

The Constant Escalation of Drug Related Violence in Mexico

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Introduction

On December 11th of 2006 Mexican president Felipe Calderon announced that he would begin a war against drugs by aiming to disband the world's most powerful and dangerous cartels. Just three years after the beginning of this new campaign the homicide rate in Mexico doubled with no progress towards ending drug trafficking.¹ It is clear that the inception of the drug war has resulted in over 100,000 additional homicides in Mexico.² These additional deaths caused by the drug war could have been avoided and they create a legitimate human rights question for the policy makers in Mexico. Regardless of who is committing the crimes, whether they be members of the cartels trying to assert their dominance or Mexican military torturing suspects for information, it is the Mexican government that needs to look at itself for taking responsibility for the rising death toll in Mexico. The people of Mexico are the ones that are suffering as the cartels remain unaffected and are still flourishing under these strict drug policies. The human rights violations that are enabled by the Mexican war on drugs of course included the hundreds of thousands of deaths in the past 13 years, but it has also enabled human rights violations such as extrajudicial killings, torture, and kidnapping. Kidnapping has been such an issue in Mexico that there have been thousands of missing people who are never found or heard of again. For the government of Mexico to refuse to end the war on drugs and to uphold it after so many years of death and torment is a human rights violation in itself. It has caused massive protests all over the country and created the Mexican Indignados Movement. The Mexican people know that the

¹ Laura Carlsen, *Mexico's False Dilemma: Human Rights or Security*, 10 NW. J. HUM. RTS. 146 (2012).

² MORALES, RAFAEL ACOSTA. "WAR: Medusa's Head: The Drug War Commandeers the People." In *Modern Mexican Culture: Critical Foundations*, edited by DAY STUART A., 219-36. TUCSON: University of Arizona Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1tg5nvh.14>.

rising death toll is because of the war on drugs and are urging that laws be changed to decriminalize drugs, create stronger legal systems, and remove soldiers from the streets.

For the Mexican government the war on drugs is simply one they are fighting against the cartel and no one else, but for Mexico's citizens it is a war on two fronts. They not only have to worry about the brutality of the cartels, who commit murders for reasons as trivial as proving they still exist, but they also must worry about the state asserting its power among them as they are helpless to protect their rights. It is the Mexican people who are caught in the middle of shootouts in the streets, or hit by grenades thrown into busy plazas, or arrested and tortured by police without having any affiliations with the cartels whatsoever.³ The Mexican people are the ones who are being kidnapped by both the cartels and federal agencies. The cartels force their victims to work for them while the federal police kidnap citizens and detain or torture them for information. Sometimes, the federal police will kidnap people from events that have nothing to do with drug trafficking at all but use drug crimes as justification for their actions.⁴

People in Mexico are being subjected to unthinkable amounts of violence, pain, abuse and death as a result of this drug war. They are powerless to fight against the cartels who force them to join in the war or who are unrestrained by the thought of innocent people being caught in the crossfire. They are powerless to fight against the unlawful detention, interrogation and torture by federal police. Mexico was not like this before the war on drugs began and the homicide rate gets worse every year. Men, women and children are all affected as the war does not discriminate when it decides if it will kidnap, rape, or throw a body into a mass grave.

³ Grillo, I. (2008, September 16). Terror Bloodies Mexico Celebrations. Retrieved March 12, 2019, from <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1841623,00.html>

⁴ 19 police in Mexican state charged in kidnappings, killings. (2018, February 09). Retrieved March 12, 2019, from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/02/08/mexican-police-kidnappings-killings/322062002/>

Historical Context

Mexico has always had a very important role in drug trafficking. Originally, Mexico never had any real influence or power, but had a coveted position neighboring the United States of America. It allowed them to successfully smuggle drugs, more specifically cocaine, into the United States that were produced in Colombia, Peru, or Bolivia. The major Colombian cartels used their power to control the Mexican smuggling operation, and although there were some drugs being produced in Mexico, like marijuana and heroin, the country was mostly utilized as a drug trade route. The United States has always been one of the top cocaine consuming countries in the world and Colombian cartels struggled to get their product into the United States successfully. Mexico was a way for them to work with and control people directly bordering Colombia's number one customer and so Colombia created alliances with marijuana producers in Mexico to traffic cocaine as well.

Mexico took a larger role when the two major Colombian cartels, Cali and Medellín, fell in the 90s.⁵ Mexican cartels themselves took over sourcing drugs from producers and no longer had to answer to anyone else. Mexican cartels now were in control of drug trafficking into the United States and now account for 90 percent of the marijuana that enters the United States and is the leader in cocaine and methamphetamine trafficking in the United States as well. The rise of Mexican cartels did lead to an increase in violence in the 90s since it was a new market and there were players still jockeying for control, but it had decreased steadily into the mid-2000s until the declaration by Calderon of the war on drugs. The low point in recent history was in 2007 when

⁵ Cook, Colleen W. (16 October 2007). Mexico's Drug Cartels (PDF). CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Research Service. p. 7. Retrieved 10 May 2016.

the rate of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants was 8.1 in Mexico.⁶ For comparison, the United States in 2007 had a rate of 5.7 which is not much lower than Mexico.⁷

So why did Felipe Calderon start the drug war if homicide rates were at a fifteen-year low? It should be noted that he started the war on drugs only eight days after being sworn in as president, and some argue that it is because the election was so close and heavily contested that he wanted to put soldiers on the streets as a way to declare dominance of Mexico.⁸ Though there still was organized violence because of the cartels in Mexico, and there is some evidence that this violence would continue to grow. The reason for the increase in cartel violence at the beginning of the 21st century was due to the arrests of the leaders of the Tijuana cartel and Gulf cartel, Benjamin Arellano Felix and Osiel Cardenas.⁹ Their departure caused fighting for power among the Mexican cartels leading to an increase in drug related violence, though the overall homicide rates were still falling steadily. Calderon's efforts seemed counterintuitive after attacking cartels directly, removing their leaders, and causing changes in their ranks. It only caused an increase in organized crime and ultimately led to the cartels to fight back thus making it into a drug war. Shortly after the declaration by Calderon to have soldiers policing in Mexico, 6,500 soldiers were sent to Michoacán. That number quickly spiraled to over 20,000 soldiers across Mexico in a matter of months.¹⁰ Early in 2008, the leader of the Beltran Leyva cartel,

⁶ Shirk, David, and Joel Wallman. "Understanding Mexico's Drug Violence." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 8 (2015): 1348-376. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24546346>

⁷ Table 1. (2017, September 07). Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/tables/table-1>

⁸ Lakhani, N. (2016, December 08). Mexico's war on drugs: What has it achieved and how is the US involved? Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/dec/08/mexico-war-on-drugs-cost-achievements-us-billions>

⁹ Cook, Colleen W. (16 October 2007). Mexico's Drug Cartels (PDF). CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Research Service. p. 7. Retrieved 10 May 2016.

¹⁰ Lakhani, N. (2016, December 08). Mexico's war on drugs: What has it achieved and how is the US involved? Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/dec/08/mexico-war-on-drugs-cost-achievements-us-billionss>

Alfredo Beltran Leyva was captured. It is no coincidence that following this, violence greatly increases in Mexico including the murders of Mexican officials. In early May, Roberto Velasco Bravo, a director of investigations of organized crime, Edgar Eusebio Millan Gomez, a federal police chief, and Esteban Roble Espinosa, a commander of the investigative police force in Mexico City are all murdered within the span of eight days.¹¹ This could be seen clearly as retaliation by the cartels for the increased police state created to fight them, and is the start to the rapidly increasing homicide rate in Mexico as well as a turning point in the force being used by both sides to win the war on drugs. The next thirteen years in Mexico are shaped by the decision to create the war on drugs. Violence leads to protests and more violence. Human rights are violated as police react harshly to protesters and cartels become even more savage as they move not only to drug trafficking but human trafficking as well.

Case Study

There are many consequences of the Mexican war on drugs, but the most explicit and overt consequences are the deaths of Mexican citizens. In 2018 there were 28,816 homicides in Mexico which was a 15 percent increase from 2017 and was reported as a new record in the countries homicide rate.¹² Human rights activists have argued that the murders that have caused this steadily increasing homicide rate are due to the Mexican government's choice in continuing the war on drugs. It may seem like on the surface that the cartels are the ones committing the violence, but that is not the case. Not only is the violence enabled by the current militarized state, it is also committed by Mexican soldiers as well. For the most part the cartels are committing

¹¹ Mexico Drug War Fast Facts. (2019, February 15). Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/world/americas/mexico-drug-war-fast-facts/index.html>

¹² Agren, David. "Mexico's Murder Rate Broke New Record in 2018 as Drug War Drags on." The Guardian. January 22, 2019. Accessed February 20, 2019

violence in response to actions taken by the Mexican government, and the inability to change policy is what is allowing the violence to continue. Actions taken by the military police, like torture and kidnappings, are not only happening on cartel members, but innocent bystanders as well.¹³ Inaction by the government has caused political activists to call out the situation. The Mexican Indignados movement created in 2011 has sent hundreds of thousands of protesters into the streets calling for a change in policy as they are tired of watching their family members murdered in the drug war.¹⁴

The protests in 2011 by the Mexican Indignados movement, also known as the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity, was sparked by the death of the son of the political activist and poet Javier Sicilia. His son and four of his close friends were found dead in Cuernavaca, and they had no apparent connections to drug trafficking themselves.¹⁵ Sicilia, a journalist as well, was outraged by the assassination of his son and a movement to end the violence began. They cited the fact that so many murders, similar to that of Sicilia's son, go unsolved the blame can only be put on the Government for incorrectly administering the war on drugs.¹⁶ This is why they had two major protests called for by Sicilia in an open letter to Mexican criminals and politicians on May 5th and 8th in Cuernavaca and Mexico City.¹⁷ Thousands responded to his Sicilia in an attempt to end the violence all over Mexico and it is a

¹³ Investiga PGR a militares y agente federal por tortura de mujer - El Diario. (2019, January 13). Retrieved March 2, 2019, from http://diario.mx/Nacional/2016-04-14_1574f722/investiga-pgr-a-militares-y-agente-federal-por-tortura-de-mujer/

¹⁴ Infante, G. (2011, August 04). Notes and views on Mexico. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <http://frommexico.blogs.france24.com/article/2011/04/08/mexicans-go-out-protests-against-violence-and-drug-war-0.html>

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Miglierini, J. (2011, April 23). Mexico poet Javier Sicilia leads anger at drug violence. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-13141263>

¹⁷ Sicilia, J. (2011, April 06). Javier Sicilia's Open Letter to Mexico's Politicians and Criminals. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://glasgowchiapassolidaritygroup.wordpress.com/2011/04/06/javier-sicilias-open-letter-to-mexicos-politicians-and-criminals/>

good representation of the amount of people that are tired of the violence.¹⁸ It is clear in his letter that he puts the blame on not just the cartels and criminals of Mexico but Mexico's leaders as well. He calls for Calderon to step down from his position as president and it is one of the first instances of the Mexican people calling out its leaders for their part in the death of thousands and the terrible mismanagement of the war on drugs. The movement was able to set up a meeting with Calderon to speak about Mexico's strategy in the drug war. It was seen as a great step in the right direction for change, but nothing came of it.¹⁹ The Indignados movement has not made any lasting impression since 2011 and violence towards protestors and those who support the movement may be the reason why.

The Mexican governments only involvement in the violation of human rights does not stop at the implication of a drug war, it is also because of their actions during it. The police have become militarized during the war on drugs, and instead of investigators and policemen on the streets of Mexico, they have soldiers trained to kill. They were not trained to find truth or protect humans and their rights, but they were trained to kill other humans and since they have been deployed in Mexico that is what they have been doing. But they have not just been acting with lethal force on members of the many Mexican cartels, they have also used it on innocent Mexican citizens. An example of this is the event that took place in 2014 in Iguala when 6 students were killed and at least 20 were kidnapped by Mexican police in an ambush. The numbers may be higher as multiple sources have almost 50 people missing, but some students may had been able to escape when their school buses were ambushed by police when they were

¹⁸ Miglierini, J. (2011, April 23). Mexico poet Javier Sicilia leads anger at drug violence. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-131412633>

¹⁹ Ramsey, G. (n.d.). Can Mexico's Peace Movement Change Calderon's Strategy? Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20111105220515/http://insightcrime.org/insight-latest-news/item/1126-can-mexicos-peace-movement-alter-calderons-strategy>

returning from collecting money for future protests. Students who could not get away were either killed while attempting to flee or kidnapped by the police who had taken them from the buses and drove the students away themselves.²⁰ The area near Iguala in the state of Guerrero is apparently a hotbed for criminal activity and the police there are known for being corrupt. While the reason for the ambush was not originally known, later reports indicate that the mayor of Iguala called for the ambush because he did not want the students interfering with any activities that may have had to do with his wife who is a sister of members of the Beltran Leyva Cartel.²¹ It was also reported that federal agents had a role in their kidnapping and may have either passed them on to local gangs to torture and murder them or had done that themselves.²² Bodies were later found in a mass grave but the condition that they were found in made it impossible to identify the victims. Later evidence concluded that the bodies were not of the missing students and they are still missing today.²³

Stories similar to this, where people go missing or are kidnapped, has become more common in the last decade and it directly corresponds to the beginning of the war on drugs. The corruption created by the war on drugs as well as the power of having armed soldiers being controlled by corrupt officials and powerful cartels had allowed for cases like the Iguala kidnapping and many like it to happen. Police are either directly involved or claim ignorance by looking the other way. When they are caught committing the acts themselves, they seldom face

²⁰ Tuckman, J. (2014, September 30). Scores of students still missing after ambush by Mexican police and gunmen. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/30/scores-students-missing-after-ambush-gunmen-mexican-police>

²¹ Hernández, A. (2014, October 19). Los Pineda Villa, el clan fundador de la mafia guerrerense. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.proceso.com.mx/385199/los-pineda-villa-el-clan-fundador-de-la-mafia-guerrense>

²² Hernández, A., & Fisher, S. (2014, December 14). Iguala: La historia no oficial. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.proceso.com.mx/390560>

²³ Redacción, L. (2014, October 15). Hallan otras 4 fosas en Iguala; cuerpos de las primeras no son de estudiantes: Murillo Karam. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <https://www.proceso.com.mx/384773>

consequences for their actions. A recent report shows that between 2012 and 2016 only 3.2 percent of soldiers tried for misconduct and abuse get convicted.²⁴ Still nothing has been done to make any changes to this broken system by the Mexican government that allow for their soldiers to roam the streets and use their military training on Mexican civilians.

The war on drugs in Mexico is very similar to what was occurring in El Salvador in the 1980's. The Salvadoran government was fighting to protect its people from the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front). Like in Mexico the fighting between government and its opposers has led to massive actions of violence. In El Salvador there was the El Mozote massacre where more than 800 civilians were killed by the government. The government believed that the people of El Mozote were hiding guerrillas in the village. The government soldiers ordered the people to stay in their homes and not to come out or else they will get killed. The soldiers began to interrogate and torture some citizens to find out the whereabouts of guerrilla soldiers. In the process the soldiers began to kill men, women and even children it was a horrendous act done by the government who supposedly were there to protect their people.²⁵ In Mexico the citizens face the same cruel acts that the Salvadoran people faced. In Mexico journalist have been major targets over the years. Many of them trying to expose the secrets of the drug traffickers and linking some drug operations with political officials. The linking between political officials has put many Mexican journalists lives at risk. In a country trying to stop drug violence, the last thing a person would think of would be politicians working with drug

²⁴ Suárez-Enríquez, X. (2017, November). Human Rights Violations Committed by Mexican Soldiers against Civilians are Met with Impunity (Rep.). Retrieved March 2, 2019, from WOLA Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas website: https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/WOLA_MILITARY-CRIMES_REP_ENGLISH.pdf

²⁵ Schlotterbeck, M. Lecture 11, Understanding Insurgent Collective Action: The FMLN & its supporters. February 12, 2019

cartels. It is almost like the people of Mexico are fighting all by themselves as the government that has been fighting the drug war is also a key player in participating.

The constant escalation of violence in Mexico is especially worrisome considering no one has stepped in to try and stop it. In fact, the United States has in fact helped fund the war on drugs that has contributed to the deaths of so many with the Merida Initiative in 2008. This would have the United States giving Mexico billions of dollars to fight drug trafficking.²⁶ Again we see a pattern of the United States interfering and contributing to human rights violations in Latin America. The United States has intervened in the wrong way and has been incentivizing the Mexican government to continue the senseless and unnecessary war. The United States is the reason the drugs are being trafficked in Mexico and should look to changing its own policies and working with Mexico in finding a solution to dealing with the drug consumption that incentivizes the cartels to traffic drugs in the first place.

Conclusion

The Mexican government needs to seriously consider making some changes to end the violence that has been going on for over a decade. Cartels have moved to not just drug trafficking now but also human trafficking and other criminal activities. Proposed solutions to the violence, like decriminalization of drugs, have fallen on deaf ears. Decriminalization may actually be a legitimate solution as countries in other parts of the world have done it and have experienced extremely low levels of drug related activity. Also, with drugs being a billion-dollar industry in Mexico, for the cartels, there is a lot of tax money that the government can bring in and start toward building a better future for its citizens. Unfortunately, like most human rights

²⁶ The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

issues, the world for the most part has been indifferent towards the human rights violations in Mexico. With little pressure to make a change from other world powers, and its own activists being threatened by cartels and the government in Mexico, we absolutely could be looking at an endless war as the violence in Mexico becomes more normalized.

Case File

Agren, D. (2019). *'A smell of death': Mexico's truck of corpses highlights drug war crisis.* [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/25/a-smell-of-death-mexicos-truck-of-corpses-highlights-drug-war-crisis> [Accessed 17 Feb. 2019].

In Guadalajara Mexico, the authorities were struggling with what to do with the dead bodies that were piling up because of the drug war. David Argen writes about how the sheer amount of bodies left authorities with no choice but to use a refrigerated truck to store the bodies. The scandal was exposed when a truck in Guadalajara got stuck in the mud. Locals noticed the foul smell coming from the truck and forced it open to find bodies wrapped in garbage bags and duct tape. After the incident, Jalisco officials admitted to using refrigerated trailers for years. They would constantly move from neighborhood to neighborhood since the morgues had nowhere to put them and the bodies of the dead were not a high priority.

The number of bodies and the slow pace of bureaucracy left officials with in their eyes no better choice but to turn to a refrigerated trailer. The article suggests that this is not the only way that the war on drugs has affected the area and states past controversial events like the death of DEA agent Kiki Camarena. This might suggest that the author is trying to downplay the current event the drug war has caused because there has always been some form of drug violence or human rights violation in Guadalajara. The use of a refrigerated trailer to store unregistered bodies is disrespectful to the families and to the dead themselves. It is a violation of human rights and shows the lack of care and empathy from Mexican officials to just cast them away. A trailer cannot possibly be the best and only option when something like this happens. Officials not being able to foresee this situation coming and coming up with a plan to deal with it shows how poor of a job the Mexican government is doing while they a performing this war on drugs.

Shirk, David, and Joel Wallman. "Understanding Mexico's Drug Violence." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 8 (2015): 1348-376. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24546346>

Shirk and Wallman offer a historic approach at the war on drugs in their article. They give some context to help the reader understand why Mexico is where it is at today. They go in detail about the increase in deaths in Mexico since the beginning of the war and defined some of the main factors that causes the drug war. They go over some of the main tactics the government used to try to end the drug trade and what organized crime has done for Mexico. They touch on what politics has contributed to the war on drugs and where the line is regarding political and drug violence. There are also explanations of the use of corruption in drug trafficking and how those played into the drug war and the growth of the drug trade.

They conclude with ideas on what could help end the drug violence in Mexico and drug trafficking in general. Decriminalization of drug use, programs to help fight addiction, and more awareness on the amount of violence being committed in Mexico may be able to help better policies and human rights fighting against it. The articles focus is at understanding why there is violence in Mexico and its relation to the drug trade. At the end of the article the authors declare they have no conflict of interest in the matter.

The article will be useful because although it does not give exact accusations of human rights violations, it gives us historical context needed to understand why Mexico is in the situation it is in now, what steps it has taken before we got here and to help us understand why it is taking the current steps they are in repressing the violence that has come from the drug trade if they are at all. Where the drug trade has come from and how it evolved over the years will help in understanding how extreme the increase in violence really is since the beginning of drug trafficking to the beginning of the drug war.

MORALES, RAFAEL ACOSTA. "WAR: Medusa's Head: The Drug War Commandeers the People." In *Modern Mexican Culture: Critical Foundations*, edited by DAY STUART A., 219-36. TUCSON: University of Arizona Press, 2017.<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1tg5nvh.14>.

The Morales article suggests that the Mexican war on drugs is making no impact on the countries drug use and says that if it was going to make a positive impact it would have by now. He cites how few died from drug use before the war on drugs took place, seemingly out of nowhere, and that the 120,000 that have died because of drug war related deaths is a high price to pay to fight the war on drugs. He cites the steps taken in 1940 to curb drug problems by giving them away and allowing users to get drugs from official dispensaries, but that ended because of U.S intervention. He implies that ending the drug war is not about trying to stop those who are distributing the drugs but about making Mexico a better place for those using them so that drug use would be less rampant on its own.

Morales states that youths are the ones that are being killed more frequently in the drug war and it is youth and those in poverty that are being targeted more frequently for drug use as well. He states that there is a connection with the United States in the way that Mexico is treating its minority population, youths and poor, by criminalizing them and what they do. This observation may me because Morales states that the war on drugs was never spoken about publicly before Felipe Calderon became the president and it seems like the problem came out of nowhere to perhaps solve what he believes to be an issue with the youth and poor. He often compares today's problems and how both the people and government react to them with similar problems in the past.

Fredrick, J. (2019). *NPR Choice page*. [online] Npr.org. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/01/14/571184153/on-the-hunt-for-poppies-in-mexico-america's-biggest-heroin-supplier> [Accessed 17 Feb. 2019].

The Frederick article on the tactics the Mexican army uses to destroy Heroin Poppy fields shows a less violent side of the Mexican war on drugs. It states how officials will go into the hills

and burn any poppy fields that they see. This is supposed to stop a large amount of the deaths that happen from heroin overdose, and the article cites the 64,000 deaths in the United States where over 90 percent of the heroin comes from Mexico. The article states that Heroin cultivation has grown 3 times since 2013. The article also states that the burning of poppy fields only hurts the local farmers and not the big cartels that pay for the finished product because whenever a field is burned the cartels just go and buy it somewhere else.

The article gives proof of the failings of the war on drugs. All the things that the article states on the growth of heroin use and cultivation has been after the war on drugs in Mexico had already started. It also proves that cartels are willing to continue growing and paying for many different types of drugs even through the government crackdown on peasant fields. It also states how drug cultivators are planting fake fields for the Army to waste time on burning as the real higher quality fields are hidden elsewhere. It also shows how the army is putting officials in places where no drug trafficking is taking place as no cartel personnel spend any time in these fields and the only people being hurt by it is the poor farmers.

Gibbs, S. (2019). *Wanted: honest police in Mexico's war on drugs*. [online] TheTimes.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/wanted-honest-police-in-mexico-s-war-on-drugs-zjx8tl6b8> [Accessed 17 Feb. 2019].

The article by Stephen Gibbs speaks of a new national guard that is being created by the new Mexican president Lopez Obrador. The guard would have benefits and pay like the current army soldier would receive and uses the word honorable to describe the type of work they would be doing. The creation of a guard disregards the failures of using violence and armed forces to quell drug trafficking in the past and disregards the thousands who have died because of un-honorable actions taken by those state officials against Mexican citizens. The article itself

implies that the current police in Mexico are not honest themselves and that only a changing of the guard is what is needed to create a safer Mexico and end the unnecessary violence.

The fact that the new president Obrador is still financing anything towards a war on drugs mean that they are turning a blind eye to the failures of the war on drugs. Mexican officials are ignoring the downfalls of the war on drugs while at the same time admitting that corrupt police have been a reason for the downfalls of the war on drugs. The problem is that corruption is not the only issue with the war on drugs and it seems like Mexico is ignoring how the past 13 years has gone.

Morris, Stephen D. "Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Violence in Mexico." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2012): 29-43. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24590861>.

Stephen Morris discusses how corruption and drug trafficking in Mexico go hand in hand. In order to have the drug cartels have their business run smoothly politicians must be bribed in order for it to happen. According to Morris more than \$500 million were used by drug cartels to bribe politicians and officials. Morris tries to explain that corruption plays a central role on the drug war. He explains how officials have deals with cartels but put an image on for the people that they are doing everything they can for the drug war to end. This journal will fit well into our dossier as it shows the people behind the curtain pulling the strings. The corrupt government officials saying they are doing everything they can to stop the drug war but in reality are the ones involved.

Library, CNN. "Mexico Drug War Fast Facts." CNN. February 15, 2019. Accessed February 20, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/02/world/americas/mexico-drug-war-fast-facts/index.html>.

This article by CNN provides a history of the drug cartels in Mexico. It gives a list of cartel names with a brief description of their actions. Most importantly it gives a timeline which is very helpful for historical context. The timeline begins in 2006, when the drug war started, all the way to present day. This can be a starting point to understand how the cartels came to power and overtook Mexico's underground world.

Rios, Viridiana, and David A. Shirk. "Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis Through 2010." NCJRS. February 2011. Accessed February 20, 2019. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=260670>.

Another journal that provides numbers and statistics that proves the violent crime increase since the beginning of the drug war. The data collected dates from the 1990's to 2010 depending on which chart a person is looking at. The data also shows which type of officials have been killed the most for example like mayors in towns. The journal also provides the number of killings by each major drug cartel. It also displays the groups in conflict and how many people have the battle of cartels have taken. This journal gives us more great data to use for our dossier. We can compare and contrast the other data found in the other journals.

Agren, David. "Mexico's Murder Rate Broke New Record in 2018 as Drug War Drags on." The Guardian. January 22, 2019. Accessed February 20, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/22/mexico-murder-rate-new-record-2018-drug-war>.

This online article discusses the going rise of drug related violence in Mexico in 2018. The violent crimes have increased by 15% from the previous year. It discusses about Mexico's new president Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his plans to reduce the rate of drug related crimes. His main campaign was to tackle what he believes is the root of all the crimes which is

poverty and a lack of opportunity. He faces backlash though as he plans to militarize the police force and people believe that the police attribute to the crime rate as well.

Laura Carlsen, *Mexico's False Dilemma: Human Rights or Security*, 10 NW. J. HUM. RTS. 146 (2012).

Carlsen's article focuses on the execution of the war on drugs by the Mexican Government and the use of the army to fight it. There have been thousands of people that have died because of the war on drugs and the actions that the government has been taking has not shown any progress in over a decade. Carlsen argues that there have been very few court cases and even less convictions of army personnel in the deaths of Mexican citizens regardless if they are members of a cartel or innocent bystanders. The article suggests that the government is to blame and needs to change its course of action to stop the unnecessary deaths of thousands of people.

The article gives a different point of view to the war on drugs in Mexico than many Americans may have. We view drugs as bad, so the strict approach seems reasonable, however there are factors that Americans do not consider when thinking about a full out war on drugs. Due process is a human right that everyone deserves and should get in a court of law. The army goes into the communities, with many innocent civilians and uses excessive force and violence. Some may take the law into their own hands and some innocent people get falsely accused. The Article may remind Americans of the war on drugs at home that has incarcerated so many people, but then it reminds you that the Mexicans involved are not being incarcerated but killed. Being in a Human Rights journal, the article is meant to raise awareness among other Human Rights activists.

With an interest in Human Rights violations in Mexico, Carlsen's article gives some insight into the corruption and violations that the Government and Army commit. It will help give information of the war on drugs and allow me to expand on more Human Rights violations that may stem from the war on drugs. It will help me understand the government's role and some of the actions and inactions they have taken to create the current situation.