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FM AMCONSUL MONTERREY

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DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

FBI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

HQ USNORTHCOM IMMEDIATE

DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

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RELEASED IN PART
B1,B7(F),1.4(D)

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UNCLAS MONTERREY 000164

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, KCRM, ASEC, PHUM, SOCI, CASC, MX

SUBJECT: ALARMING INCREASE IN DRUG CARTEL VIOLENCE IN MONTERREY METRO
AREA

REF: 10 MEXICO 257

1. (SBU) Summary. Organized crime related deaths so far in 2010 in Nuevo Leon have already exceeded any previous 12 month record. In one 18 hour period, the state registered 13 known crime related killings. The drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) have targeted military, state, and municipal police by killing corrupt officers affiliated with the opposing cartel, or as retaliation for military operations against them. Fierce gun battles continue on the highway to Reynosa, impeding traffic flows, and narco-traffickers have set up roadblocks in the city. DTOs have begun to travel, relatively unimpeded, in large convoys of armored vehicles in both the outlying areas of the Monterrey Consular District and in the city itself. Authorities have also registered a significant increase in the number of kidnappings and reports of extortion in Nuevo Leon. In Santiago alone, unofficially, over 40 business owners were reportedly kidnapped in 2010. In response, Governor Rodrigo Medina recently announced that additional federal troops will soon arrive and that, inter alia, they will take over the responsibilities of local municipal police forces in high-risk zones. End summary.

Cartel-Related Killings at Record High

Classified by DAS, A/GIS, DoS on : 10/17/2013 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~
Reason: 1.4(D) ~ Declassify on: 04/27/2025

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Adolph Eisner, Senior Reviewer

2. (U) On April 20, the newspaper El Norte released homicide statistics indicating that for 2010, Nuevo Leon has already exceeded all previous annual records for organized crime related deaths. In 2010 thus far, Nuevo Leon has registered 117 deaths related to organized crime, breaking 2007's record of 106 deaths for the entire year. Of the 117 deaths, eight were innocent bystanders caught in crossfire, including the deaths of two Tec de Monterrey students on March 19. On April 20, media reported gunmen shot dead three civilians in Monterrey under unknown circumstances. Officials also reported an increase in the number of attacks targeting law enforcement officials. In April 2010, drug-related violence claimed eight state and municipal police officers; cartels have killed 16 state or municipal police officers so far this year. From April 14 - 21st, 21 people died in the Monterey metropolitan area, including two Army soldiers.

Cartels Target Police and Army

3. (SBU) For four consecutive days, gunmen targeted police officers in the Monterrey metropolitan area. On April 14, gunmen killed a Guadalupe municipal police officer and wounded his partner while they sat in their patrol car. On April 15, a Monterrey municipal police officer was found dead in his patrol car along with two dead ex-police officers. On April 16, seven gunmen stopped a Santiago police officer riding in a private vehicle with his wife and three children. The gunmen beat the officer with an AK-47 before killing him in front of his family. The gunmen then opened fire on two police officers in a patrol vehicle that happened to be nearby. The officers fled.

4. (SBU) On April 17, in the southern part of Monterrey, police discovered a Nuevo Leon State police officer dead in his patrol car, while his partner was gravely injured. Authorities believe that the vehicle the gunmen used in the April 16 attack is the same white Murano SUV used in the attack on the 17th. On April 19, police found the body of a Santiago Transit police officer bound and gagged bearing signs of torture, in the affluent Monterrey suburb of San Pedro

Next to the body, authorities found narco-messages signed

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by the Gulf Cartel stating, "This is for helping the Zetas," as well as four floral arrangements. The officer had been missing since April 15 and his family had created a Facebook page to plead for help in locating him.

5. (U) In addition to targeting police officers, the Secretariat of National Defense revealed on April 16 that, in two separate events, members of the Zetas drug trafficking organization kidnapped an Army lieutenant and five soldiers with the help of Monterrey municipal police and Nuevo Leon State police. The Secretariat said that, on March 8, four soldiers returning from leave arrived at a bus station in Monterrey and boarded a taxi together. Monterrey municipal police stopped the taxi and detained

them until four trucks arrived carrying armed men. The gunmen then kidnapped the four soldiers.

6. (SBU) In a similar incident on April 5, an Army lieutenant was headed to the same bus station in a private vehicle when his car was stopped by a State Police patrol car. The Secretariat suspects that the Zetas leader in Monterrey, Hector Luna Luna, aka "Tori", is responsible for these kidnappings in retaliation for army actions. On April 17, the Nuevo Leon State Attorney General's office announced that they are opening an investigation into the disappearances.

More Shootouts on the Reynosa Highway

7. (U) On April 15, Army troops stopped gunmen in four trucks for inspection, resulting in a midday shootout on the Reynosa highway. The Army captured the leader of a group of Halcones operating in Cadereyta, Nuevo Leon (Note: the "Hawks" constitute the lowest tier of the Zeta Cartel, acting as look-outs or informants for the organization. End note.). The Army captured a second gunman, but the remaining assailants fled the scene. A 14-year-old bystander, who was walking with her mother and grandmother, was taken to the hospital with minor injuries.

8. (U) On April 20, gunmen on the highway to Reynosa fired on four Cadereyta police officers, wounding all four before fleeing the scene. That same day, gunmen killed one and wounded four in Colonia Condesa in Monterrey. In a possibly related event, two youths were killed in the same area that same night by masked gunmen riding in two vehicles.

9. (SBU) On April 24, a major confrontation between Army soldiers and gunmen took place at 6:30pm in General Bravo, near the Tamaulipas border on the highway to Reynosa. Approximately 40 pickup trucks waged a gun battle with Army forces, leaving three gunmen dead. Federal officials shut the highway for over an hour, backing up traffic on both ends. The Army rescued four kidnap victims. The remaining gunmen fled the scene and military helicopters were unable to locate the suspects. (Note: The area has been the site of shootouts between the Army and drug cartels. In the past month alone, major shootouts occurred on March 11, 19, and 30. End note.) Within a half hour, gunmen hijacked vehicles in Monterrey and then used them to establish at least four narco-road blockades on major thoroughfares most likely set up to impede military reinforcements from reaching the fight (Note: were caught in the blockade and witnessed the events firsthand. End note.).

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A Bloody 18 Hours for Nuevo Leon

10. (U) On April 21, over the course of 18 hours, Nuevo Leon

recorded 13 violent deaths (four in Monterrey, two in Guadalupe, two in San Nicolas, two in Santiago, one in Apodaca, one in Allende, and one in General Bravo) that were the result of 17 different shootings or attacks in the state. In General Bravo, police found a narco-message accompanying the charred body of a dead policeman. A note with a threat from the Zeta Cartel to the rival Gulf Cartel also accompanied a body found in Santiago.

Cartel Killings Continue

11. (SBU) That same day in the town of Marin, Nuevo Leon, State Investigative Agency (AEI) officials, following an anonymous tip, found the body of a Zetas leader bound and gagged with signs of torture. Officials found a poster with the Gulf Cartel signature and a smiley face beside the body.

12. (U) On April 24, a shootout in the municipality of Juarez, a suburb of Monterrey, left five gunmen dead and one Army soldier wounded. The shootout also exposed collusion between drug cartel gunmen and municipal police. Three Juarez police vehicles blocked the main roads to prevent the military from sending reinforcements to the scene of the shootout. The Army subsequently arrested six municipal police officers.

13. (U) On April 25, a shootout occurred at a nightclub in Monterrey's downtown area, leaving three dead and as many as six injured, including an eight-month pregnant woman. Witnesses stated that a single assailant with a long gun approached the bar and opened fire and fled before authorities arrived on the scene.

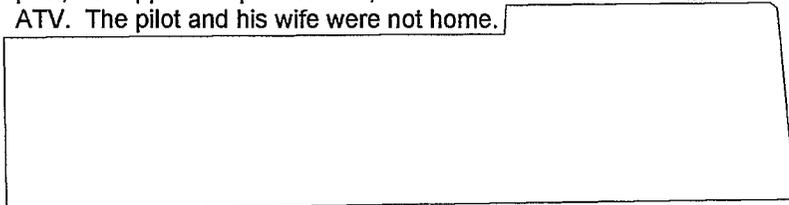
Kidnappings and Extortion Increase

14. (U) Monterrey merchants filed a complaint on April 15 against a city inspector allegedly extorting between US\$ 50-125 from business owners per week. The inspector threatened to have the small business owners kidnapped by members of organized crime if the fees were not paid. The businessmen banded together and filed a complaint once the inspector began calling and harassing them at their homes. Additionally, during the past four months, over 40 business owners in Santiago, a city south of Monterrey, have been kidnapped by criminal groups operating in the area. Some return to their homes after their families pay ransom, ranging from US\$ 41,000-500,000. Others remain missing.

Upscale Residential Enclave Targeted

15. (SBU) On April 18, an armed group traveling in three SUVs stormed into the residential area of the Las Misiones Club Campestre country club and private golf course near Santiago during an annual golf tournament attended by over 200 people. The gunmen

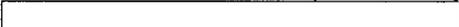
broke through the security gate and raided the home of an airline pilot, kidnapped the pilot's niece, and took two vehicles and an ATV. The pilot and his wife were not home.



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16. (U) On April 23, the Nuevo Leon State Investigative Agency (AEI) captured three alleged kidnapers following a car chase that began in Monterrey and ended in the San Pedro suburb. The police pursued the kidnapers after family members of the kidnap victim dropped off ransom money. The criminals admitted to other kidnappings and extortions. Kidnappings and extortion calls have markedly increased in the area in the past few months.

Mayor Abandons Vigilante Squad?

17. (SBU) After the arrest of "El Chico Malo" on March 18, San Pedro Mayor Mauricio Fernandez said he was unaware of his paid informant's criminal ties. Under fire and under criminal investigation, the mayor decided on April 21 to disband his "grupo rudo" vigilante group, citing difficulties in financing (Note: the vigilante group was allegedly privately funded. End note.). Fernandez said that due to El Chico Malo's criminal ties, his vigilante group's purpose had been distorted. Coincidentally, or not, the announcement came after an unfavorable April 20 New York Times article about the mayor and his "grupo rudo". (Comment:  the next chapter in this saga is still not clear. End comment.)

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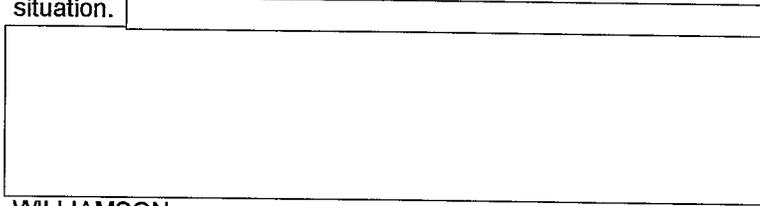
Governor Asks For Federal Help

18. (U) On April 25, Governor Rodrigo Medina announced that 150 additional Federal Police will take control of high-risk zones in the state. On April 22, 100 Nuevo Leon State Police took control of Cadereyta, Nuevo Leon, relieving 100 municipal officers of their duties. The municipal officers will undergo background checks and the state will vet them before they can return to their posts. The actions came in response to increased cartel violence in the area, and the ineffectiveness and corruption of local police.

Comment

19. (SBU) Comment: The tempo of drug cartel related violence has continued to rise unabated in the Monterrey metropolitan area. DTOs have begun to travel, relatively unimpeded, in large convoys of armored vehicles in both the outlying areas of the Monterrey

Consular District and in the city itself. Beset by corruption and a paucity of resources, the state government is unable to deal with the situation and is relying on the military to stabilize the situation.



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