



# Highway ISAC

## FIRST OBSERVER HIGHWAY INFORMATION SHARING AND ANALYSIS CENTER

Transportation Security Operations Center (TSOC)

Department of Homeland Security

Highway ISAC – 703.563.3275

Email: [TSOC.HighwayISAC@dhs.gov](mailto:TSOC.HighwayISAC@dhs.gov)

### Southwest Border Violence

*The following document is “Unclassified” and is intended for distribution to the trucking community.*

#### **SUMMARY:**

**Violence amongst Mexican drug cartels in the border states, on both sides of the US-Mexico border, has exponentially increased in the past years. More than 200 Americans have been killed in the area since 2004.<sup>1</sup> Murders, drug smuggling, human smuggling, beatings, tortures, and most notably kidnappings, are all on the rise. The majority of these crimes are occurring within the borders of Mexico, but when the gangs and cartel members begin to relocate operations, the violence follows.**

#### ***Why Should You Care??***

*Being a highway professional carries extra potential for involvement in these experiences. Truck drivers carry a risk as they are involved in operations that might interest these criminals. Law enforcement personnel also run an elevated risk of attack by Mexican gang members. Whether traveling to Mexico for personal reasons or simply making scheduled deliveries or pickups, you must maintain situational awareness at all times and be extremely conscious of your environment. Knowing the background of the route you will be taking, the types of neighborhoods encountered, and even the company history you are working with will prove beneficial in your safety. If ever approached by unknown individuals always maintain a sense of guard and assess the level of suspicion of their intentions. If a situation does not feel right to you, do not hesitate to avoid the circumstances at all costs.*

<sup>1</sup> Source: MSNBC; <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29095730>



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## DESCRIPTION:

For over 40 years drug cartels have been involved in extensive drug trafficking operations across the US-Mexico border. Due to the efforts of President Calderon in Mexico and law enforcement officers in America, cross border smuggling of drugs has become much more difficult to these operations. With these difficulties, the cartels gangs have become more aggressive and dangerous with their tactics. Violent crimes have surged throughout border cities and the violence that primarily occurred on the Mexican side has begun to spill into the United States.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT IS BEING DONE?

Rising violence in Mexico and abroad is forcing foreign companies to change their operating procedures and shipping routes, while also tightening security for their employees. Some companies are asking employees to only travel during daylight hours and if possible to travel in groups when in Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Mexico is also deploying more guards in order to protect commuter routes for Americans. The area of Ciudad Juarez, which is the main hotspot of violent activity, is home to nearly 400 factories and 230,000 employees that are mostly owned by the U.S. Officials have created special commuter routes leading to and from the industrial parks to protect the workers and managers. They've engaged 300 city, state, and federal police and over 5,000 soldiers to protect the corridors. These routes also lead to and from international bridges traveled daily by U.S. plant managers, engineers and suppliers.<sup>4</sup>

The U.S. Department of State has issued a nationwide travel alert for U.S. citizens traveling to, working, or living in Mexico. It states:

- It is imperative that travelers understand the risks of going to Mexico, how best to avoid dangerous situations and who to contact if one becomes a victim of crime.
- The greatest increase in violence has occurred near the U.S. border, however all areas of Mexico should be visited with caution.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Forbes; [http://www.forbes.com/2009/02/08/mexico-iraq-drugs-opinions-columnists\\_0209\\_reihan\\_salam.html](http://www.forbes.com/2009/02/08/mexico-iraq-drugs-opinions-columnists_0209_reihan_salam.html)

<sup>3</sup> Source: International Herald Tribune; <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2009/02/25/business/LT-Mexico-Violence-Businesses.php>

<sup>4</sup> Source: Dallas Morning News; [http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/world/mexico/stories/DN-juarez\\_07int.State.Edition1.1225d12.html](http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/world/mexico/stories/DN-juarez_07int.State.Edition1.1225d12.html)



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- U.S. citizens who believe they are being targeted for possible kidnapping or other crimes should notify Mexican officials and the nearest American consulate or Embassy as soon as possible. ([See numbers below](#))
- Never take chances that put you at risk, if you feel uncomfortable, attempt to return to the U.S.
- Avoid driving on certain roads, and as a general rule stick to the toll (cuota) roads when possible, as they are normally more secure.
- Travelers should leave their itinerary with a friend or family member not traveling with them
- Check cell phone providers prior to departure to confirm that their cell phone is capable of roaming on GSM or 3G international networks.
- Do not display expensive looking jewelry, large amounts of money, or other valuables.

## **ESTABLISH REPORTING/DURESS PROCEDURES**

When operating in areas that are subject to criminal/violent activity it is always recommended to have reporting procedures established throughout the duration of the trip.

- Every scheduled/non-scheduled stop, report in with operations
  - Report on location, and next destination
- Establish a time period to report in, every 4 hours for example
- When stopping/delivering in such areas, call in prior to delivery and after delivery is made.
- Establish a duress code for the prescribed route
  - If in trouble, you are able to communicate such in the presence of those who are threatening you.



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## Mexican Consulate Contacts:

Before traveling in Mexico, be sure to determine the nearest consulate according to your approved routes. Make contact with the consulate and get updated security information if available.

### Consulates:

Ciudad Juarez: Paseo de la Victoria 3650, tel. (52)(656) 227-3000.

<http://ciudadjuarez.usconsulate.gov>.

Guadalajara: Progreso 175, telephone (52)(333) 268-2100.

<http://guadalajara.usconsulate.gov/>.

Hermosillo: Avenida Monterrey 141, telephone (52)(662) 289-3500.

<http://hermosillo.usconsulate.gov>.

Matamoros: Avenida Primera 2002, telephone (52)(868) 812-4402.

<http://matamoros.usconsulate.gov>.

Merida: Calle 60 no. 338 k, telephone (52)(999) 942-5700.

<http://merida.usconsulate.gov>.

Monterrey: Avenida Constitucion 411 Poniente, telephone (52)(818) 047-3100.

<http://monterrey.usconsulate.gov>.

Nogales: Calle San Jose, Nogales, Sonora, telephone (52)(631) 311-8150.

<http://nogales.usconsulate.gov>.

Nuevo Laredo: Calle Allende 3330, col. Jardin, telephone (52)(867) 714-0512.

<http://nuevolaredo.usconsulate.gov/>.

Tijuana: Tapachula 96, telephone (52)(664) 622-7400.

<http://tijuana.usconsulate.gov/service.html>.

If you are unable to contact a consulate, utilize the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000.

For other Mexican travel related information, be sure to check the U.S. Department of State travel page [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_970.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html)

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

For any questions or comments regarding this product please contact Highway ISAC, Intelligence Analyst, Christopher Morrow at 703.563.3275 or via e-mail at [TSOC.HighwayISAC@dhs.gov](mailto:TSOC.HighwayISAC@dhs.gov)