

Armed violence in Mexico Fact Sheet 2017

Guns kill many more Mexicans than drugs, despite what the dominant narrative and media stories in both Mexico and the United States say. Mexico has restrictive firearms legislation that prohibits personal possession for most people, and has signed all international instruments to address illicit trafficking. This has not prevented the proliferation of high-caliber weapons into the country and the rise in murders committed with firearms.

The quality of life in Mexico has deteriorated because of violence, and firearms have played a central role in this situation: from 2001 to 2010, 37% of intentional murders were committed with firearms, and this percentage rose to 56% from 2011 to the first half of 2016. In 16 years, more than 110,000 people have died in the country because of gun violence,¹ more than the entire population of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Homicides are not the only manifestation of armed violence: other crimes committed with guns have also risen in the last years. It is estimated that in 2011, 63% of the crimes committed with any kind of weapon were committed with firearms, while in 2015 this percentage rose to 67%, constituting more than 5 million crimes in Mexico.²

It is impossible to address this problem without considering the origin of the illegal firearms that are seized in Mexico and submitted for tracing. The ATF reports that between 2009 and 2014, 70% of traced firearms recovered at crime scenes came from the U.S.³ In addition, the Violence Policy Center reviewed 21 court cases of firearms trafficking between 2007 and 2009 and revealed that 63% of the 492 weapons analyzed were either assault weapons (209; 42 percent), armor-piercing handguns (88; 18 percent), or anti-

¹ Executive Secretary of the National System of Public Security, Criminal Statistics (SESNP) <http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/incidencia-delictiva/incidencia-delictiva-fuero-comun.php>

² INEGI, National Survey on Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) 2012, 2016.

³ ATF, Mexico, January 1, 2009, December 31, 2014, <https://www.atf.gov/file/2751/download>

armor 50 caliber sniper rifles (11; two percent).⁴ And finally, the Attorney General of Mexico reported that half of recovered weapons were AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles.⁵

Decisions that may seem local have broader effects. Several academic studies have linked the existence of less restrictive legislation in the United States with the rise of armed violence in Mexico, specifically, the end of the Assault Weapons Ban in 2004 and of the prohibition on importing these firearms from other countries.⁶ More than 40,000 Mexicans and several members of the U.S. Congress have also associated the lack of gun control laws with violence in Mexico, making specific petitions in 2009, 2011 and 2016, without success.⁷

North and South of the Rio Grande, guns are undermining the right to life, freedom and security. The solution and the efforts for a peaceful society must come from both sides of the border.

This fact sheet was produced by Desarma México.

⁴ Violence Policy Center, *Types of Firearms and Methods of Gun Trafficking from the United States to Mexico as Revealed in U.S. Court Documents*, April 2009, <http://www.vpc.org/studies/indicted.pdf>

⁵ Attorney General of Mexico (PGR)

<http://www.pgr.gob.mx/informesinstitucionales/Documents/INFORME%20DE%20LABORES/2015.pdf>

⁶ Aridrajit Dube et al., *Cross-Border Spillover: U.S. Gun Laws and Violence in Mexico*, Department of Economic and Politics, Working paper at New York University, 2012; Luke Chicoine, *Exporting the Second Amendment: U.S. Assault Weapons and the Homicide Rate in Mexico*, University of Notre Dame, Draft 2011; David Pérez y Eugenio Weigend, "Más armas, más delitos, más homicidios", *Nexos*, septiembre 2013.

⁷ 3 Letters to Obama. 1: <https://engel.house.gov/latest-news1/rep-engel-urges-president-obama-to-enforce-bush-41clinton-restrictions-on-imported-assault-weapons/> 2: <https://engel.house.gov/latest-news1/rep-engel-writes-to-president-obama-calling-for-the-closing-of-assault-weapons-import-loopholes/> 3: <https://www.wola.org/2011/08/diego-luna-javier-sicilia-sergio-aguayo-of-alianza-civica-and-wola-promote-international-campaign-against-arms-trafficking/>

Intentional Homicides in Mexico

Total / committed with firearms

2001 - June 2016

Year	Intentional Homicides Total	Intentional Homicides Committed with firearms	% intentional murders committed by firearms
2001	13,855	3,512	25%
2002	13,148	2,616	20%
2003	12,676	3,006	24%
2004	11,658	2,858	25%
2005	11,246	3,208	29%
2006	11,806	3,610	31%
2007	10,253	4,040	39%
2008	13,155	5,085	39%
2009	16,118	8,804	55%
2010	20,680	12,478	60%
Subtotal	134,595	49,217	37%
2011	22,852	13,027	57%
2012	21,736	11,463	53%
2013	18,331	9,989	54%
2014	15,653	8,709	56%
2015	17,028	9,643	57%
2016*	15,201	9,232	61%
Subtotal	110,801	62,063	56%
Total 2001- June 2016	245,396	111,280	25%

Executive Secretary of the National System of Public Security, Criminal Statistics (SESNP) <http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/incidencia-delictiva/incidencia-delictiva-fuero-comun.php>

Type of weapons used in crimes

Mexico 2011 vs. 2015

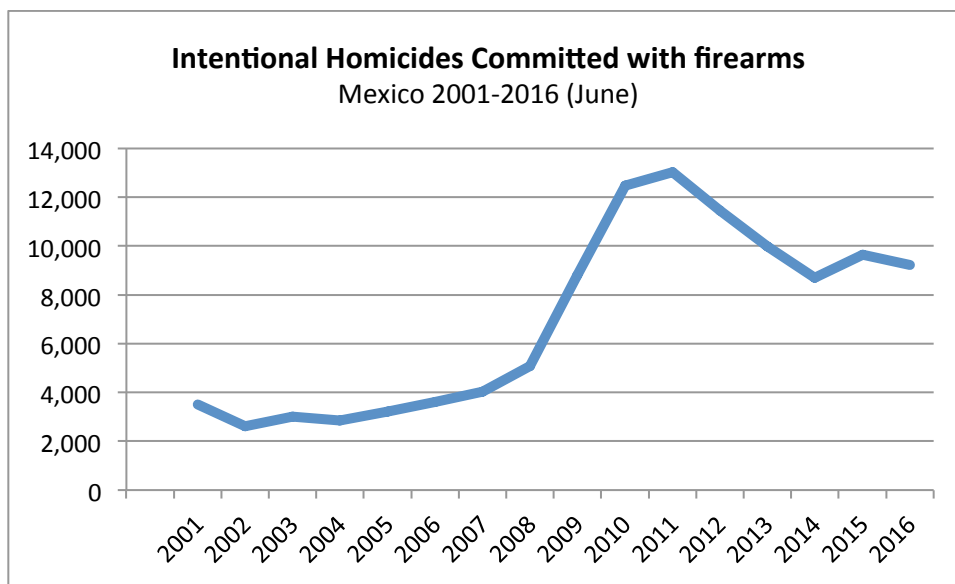
Year	Estimated of crimes committed with any kind of weapon	Estimated of crimes Committed with firearms	Percentage committed with firearm
2011	5,785,721	3,643,111	63.0 %
2015	7,743,139	5,201,633	67.2 %

INEGI, National Survey on Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) 2012, 2016.

**Firearms Recovered in Mexico and Submitted to ATF for Tracing
2009-2014**

	# of Traces	% of all traces
U.S. Sourced Firearms		
Manufactured in the U.S.	54,915	52.4
Imported into de U.S.	18,769	18
<i>Subtotal U.S. Sourced</i>	73,684	70.4
Underdetermined Source Country		
Non US Manufacturer	17,544	16.7
Undetermined Country of Origin	13,622	13
<i>Subtotal Undetermined Source</i>	31,166	30
Total	104,850	100

ATF, Mexico, January 1, 2009, December 31, 2014, <https://www.atf.gov/file/2751/download>



Executive Secretary of the National System of Public Security, Criminal Statistics (SESNSP) <http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/incidencia-delictiva/incidencia-delictiva-fuero-comun.php>