

ACTION DS-00

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|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| INFO | LOG-00 | EEB-00 | AID-00 | A-00 | INL-00 | DODE-00 | WHA-00 |
| | UTED-00 | DIAS-00 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | IO-00 | L-00 | ARMY-00 |
| | MOFM-00 | MOF-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OIC-00 | OIG-00 | PRS-00 |
| | P-00 | SP-00 | SS-00 | STR-00 | TRSE-00 | ASDS-00 | DSCC-00 |
| | PRM-00 | DRL-00 | G-00 | CARC-00 | SAS-00 | FA-00 | /000W |

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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D), B6

O R 262058Z AUG 10
 FM AMCONSUL MATAMOROS
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0178
 INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
 WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
 CDR USNORTHCOM PETERSON AFB CO
 DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
 HQ BICE INTEL WASHINGTON DC
 HQ BICE WASHINGTON DC
 HQ NORAD USNORTHCOM INTEL PETERSON AFB CO
 US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC
 NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC
 DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
 DEA MCALLEN TX
 CIA WASHINGTON DC
 AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
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 AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 AMEMBASSY QUITO
 AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
 AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS MATAMOROS 000226

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 13526: N/A
 TAGS: ASEC, SNAR, MX, KCRM, SMIG, PHUM, KTIP
 SUBJECT: Zetas massacre 72 migrants in Tamaulipas

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[redacted]
 below is a summary of the events that occurred around
 the August 22 execution of 72 individuals in the Tamaulipas town of
 San Fernando, approximately 90 miles south of Brownsville, Texas.
 Much of the information provided was obtained from GOM
 interrogation of the sole survivor, an 18 year-old Ecuadorian male,
 currently in a Mexican Navy hospital:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, M. GRAFELD, DAS, A/GIS
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
 CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 26 AUG 2025
 DATE/CASE ID: 11 JUL 2011 201103281

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2. On August 22, approximately 75 migrants from Guatemala, Honduras, Brazil and Ecuador (including one described only as "Hindu"), traveling in three panel trucks on the highway between the Tamaulipas towns of Ciudad Victoria and San Fernando, were stopped by an unknown number of organized crime figures and transported under guard to San Fernando. [redacted] believes the hijack point was north of the fixed SEDENA highway checkpoint, and that the migrants avoided that checkpoint by using small rural roads.

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3. According to the survivor, the members of the group were offered the opportunity to work for the alleged drug trafficking organization (DTO) Las Zetas for \$500 USD a week. The men were offered the opportunity to become "sicarios" or gunmen while the women were offered the opportunity of work as domestic help. All but one member of the group turned down the offer to work for the Zetas. One female and one child were supposedly separated from this group and their whereabouts are unknown at this time. (Comment: the salary offered seems exceedingly generous and was likely not the actual salary, if any, they would have received if they had agreed to join the organization. End comment.)

4. Upon their refusal, the group was taken to an abandoned warehouse and executed, allegedly with single pistol shots to the head. The photos received show that the victims were bound and some blindfolded. In all, 58 men and 14 women were executed. Two individuals survived the initial shooting, the 18 year-old Ecuadorian male and one Salvadoran male. The survivor stated he lost consciousness and when he awoke later only he and the Salvadorian male were still alive.

5. The Ecuadorian stated that he and the other survivor departed the scene in different directions. He told the authorities that he heard trucks pursuing the other survivor and later heard gun shots, which led him to believe that the Salvadorian had been caught and executed. He then attempted to seek assistance at a nearby house or possibly by approaching a local police officer (accounts differ slightly). Either way, his requests for assistance were refused. He then walked through the night and arrived at a Mexican Navy checkpoint in the early morning hours of Monday, August 23.

6. On the 23rd, the Mexican Navy made attempts to find the massacre site on the ground and by helicopter. Contrary to press reporting, [redacted] deny engaging the Zetas via air assault. The ground troops searching for the bodies came upon a group of several Zetas on a ranch and became involved in a gun battle that left one Mexican Marine and three cartel members dead. The number of injured is unknown. In addition, the Navy seized 21 assault weapons, shotguns and long-arm rifles. One Zeta of minor age was apprehended and is in the custody of the Mexican

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government. The survivor positively identified this subject via photograph as one of the DTO kidnapers.

7. On Tuesday, August 24, at approximately 1800 hours, the Mexican Navy found the victims in an abandoned ranch. The bodies appear to have been piled up against the wall of an abandoned barn/warehouse. On Thursday, August 26, the State forensics office stated that the MPF (Public Ministry) had autopsied 24 bodies and the results are consistent with the victims being executed on Sunday, the 22nd.

Unconfirmed reports also indicate that one or more of the female victims were pregnant. The victims were found with no identification at all. The three trucks and the migrant's luggage were not recovered.

8. On August 26, Mexican authorities advised that the Director of the Municipal Police in San Fernando was found dead in Mendez with other unidentified bodies, one believed to be the State Prosecutor (MPE).

9. [REDACTED]

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10. Comment: If the survivor's account of the murders is accurate, then this represents a new level of violence from the Zetas. It remains unclear how these deaths benefit the Zetas. It seems unlikely that they were kidnapped for ransom as no efforts were made to solicit funds from family members prior to their murders. One theory proposed [REDACTED] is that as the profits from the migrant's proposed illegal entry in to the U.S. were destined for the Gulf Cartel, their murders were a way for the Zetas to financially hurt the Gulf Cartel's interests. Interestingly, the Matamoros papers extensively covered the massacre, an extremely unusual event and a sign that the Gulf Cartel views publicity of the Zetas actions as useful to them.

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