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**Por un México
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USA-MEXICO FIREARMS SMUGGLING

March 26 2009



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How is carried out firearms smuggling in Mexico?

Pursuant to the legal definition, firearm smuggling means the entering of weapons, ammunitions, cartridges, explosives and material of exclusive use of the Army, Navy and Air Force or subject to control to national territory, in a clandestine manner. This provision is contained in Article 84 of the Federal Law on Firearms and Explosives.

Arising from the investigations by the Mexican Federal Public Prosecutor with the support of the Federal Police and Mexican Army, and the exchange of information via legal assistance with the US DOJ authorities it is learned that smugglers prefer to buy weapons in cash from American citizens or legal residents

In this manner the smugglers turn into middle men between the interested party and the authorized weapon seller to smuggle weapons into our country thru the 19 formal entry ports and the uncountable informal entry points along 3,152 kilometers of common borderline.

For instance, there are 4 formal entry ports in Chihuahua, and 300 third order roads on the border between Ojinaga and Ciudad Juárez.

The weapons are smuggled into the United States hidden in land vehicles, spare wheels, back of seats, holes in the body of the vehicle, etc.

The smuggling is carried out in an ant-like operation (frequent repetition) and not in huge quantities shipments. Up to now no national or foreign criminal organization devoted only to firearm smuggling has been detected in Mexico.

PGR investigations show that individual persons carry out this activity. This is the core importance of the detention of Víctor Varela by AFT. According to his statements before the US authorities he was devoted to supply firearms to the criminal organization Carrillo Fuentes.



The Federal Public Prosecutor receives formal and final information regarding the statements allowing us to corroborate the Varela links in México, and other kind of information supporting legal actions in México.

Today the knowledge is only informal thru the agency; formal procedure via the authorized channels is on going.

What is the route for firearms trafficking?

There are identified four routes: Pacific, Center, Gulf and South.





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How many illegal firearms are in México?

There is no exact data about it because they are illegal, they are only detected when legal actions are performed related to their shipment, possession, amassing of weapons, or carrying of weapons in flagrante delicto or when used in a shooting or execution.

Normally persons apprehended with firearms deny to render a statement or say that they didn't know that those weapons were with them, they just say that the weapons were given to them and their origin is ignored.

The most meaningful seize in the country is the result of shootings between enemy groups, searches or findings.

Are drug cartels controlling firearms trafficking or there are different cells?

Organizations devoted to drugtrafficking do not control firearm trafficking; their distribution network contact persons who buy weapons, but this persons are linked to the organization, even when they work quasi-independently. The above responds to the supply in the US market and demand by criminal organizations resulting in turn from the need to control territory.

Are there zone suppliers in the United States? How these groups work?

There are no clandestine groups selling arms in the United States, since there are more than 12 thousand businesses along the borderline with Mexico selling firearms and more than 100,000 stores selling them legally in the US territory or via Gun shows, trading legally at the border with Mexico. The most common phenomenon to buy weapons is the use of middlemen who are not entitled to by weapons.

Who is delivered these weapons?

In the US there are no groups selling weapons clandestinely since the formal market is very big and its control is minimum; therefore a black market is useless, there is no need for someone to control it.



What is the price of the firearms smuggled to out country (model and origin) and their price in the black market?

Make	Origin
Colt	US
Norinco	China
Marlin Firearms	US
Bushmaster Firearmas	US
Beretta USA Corp	US
Pietro Beretta	Italy
Browning	Belgium, Germany, Italy Japan and US
Raven Arms	US
Remington Arms	US
Smith & Wesson	US
Romarm/Cugir	Rumania
Llama Gabilondo & Cia.	Spain
Mossberg	US
Jennings Firearms	US
Glock GMBH	Austria

The price fluctuates between demand and supply, the rate goes from 800.00 USD., to 2,000.00 USD., it has to be considered the age, status, make, model and version of the material.

¿Is there any program by the Mexican Government to keep fireams from being smuggled into the country?

In order to face the firearm trafficking problem, the Governments of the United States and México, since 1995 have strengthened the information exchange mechanisms to improve the techniques for identification, detection and interception supporting the prevention and control of this crime.

Within this scheme, the Government of México crated the Interinstitutional Coordination Group to Prevent and Control Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunitions and Explosives (GC-Armas), with members of 6 State Ministers (SRE, SDN, SEMAR, SHCP, SG, SSPF) and P.G.R., keeping close liaison with US ATF to implement actions with the aim to fight firearms trafficking.



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Its creation allow:

- Permanent training of public security personnel to identify weapons and track them later.
- Identification and tracking of firearms to detect their origins and possible firearms traffickers.
- To know the trends of the most commonly material seized in national territory.

Budget allocated to these programs.

Each participating entity has its own budget and work according to its own duties imposed.

¿Is there any US-México binational program to avoid firearm smuggling?

US-México Liaisons are established to exchange information on real time to carry out actions in case of detecting on-going firearm smuggling and to track the seized firearm.

They are the contact point to obtain results from the tracking of seized firearms and exchange information to identify persons involved in such crime.

¿What are the results obtained?

The Government of President Calderón has carried out a very intense effort to stop the ability to produce violence by organized groups,

Here are the antecedents: between 2002 and 2006 the annual average of long weapons seized is 2,500, and 450,000 ammunitions, during the same time period.

On this 28 months of the government, between December 1st 2006 and March 26, 2009, it has been seized 35,943 firearms, out of them 19,801 are long weapons, most of them are assault rifles; 4 millions 772 thousand 517 cartridges and ammunitions; and 2,804 grenades.

It is important to highlight that only in 2008, the figures were very relevant. 20,915 firearms and 3 millions 036 thousand 677 cartridges and ammunition. In 2009 it has been seized so far : 4,056 firearms and 894,008 ammunitions.



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What State shows the highest rate?

The action against organized crime by Mexican Federal Government is carried out in States with the highest figures.

- Long firearms, Michoacán, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California and Chihuahua.**
- Ammunitions, Tamaulipas, Baja California, Michoacán, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Chihuahua.**
- Grenades Tamaulipas, Michoacán, Chiapas, Sinaloa, and Nuevo León.**

¿Which are the criminal organizations?

Analysis of firearms and ammunitions seizures and arrest of persons establish that criminal organizations “Cártel del Golfo” and “Zetas” are those with the most presence and violent.

The highest quantity of firearms with special characteristics due to their versatility, wounding power, range, penetration and fire power have been seized to these criminal organizations.

It is highlighted the following weapons anti-tank rockets M72 and AT-4, rocket launchers RPG-7, grenade launchers MGL Caliber 37mm., grenade launcher additional devices caliber 37 and 40 mm, 37 and 40 mm grenades, fragmenting grenades, Barret rifle.50”, and new generation firearms like sub-machinegun and pistol FN Herstal by Belgium, imported by US, caliber 5.7x28mm, “Five-Seven” for their technical characteristics the qualities of its subsonic, tracing and penetrating ammunition able to penetrate Kevlar and Crisat armor, it is also known as “police killer”

On second place, regarding the seizure of conventional and special characteristics firearms, it has been seized in lower amounts some Barret rifles, rocket launchers and sub-machineguns FN Herstal caliber 5.7x28 to the so-called “Arellano Félix Brothers Cartel”, which operational cells have less presence due to the apprehension of its main leaders.



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In third place is “Cártel del Pacífico”, and groups alike (Mayo Zambada, Carrillo Fuentes) with important presence, since is a large group, some of its members have been arrested with possession of individual firearms and assault rifles of conventional characteristics, on some times grenade launchers and .37 millimeters caliber grenades also have been seized.

The figures in no manner are produce satisfaction or proud as they mean that are the result of the efforts carried out up to today, however, those are to be doubled in order to stop and banish firearm smuggling to our country.