is used to estimate the economic cost of homicide, violent crime and fear of insecurity. Unit costs for the homicide and violent crimes are based on a study by McCollister (2010) that estimated the tangible and intangible cost of violent crimes in the United States. The McCollister (2010) direct and indirect costs are applied to the number of homicides to calculate the total cost of homicide. Only the McCollister (2010) intangible (indirect) costs are applied to violent crime. The direct costs of violent crime are taken from the nationally representative victimization surveys (ENVIPE and ENVE) administered by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). Both surveys collect data on economic and health-related direct costs due to violent crime.

1. Direct costs or tangible costs of crime include medical expenses, cash losses, property theft or damage, and productivity losses.

2. Indirect costs include physical and psychological trauma as well as long-term costs due to a violent incident.

In addition to the breakdown by tangible and intangible costs, McCollister (2010) offers further details of the costs by victim, perpetrator and justice system. Such itemization enables IEP to exclude the justice system costs to avoid double counting with expenditure data used for the justice system and domestic security.

IEP also uses Dolan and Peasgood's (2006) estimate of the unit cost of fear of crime to calculate the cost of perceptions of insecurity in Mexico.

The equivalent cost in Mexico was then calculated based on purchasing power adjusted GDP per capita in PPP constant 2021 international dollars of $20,987 for Mexico as compared to $60,798 for the United States in 2008, the year for which the unit costs were estimated. This is called the adjusted unit cost.

All the costs are adjusted to constant 2025 pesos using GDP deflator data from the World Bank. The base year of 2025 was chosen because it is the most recent year for which GDP deflator data was available. Estimating the economic impact in constant prices facilitates comparisons over time.

State-level GDP-related analyses use the most recently available GDP data from INEGI, while national GDP analyses use data available from the World Bank.

CALCULATING THE COST OF HOMICIDE AND VIOLENT CRIME

To calculate the cost for the categories of crime used in this study, IEP uses the data from the MPI. Homicides are multiplied by adjusted unit costs to calculate the total cost of homicide in Mexico. For violent crime, the economic costs of each sub-indicator category are calculated using their respective adjusted unit costs.

The direct costs for violent and organized crime are sourced from ENVIPE, a national household survey of victimization and perception of public safety, and from ENVE, a national survey of business victimization. These surveys collect data on the economic and health-related losses to the victim of violent and organized crime.

COST OF FEAR OF INSECURITY

ENVIPE data are used to estimate the perception of insecurity at the state level in Mexico. IEP uses the proportion of respondents who felt insecure, multiplied by the state's population to arrive at the number of people who reported a fear of insecurity. Victimization survey estimates are conducted yearly and are available from 2011 to 2025. Therefore, IEP estimates the fear of insecurity for the years for which data is not available. The unit cost of fear is taken from Dolan and Peasgood (2006), from which the adjusted unit cost is derived.

PROTECTION COSTS

Protection costs represent spending by households and businesses on measures that reduces victimization from violent and organized crime. Both households and businesses take measures such as hiring private security, purchasing firearms or insurance, installing alarms, locks and changing place of residence or business to protect themselves in the face of high levels of crime and violence. This category replaces private security expenditure and the cost of firearms.

Data for protection costs are sourced from INEGI, both for households and businesses. INEGI provides state level summaries of protection costs developed from the ENVIPE (household survey) and ENVE (business survey).

CALCULATING THE INDIRECT COST OF INCARCERATION

The direct cost of incarceration is included in the government expenditure on domestic security and the justice system. Therefore, IEP only includes the indirect cost of incarceration, which is the lost income due to imprisonment. This is calculated using the Mexican minimum wage and the number of inmates that would have been in full-time employment. Data on the minimum wage for Mexico are sourced from the Department of Labor and Social Welfare (STPS). For 2025, the minimum wage of 279 pesos per day is used. This is calculated for a yearly wage of 100,368 pesos (based on the Mexican standard of annual wages representing daily wages across 12 months of 30 days).

Literature suggests that 60 percent of people who were sentenced to prison had full-time employment prior to being in prison and 20 percent of them have some employment inside prison. Based on this, IEP considers that only 50 percent of the inmates would have been in full-time employment, which is conservative. The minimum wage lost is calculated for 50 percent of the prison population in Mexico.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE CONTAINMENT

To estimate the total economic impact of violence, IEP uses a peace multiplier to estimate the additional economic activity that would have resulted if violence was avoided. The conceptual underpinning of the multiplier is the opportunity cost of the resources lost by the victim, perpetrator, and the law enforcement agencies due to the crime. Therefore, the peace multiplier represents the flow-on effects of redirected expenditure from violence containment to more economically enabling activities, such as business investment or education.

Appendices: Results Tables

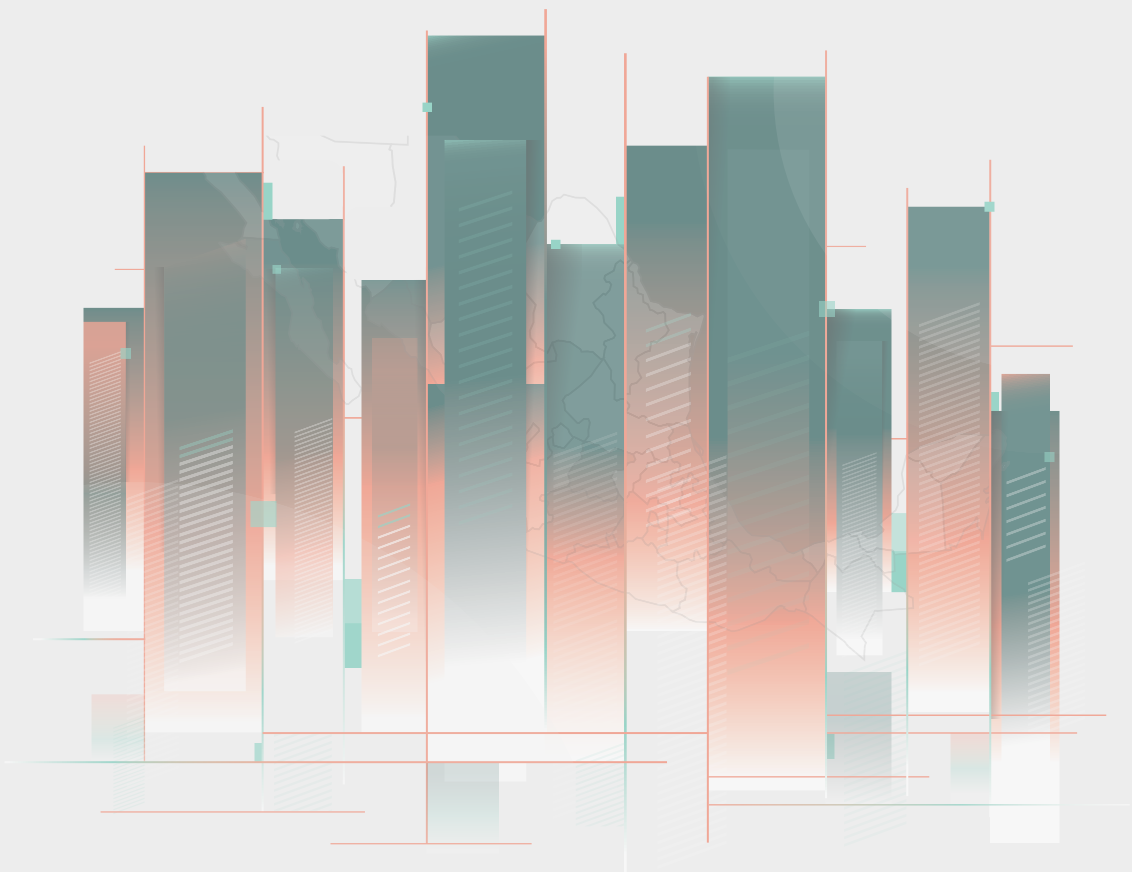


TABLE A

Overall Scores, 2015–2025

A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.

State	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aguascalientes	1.980	1.813	2.151	2.462	2.576	2.509	2.456	2.333	2.387	2.462	2.318
Baja California	3.369	3.411	4.340	4.533	4.617	4.522	4.488	4.483	4.542	4.200	3.712
Baja California Sur	2.856	3.366	4.502	3.347	2.953	2.731	2.689	2.745	2.670	2.980	3.172
Campeche	1.621	1.612	1.589	1.604	2.064	1.669	1.819	2.351	2.418	2.154	1.930
Chiapas	1.931	1.889	1.971	1.998	1.926	1.793	1.876	1.742	1.753	1.952	1.708
Chihuahua	2.913	3.122	3.684	3.812	4.094	4.040	3.967	3.459	3.646	3.649	3.450
Coahuila	2.418	2.022	2.058	2.223	2.305	2.281	2.234	2.229	2.132	2.126	2.051
Colima	2.389	3.703	3.918	4.164	4.468	4.486	4.414	4.728	4.721	4.717	4.579
Durango	2.424	2.362	2.411	2.342	2.401	2.319	2.309	2.243	1.989	1.855	1.868
Guanajuato	2.495	2.552	2.911	3.816	3.958	4.019	4.054	4.112	4.192	4.343	4.269
Guerrero	3.773	4.144	4.104	4.195	3.968	3.447	3.288	3.311	3.343	3.371	3.097
Hidalgo	1.713	1.788	2.016	2.132	2.343	2.212	2.150	2.271	2.384	2.205	2.296
Jalisco	2.524	2.582	2.868	3.204	3.160	3.019	2.901	2.812	2.770	2.712	2.546
Mexico City	2.759	2.827	3.020	3.427	3.505	2.953	2.909	2.763	2.750	2.721	2.908
Mexico State	3.123	2.928	3.075	3.191	3.363	3.462	3.429	3.613	3.533	3.384	2.867
Michoacán	2.497	2.682	2.884	3.051	3.303	3.400	3.604	3.361	3.060	2.969	2.924
Morelos	3.013	3.099	2.943	3.154	3.646	3.489	3.765	3.852	4.159	4.314	4.142
Nayarit	1.736	1.468	2.194	2.510	1.911	1.772	1.835	1.948	2.115	2.102	2.253
Nuevo León	2.546	2.776	2.826	2.859	2.986	2.849	3.191	3.505	3.666	3.591	3.030
Oaxaca	1.644	2.333	2.434	2.772	2.729	2.650	2.669	2.623	2.621	2.547	2.293
Puebla	2.450	2.112	2.245	2.498	2.638	2.364	2.474	2.367	2.391	2.395	2.371
Querétaro	1.843	1.952	2.086	2.313	2.677	2.721	2.704	2.752	2.701	2.720	2.788
Quintana Roo	2.500	2.135	2.796	3.750	4.411	3.527	3.482	3.434	3.745	3.812	3.496
San Luis Potosí	2.018	2.268	2.630	2.745	2.966	3.303	3.192	2.896	2.929	2.918	2.906
Sinaloa	3.231	3.032	3.515	3.120	2.900	2.747	2.633	2.558	2.872	3.283	4.364
Sonora	2.834	2.962	2.664	2.550	3.144	3.492	3.966	3.559	3.332	3.312	3.098
Tabasco	2.483	2.576	2.880	3.601	3.320	2.814	2.544	2.379	2.300	3.145	3.159
Tamaulipas	3.154	3.052	3.282	3.215	2.762	2.512	2.450	2.304	2.385	2.383	2.298
Tlaxcala	1.609	1.617	1.689	1.746	1.783	1.707	1.629	1.659	1.620	1.662	1.728
Veracruz	1.789	2.102	2.558	2.491	2.797	2.528	2.439	2.414	2.414	2.422	2.384
Yucatán	1.540	1.521	1.467	1.354	1.388	1.272	1.285	1.301	1.330	1.269	1.279
Zacatecas	2.488	2.846	3.346	3.612	3.754	4.416	4.480	4.496	3.872	2.948	2.315
NATIONAL	**2.561**	**2.592**	**2.858**	**3.063**	**3.142**	**3.029**	**3.028**	**3.008**	**2.981**	**2.966**	**2.814**

Source: IEP

TABLE B

Economic impact of violence, 2015–2025, billions of constant 2025 pesos

State	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Aguascalientes	29.9	28.0	32.2	43.4	50.6	51.7	65.2	41.8	39.8	42.8	38.5
Baja California	146.5	164.9	223.9	262.3	246.8	241.5	249.6	236.9	226.3	220.4	179.8
Baja California Sur	29.3	37.5	67.7	37.0	33.5	30.2	32.3	31.1	29.6	44.4	42.1
Campeche	17.4	20.6	18.2	19.9	22.2	21.6	24.9	34.0	34.3	31.7	27.0
Chiapas	95.7	93.7	91.9	98.2	90.7	86.1	121.2	91.5	104.4	118.9	80.3
Chihuahua	126.9	140.9	175.7	187.7	215.8	216.5	208.5	178.6	191.6	196.7	184.6
Coahuila	73.6	65.4	61.0	64.6	64.6	76.1	57.5	58.5	55.7	62.2	58.9
Colima	23.1	50.0	63.4	59.4	64.1	61.9	56.0	75.1	78.2	75.3	59.1
Durango	52.1	52.4	46.6	43.1	40.9	40.7	43.2	47.8	38.3	36.9	33.5
Guanajuato	166.0	178.4	199.1	325.2	338.8	367.7	300.4	291.7	292.1	305.2	295.6
Guerrero	173.6	188.2	202.0	200.9	166.1	128.8	128.3	126.0	145.4	156.2	139.9
Hidalgo	53.4	58.3	78.5	76.3	87.6	82.6	83.0	85.9	82.0	70.6	76.9
Jalisco	190.5	221.4	270.1	313.3	312.4	289.3	272.8	268.5	263.8	272.8	246.6
Mexico City	231.5	256.2	288.0	355.0	364.4	355.5	353.5	287.9	274.5	257.0	243.3
Mexico State	658.8	582.0	663.8	681.7	654.9	636.6	630.9	649.3	612.6	631.2	527.6
Michoacán	118.0	143.9	150.5	166.5	203.2	229.6	269.0	227.1	176.4	167.8	162.5
Morelos	75.8	85.1	81.0	97.3	110.2	113.6	127.7	129.3	142.8	148.4	117.4
Nayarit	22.3	17.4	32.9	37.1	27.4	27.7	30.6	35.4	43.8	46.2	42.2
Nuevo León	124.5	148.6	149.5	149.9	150.1	152.4	199.7	203.1	276.0	230.2	179.2
Oaxaca	53.6	107.9	113.4	146.3	151.3	139.2	148.6	133.0	117.2	121.9	107.3
Puebla	140.1	134.1	154.0	187.8	206.2	183.8	247.8	174.5	168.8	185.7	175.7
Querétaro	47.8	50.5	52.7	58.1	72.7	81.9	74.1	73.1	78.8	82.2	72.0
Quintana Roo	52.4	40.9	53.5	82.4	90.9	79.0	90.0	88.0	106.2	131.2	84.3
San Luis Potosí	56.3	63.8	76.9	77.1	80.1	90.4	99.4	92.8	87.1	82.7	68.5
Sinaloa	104.3	111.1	136.4	112.9	105.6	97.1	92.7	84.4	88.2	123.1	170.5
Sonora	83.5	94.9	92.1	95.9	125.8	141.2	169.6	158.6	140.5	151.3	130.0
Tabasco	73.5	74.9	81.5	97.4	103.8	87.6	76.8	66.2	60.7	101.7	91.4
Tamaulipas	116.4	122.6	134.5	139.0	125.6	107.0	100.9	83.0	84.5	84.2	66.1
Tlaxcala	24.0	22.9	24.2	26.7	29.5	25.6	26.3	25.7	24.0	30.2	26.1
Veracruz	124.5	169.9	219.9	206.0	217.4	191.0	182.8	173.1	172.3	208.2	210.9
Yucatán	35.6	37.2	39.4	30.9	27.4	25.9	27.1	23.3	23.8	29.1	25.7
Zacatecas	45.3	60.3	65.3	67.1	68.1	90.3	121.9	107.4	104.0	72.9	41.7
NATIONAL	**3,366.4**	**3,623.7**	**4,139.7**	**4,546.4**	**4,648.7**	**4,550.1**	**4,712.2**	**4,382.9**	**4,363.5**	**4,519.2**	**4,005.4**

Source: IEP

ENDNOTES

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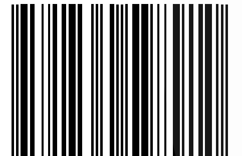
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