Institute for Economics & Peace
Identifying and measuring the factors that drive peace

MEXICO PEACE INDEX 2024

- National and State Results
- Nine-Year Trends
- The Economic Impact of Violence
- Positive Peace in Mexico

IEP Institute for Economics & Peace

Quantifying Peace and its Benefits

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the 11th edition of the Mexico Peace Index (MPI), produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP). It provides a comprehensive measure of peacefulness in Mexico, including trends, analysis, and estimates of the economic impact of violence. The MPI is based on the Global Peace Index, the world's leading measure of global peacefulness, produced by IEP every year since 2007. The MPI consists of 12 sub-indicators aggregated into five major indicators.

Mexico's peacefulness improved by 1.4 percent in 2023. This was the fourth straight year of improvement, following four consecutive years of deteriorations. However, more states deteriorated than improved, with 15 states improving and 17 deteriorating.

Mexico's organized criminal landscape continues to be reshaped by the ongoing decline of the market for illicit marijuana and heroin in the United States and criminal groups' growing reliance on activities such as extortion, domestic retail drug sales, and the manufacture and trafficking of the synthetic opioid fentanyl. Against this backdrop, there has been increased competition over trafficking routes and control of local rackets between groups, especially the country's two most powerful cartels, the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel. It is estimated that between 2017 and 2022 about 19,000 casualties resulted from the conflict between these two groups.[1]

Mexico is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a politician. A recent global measure found the country had one of the highest numbers of politically motivated killings in the world.[2] Moreover, analyses within Mexico have shown political violence substantially increasing over the last three years, rising from 51 assassinations of political figures and government officials in 2020, to 171 in 2023. This is the third successive year of deterioration.

In 2023, the states with the highest homicide rates were Colima, Morelos, Baja California, Zacatecas, and Chihuahua. Colima's capital city recorded the highest homicide rate of any major municipality in the country.[3]

Colima also ranked as the country's least peaceful state last year, followed by Baja California, Morelos, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas. In contrast, Yucatán was once again the most peaceful state in Mexico, followed by Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Durango, and Coahuila. There is a large divergence in violence throughout the country, with the most peaceful states recording an average homicide rate of 4.2 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to an average rate of 72 in the least peaceful states. Last year, Colima registered the highest homicide rate of any state on record, with 111 deaths per 100,000 people.

In 2023, the largest improvements in peacefulness occurred in Zacatecas, Michoacán, Durango, Sonora, and Tabasco. In contrast, Morelos, Sinaloa, Quintana Roo, Chihuahua and Nayarit recorded the largest deteriorations.

All five indicators in the MPI improved in 2023, although several sub-indicators deteriorated. *Homicide and firearms crime* registered the largest improvements, with their rates improving by 5.3 and 2.7 percent, respectively. The homicide rate fell to 23.3 deaths per 100,000 people, its lowest level since 2016. This fall marks the fourth straight year in which *homicide* has improved. Despite this, homicides continue to be widespread in Mexico, with more than 30,000 victims each year since 2018, substantially more than in 2015, when there were fewer than 18,500 victims.

The *fear of violence* indicator also recorded a notable improvement last year. In 2023, 74.6 percent of the country perceived the state in which they resided as unsafe, an improvement of 1.7 percent compared to 2022. In the past nine years, national perceptions of insecurity have generally tracked with overall levels of violence in the country.

For the first time since 2020, the *violent crime* and *organized crime* indicators improved. The violent crime rate decreased by 0.8 percent, driven by an improvement in *robbery*, the most common form of *violent crime*, with the rate falling by 8.9 percent. In contrast, the other three sub-indicators – *sexual assault, family violence*, and *assault* – all registered minor deteriorations, with each of their rates rising by less than five percent. In the past nine years, the *violent crime* sub-indicators have followed divergent patterns. Assault and robbery rates have not varied more than 33 percent from their 2015 levels. However, family violence and sexual assault have increased each year, with both rates more than doubling since 2015. It is difficult to know whether the underlying rates have increased or if heightened awareness of family violence and sexual assault has contributed to these crimes being reported more frequently.

After peaking in 2022, the organized crime rate improved by 1.7 percent. This was the result of an improvement in *extortion*, which improved by 6.5 percent. All other organized crime indicators deteriorated. *Major offenses*, which include federal drug trafficking violations, recorded the largest deterioration, while *kidnapping and human trafficking* and *retail drug crimes* registered more modest deteriorations.

Despite the improvements over the past four years, Mexico was substantially less peaceful in 2023 than in 2015. In that time, peace in Mexico has deteriorated by 14.4 percent, with many crime indicators significantly higher than they were nine years ago. The homicide rate, for example, was 54.1 percent higher in 2023 than in 2015, while the firearms crime rate was 63.8 percent higher.

Organized criminal activity has continued to be the main driver of homicides and gun violence in Mexico. The proportion of homicides associated with organized crime is estimated to have risen by 145 percent between 2015 and 2022. This means that, over the past nine years, the annual

number of organized crime-related homicides rose from about 8,000 to about 20,000, while the number not linked to organized crime has shown comparatively little change.

Violence against security forces in Mexico has been on the rise in recent years. Between 2018 and 2023, over 2,600 police officers have been killed in Mexico, with Guanajuato recording the most officers killed and Zacatecas recording the highest police homicide rate. During this time, the country registered an average annual police homicide rate of 96.8 killings per 100,000 officers, meaning that being a police officer in Mexico is about four times as dangerous as being a member of the general public.

In the past nine years, guns have become the primary cause of homicide for both men and women in Mexico. Between 2015 and 2023, the proportion of male homicides committed with a firearm rose from 60.9 percent to 72.4 percent, while the proportion used in female homicides rose from 37.8 percent to 61.2 percent. This would indicate a higher availability of guns.

> “Being a police officer in Mexico is about four times as dangerous as being a member of the general public.

Since 2010, there have been more than 95,000 reported cases of missing and disappeared persons in Mexico. Last year saw by far the most cases on record, with over 12,000 missing persons reported. Historically, more men than women are reported missing, but in the past few years a growing share of missing people have been women, with a record 29.1 percent of the total being women in 2023.

The economic impact of violence has improved in each of the past four years. In 2023, the economic impact of violence in Mexico was estimated to be 4.9 trillion pesos (US$245 billion), equivalent to 19.8 percent of Mexico’s GDP. On a per capita basis, the economic impact was 37,430 pesos, more than twice the average monthly salary of a Mexican worker. Last year, the impact decreased by one percent, or 49 billion pesos. The decrease in homicides drove the improvement nationwide, as its impact fell by 2.9 percent.

Mexico’s spending on *domestic security* and its criminal justice system is the lowest of all OECD countries and was equivalent to 0.65 percent of GDP. This is also less than half of the average for Latin America. In 2023, spending on *domestic security* was lower than it was in 2008.

To tackle crime and violence more effectively, Mexico’s judicial system is especially in need of increased investment. The country has an average of 4.4 judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, one-fourth the global average. This has resulted in large numbers of people being incarcerated while awaiting trial or sentencing. Strengthening the judiciary is of particular importance for combatting Mexico’s high levels of impunity.

Mexico’s socio-economic resilience, as measured by the Positive Peace Index (PPI) score, has deteriorated by 3.7 percent in the last decade. This contrasts with an average improvement of 0.4 percent for the greater Central America and the Caribbean region. Positive Peace is a measure of the *attitudes, institutions* and *structures* that create and sustain peaceful societies, and a measure of resilience.

Mexico’s deterioration in Positive Peace since 2013 has been mostly driven by deteriorations in four Pillars of Positive Peace: *Well-Functioning Government, Low Levels of Corruption, High Levels of Human Capital,* and *Sound Business Environment*. The Mexico Positive Peace Index (MPPI), a sub-national measure of Positive Peace, further shows that *Well-Functioning Government* and *Low Levels of Corruption* were the Pillars with the highest levels of correlation with the peacefulness of states.

Simply combatting the factors that drive violence is not enough to sustain peace. Improving peacefulness in Mexico requires broader strategies that include addressing corruption and building effective institutions that are trusted by the public. To address systemic violence, a holistic public security and peacebuilding framework is needed.

The 2024 MPI report provides evidence for policymakers, business leaders, and civil society organizations to help develop new and broader peacebuilding solutions for Mexico.

KEY FINDINGS

SECTION 1: RESULTS

- In 2023, peacefulness in Mexico improved by 1.4 percent, with all five MPI indicators registering improvements. Peacefulness increased in 15 states and declined in 17.
- Last year marked the fourth consecutive year of improvement. This was preceded by sharp deteriorations from 2015 to 2019.
- The improvement in 2023 was primarily driven by a reduction in homicides, with the rate falling by 5.3 percent, the second largest improvement since 2015.
- Colima had the highest homicide rate in the country, with 111 deaths per 100,000 people. This is the country's worst homicide rate on record, beating the previous record that Colima set in 2022.
- In 2023, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness, while Morelos recorded the largest deterioration.
- Both these states ranked among the least peaceful states in Mexico in 2023. The five least peaceful states were Colima, Baja California, Morelos, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas.
- Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country for the seventh consecutive year. It was followed by Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Durango, and Coahuila.
- Mexico is one of the most dangerous places to be a politician. Political violence has been on the rise for the past three years, with the killing of at least 170 political figures and government officials in 2023, up from around 50 in 2020.
- Political violence disproportionately affects members of executive branches of government, with current and former mayors, governors and cabinet members the victims of more than half of all recorded political attacks.
- In the past six years, the highest number of political violence events have been recorded in Guerrero, with 128, followed by Veracruz and Oaxaca.
- Mexico's political environment is becoming more polarized, with opinion polls showing that partisan sentiment is on the rise.

SECTION 2: TRENDS

- Mexico's peacefulness has deteriorated by 14.4 percent over the last nine years. However, in the past four years, peacefulness in the country has improved by 6.1 percent.
- Despite some positive gains, many crime indicators are still much higher today than in 2015. The national homicide rate recorded a 54.1 percent increase between 2015 and 2023, rising from 15.1 to 23.3 deaths per 100,000 people.
- Nine states have recorded improvements in *homicide* since 2015, while the remaining 23 have deteriorated.
- Mexico's national homicide rate ranks 14th worst in the world.
- Two-thirds of homicides since 2015 have been the result of gun violence. In 2023, a record 70.2 percent of homicides in the country were committed with a firearm.
- Since 2018, more than 2,600 police officers have been killed. This equates to an average annual police homicide rate of 96.8 killings per 100,000 officers, suggesting that being a police officer in Mexico is nearly four times as dangerous as being a member of the general public.
- In 2023, there were more than 12,000 reported cases of missing persons, the highest number on record.
- The organized crime rate has risen by 62.4 percent since 2015. The deterioration was driven by a 157 percent increase in the rate of retail drug crime.
- The past decade has seen major shifts in the drugs produced by criminal actors in order to adapt to changing consumption patterns in the United States, with synthetic opioids like fentanyl becoming increasingly central to their operations.
- Between 2019 and 2023, the volume of fentanyl seizures at the Mexico-US border rose by more than 900 percent.
- Between 2013 and 2017, clashes involving at least one of the two largest cartels in the country, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), accounted for 38 percent of all cartel conflict deaths, but between 2018 and 2022, they accounted for 64 percent of such deaths.
- In 2023, about six in ten homicides in the country were estimated to be associated with organized crime, equivalent to around 18,000 killings.
- Documentations of unauthorized international migrants in Mexico have surged in the past three years, reaching a record high of nearly 800,000 in 2023. Unauthorized migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by organized criminal groups.
- The violent crime rate increased by 17.9 percent from 2015 to 2023, driven by widespread deteriorations in the rates of family violence and sexual assault. In contrast, rates of assault deteriorated only marginally, while robbery rates improved by 19.8 percent.

- Largely tracking with overall peacefulness, levels of fear of violence deteriorated notably between 2015 and 2018 but have gradually improved in the years since. In 2023, 74.6 percent of people regarded the state in which they live to be unsafe.
- Colima recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the last nine years, with its rates of firearms crime, organized crime, violent crime, and homicide all more than quadrupling since 2015.
- After Colima, the largest deteriorations in peacefulness were recorded in Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Quintana Roo, and Baja California.
- Tamaulipas has recorded the largest overall improvement in the last nine years, followed by Sinaloa, Coahuila, Durango, and Guerrero.

SECTION 3: ECONOMIC VALUE OF PEACE

- The economic impact of violence in Mexico was 4.9 trillion pesos (US$245 billion) in 2023, equivalent to 19.8 percent of the country's GDP.
- The economic impact of violence improved for the fourth year in a row in 2023, decreasing by one percent, or 49 billion pesos, from the previous year.
- The economic impact of violence was six times higher than public investments made in health care and more than five times higher than those made in education in 2023.
- Mexico's spending on *domestic security* and the *justice system* in 2023 was equal to 0.65 percent of GDP, less than half of the average for both Latin America and other members of the OECD.
- Spending on *domestic security* decreased by 41.9 percent from 2015 to 2023, while spending on the *justice system* decreased by 9.1 percent.
- In 2023, homicide constituted 42.5 percent of the economic impact of violence. This was equivalent to 2.1 trillion pesos (US$104 billion).
- A five percent reduction in the economic impact of violence is equal to the federal government's spending on transport in 2023.
- Protection costs peaked in 2019 and dropped below 2015 levels in 2023.
- The economic impact of violence was 37,430 pesos per person in 2023, more than double the average monthly salary in Mexico.
- There were four states where the economic cost of violence was substantially higher than in all others. In Morelos, Colima, Guerrero and Zacatecas, the cost represented about half of each state's GDP.
- The per capita economic impact varied significantly from state to state last year, ranging from 12,407 pesos in Yucatán to 112,660 pesos in Colima.
- In 2023, the economic impact of *violent crime* recorded the largest increase of all the indicators in the model. Government expenditure on the *military* recorded the largest decrease.
- Since 2015, 21 states have recorded deteriorations in their economic impact, with each state deteriorating on average by 52.4 percent. In contrast, 11 states have recorded improvements, with each state improving by an average of 25.1 percent.

SECTION 4: POSITIVE PEACE

- Mexico's Positive Peace Index (PPI) score has deteriorated by 3.7 percent over the past decade. In contrast, the average score of the countries in the wider Central America and the Caribbean region improved by 0.4 percent during the same period.
- Positive Peace in Mexico has recorded substantial deteriorations since 2016. This coincided with the substantial increases in violence across the country.
- Since 2013, the Pillar of Positive Peace to record the largest improvement was *Free Flow of Information*, on the back of national policies to improve internet access and the use of information technologies.
- The *Equitable Distribution of Resources* Pillar also improved, largely driven by Mexico's successful efforts in reducing inequalities in education, income, and life expectancy.
- The net deterioration since 2013 was driven by five Pillars of Positive Peace: *Well-Functioning Government, Good Relations with Neighbors, Sound Business Environment, Low Levels of Corruption,* and *High Levels of Human Capital*.
- Since 2016, Mexico has witnessed a steep decline in the *Attitudes* and *Institutions* domains, against the backdrop of rising political polarization. This was mainly driven by deterioration in *law to support equal treatment of population segments*, *government openness and transparency* and *regulatory quality*.
- At the sub-national level, the Mexico Positive Peace Index (MPPI) identifies variations in societal resilience across the country's 32 states. Nuevo León, Nayarit, Yucatán, Querétaro and Sinaloa recorded the best levels of Positive Peace. In contrast, Morelos, Guerrero, Tabasco, Puebla and Oaxaca recorded the worst levels of Positive Peace.
- The MPPI Pillars with the strongest associations with actual peace, as measured by the MPI and its five indicators, are *Low Levels of Corruption* and *Well-Functioning Government*. This suggests that corruption and administrative ineffectiveness are key drivers of violence in Mexico, as they contribute to impunity and reduce the resources available to combat crime.
- Improvement in the *fear of violence* indicator appears to be responsive to progress in all eight Pillars of MPPI.
- Nuevo León, Colima, and Baja California had the highest Positive Peace surpluses, while Tabasco, Chiapas, and Tlaxcala had the largest Positive Peace deficits. States with notable surpluses of Positive Peace are better positioned to effectively address violence over the medium to long term.

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Explore the data on the interactive Mexico Peace Index map: see how peace changes over time, compare levels of peace between states and discover how the states fare according to each indicator of peace.

2024 MEXICO PEACE INDEX

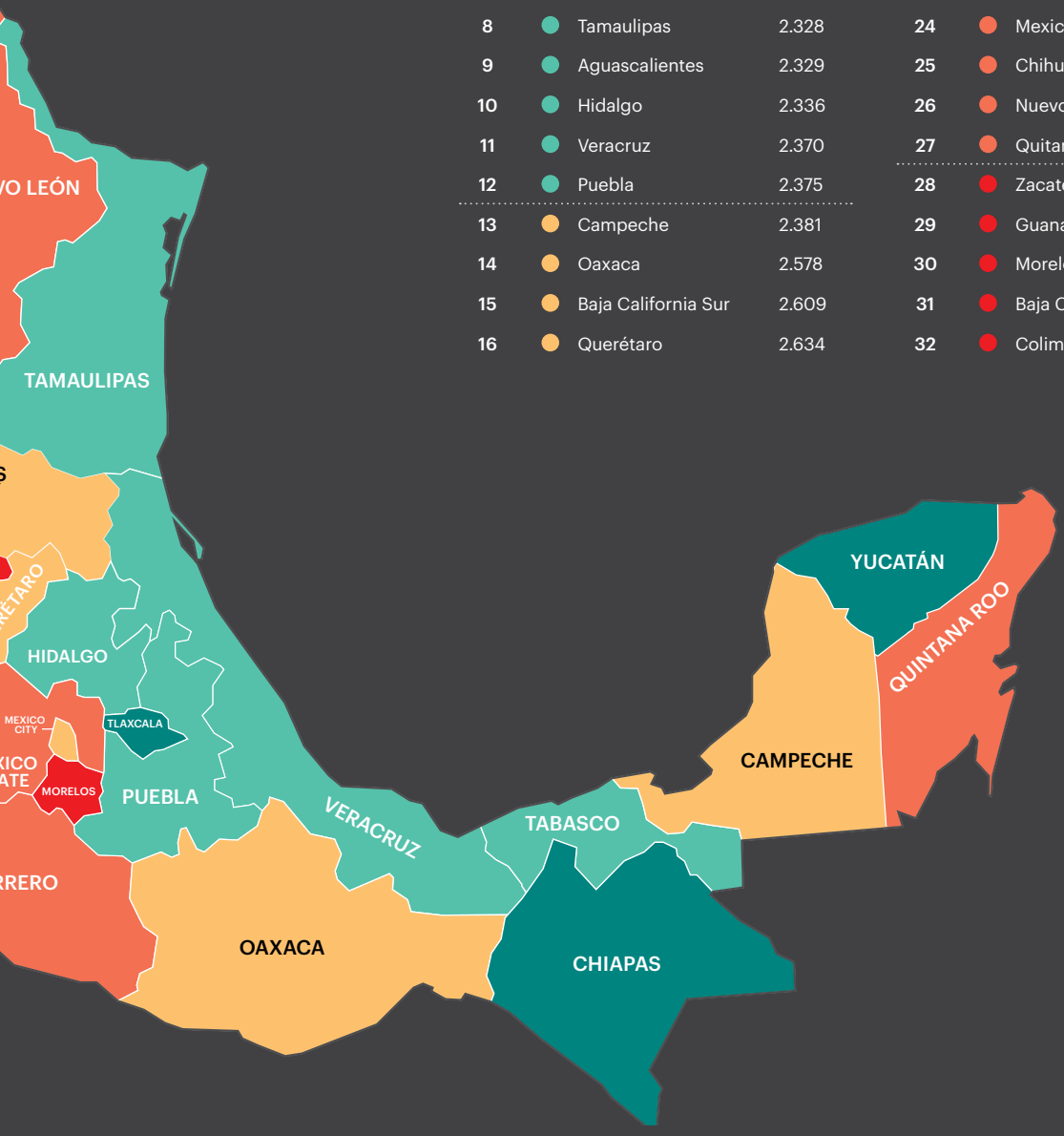
A SNAPSHOT OF THE STATE OF PEACE IN MEXICO

MPI SCORE

More peaceful

Less peaceful

RANK	STATE	SCORE
1	Yucatán	1.314
2	Tlaxcala	1.609
3	Chiapas	1.738
4	Durango	1.961
5	Coahuila	2.074
6	Nayarit	2.080
7	Tabasco	2.278
8	Tamaulipas	2.328
9	Aguascalientes	2.329
10	Hidalgo	2.336
11	Veracruz	2.370
12	Puebla	2.375
13	Campeche	2.381
14	Oaxaca	2.578
15	Baja California Sur	2.609
16	Querétaro	2.634
17	Mexico City	2.726
18	Jalisco	2.729
19	Sinaloa	2.794
20	San Luis Potosí	2.868
21	Michoacán	3.000
22	Sonora	2.254
23	Guerrero	2.271
24	Mexico State	2.446
25	Chihuahua	3.570
26	Nuevo León	3.621
27	Quitana Roo	3.678
28	Zacatecas	3.791
29	Guanajuato	4.055
30	Morelos	4.123
31	Baja California	4.422
32	Colima	4.742



1 | Results

KEY FINDINGS

- In 2023, peacefulness in Mexico improved by 1.4 percent, with all five MPI indicators registering improvements. However, more states deteriorated than improved, with 15 states improving and 17 deteriorating.
- Last year marked the fourth consecutive year of improvement. This was preceded by sharp deteriorations between 2015 and 2019. However, peace is substantially lower than it was in 2015.
- The improvement in 2023 was primarily driven by a reduction in homicides, with the rate falling by 5.3 percent, the second largest improvement since 2015.
- Colima had the highest homicide rate in the country, with 111 deaths per 100,000 people. This is the country's worst homicide rate on record, beating the previous record that Colima set in 2022.
- In 2023, Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in peacefulness, while Morelos recorded the largest deterioration.
- Both these states ranked among the least peaceful states in Mexico in 2023. The five least peaceful states were Colima, Baja California, Morelos, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas.
- Yucatán was the most peaceful state in the country for the seventh consecutive year. It was followed by Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Durango, and Coahuila.
- Mexico is one of the most dangerous places to be a politician. Political violence has been on the rise for the past three years, with the killing of at least 170 political figures and government officials in 2023, up from around 50 in 2020.
- Political violence disproportionately affects members of executive branches of government, with current and former mayors, governors, and cabinet members the victims of more than half of all recorded political attacks.
- In the past six years, the highest number of political attacks occurred in Guerrero, with 128, followed by Veracruz and Oaxaca.
- Mexico's political environment is becoming more polarized, with opinion polls showing that partisan sentiment is on the rise.

TABLE 1.1

Mexico Peace Index Results, 2023

A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.

MPI RANK	STATE	OVERALL SCORE	HOMICIDE	VIOLENT CRIME	FIREARMS CRIME	ORGANIZED CRIME	FEAR OF VIOLENCE	OVERALL CHANGE, 2022–2023	
1	Yucatán	1.314	1.107	1.096	1.395	1.041	2.670	0.030	↔
2	Tlaxcala	1.609	1.535	1.325	1.238	1.305	3.755	-0.041	↔
3	Chiapas	1.738	1.605	1.542	1.294	1.451	4.007	-0.012	↔
4	Durango	1.961	1.315	2.722	1.976	1.277	3.284	-0.191	↑ 2
5	Coahuila	2.074	1.241	2.746	2.776	1.198	2.950	-0.066	↔
6	Nayarit	2.080	1.592	2.674	2.066	1.597	3.043	0.106	↓ 2
7	Tabasco	2.278	1.609	2.940	1.800	1.915	4.453	-0.170	↑ 6
8	Tamaulipas	2.328	1.787	2.988	2.069	1.549	4.309	0.035	↑ 1
9	Aguascalientes	2.329	1.392	3.112	2.831	1.779	3.194	0.092	↓ 2
10	Hidalgo	2.336	1.518	3.045	2.533	1.718	3.783	0.078	↓ 2
11	Veracruz	2.370	1.693	2.588	2.289	2.058	4.595	-0.010	↑ 1
12	Puebla	2.375	1.883	3.082	1.596	2.096	4.460	0.023	↓ 1
13	Campeche	2.381	1.659	3.098	2.245	2.097	3.721	0.054	↓ 3
14	Oaxaca	2.578	2.434	2.421	2.062	2.704	4.288	0.003	↑ 1
15	Baja California Sur	2.609	1.203	3.629	4.645	1.131	2.474	-0.121	↑ 3
16	Querétaro	2.634	1.510	3.847	3.101	1.947	3.408	-0.040	↔
17	Mexico City	2.726	1.617	4.456	2.115	2.135	4.539	0.002	↔
18	Jalisco	2.729	2.375	3.121	2.123	2.591	4.478	-0.059	↑ 1
19	Sinaloa	2.794	2.038	3.427	3.254	2.107	3.760	0.275	↓ 5
20	San Luis Potosí	2.868	2.053	3.701	2.866	2.306	4.382	0.040	↔
21	Michoacán	3.000	3.149	2.183	2.343	3.762	4.568	-0.303	↑ 1
22	Sonora	3.254	3.687	2.922	2.704	2.961	4.365	-0.243	↑ 3
23	Guerrero	3.271	3.754	2.378	2.508	3.945	4.388	0.052	↓ 2
24	Mexico State	3.446	1.893	4.846	3.991	2.785	4.888	-0.105	↑ 3
25	Chihuahua	3.570	4.241	3.107	2.339	4.091	4.451	0.139	↓ 2
26	Nuevo León	3.621	2.442	4.031	4.741	3.513	3.961	0.085	↔
27	Quintana Roo	3.678	3.404	4.986	2.942	2.921	4.452	0.195	↓ 3
28	Zacatecas	3.791	4.470	3.483	2.368	4.144	5	-0.836	↑ 3
29	Guanajuato	4.055	3.928	3.216	4.106	5	4.662	0.029	↔
30	Morelos	4.123	5	4.149	2.635	4.040	4.842	0.399	↓ 2
31	Baja California	4.422	4.827	4.206	4.507	4.088	4.026	-0.020	↓ 1
32	Colima	4.742	5	4.019	5	5	4.574	-0.044	↔
	NATIONAL	**2.917**	**2.387**	**3.336**	**2.768**	**2.678**	**4.297**	**-0.042**	

Source: IEP

METHODOLOGY AT A GLANCE

The Mexico Peace Index (MPI) is based on the concepts and framework of the Global Peace Index (GPI), the leading global measure of peacefulness produced annually by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) since 2007. However, as an internal analysis of a single country, the MPI adapts the GPI methodology for a sub-national application. Both indices measure negative peace according to its definition as "the absence of violence or fear of violence."

This is the tenth iteration of the MPI and uses data primarily published by the Executive Secretary of the National System for Public Security / *Secretariado Ejecutivo de Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública* (SESNSP). Wherever possible, the official data is adjusted for underreporting and contextualized using other datasets. A detailed review of the methodology can be found in Section 5.

The MPI is composed of the following five indicators, scored between 1 and 5, where 1 represents the most peaceful score and 5 the least peaceful. Throughout most of the report, indicators are *italicized*, which distinguishes them from rates, which are not.

GLOBAL PEACE INDEX 2023

HOMICIDE

The number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

VIOLENT CRIME

The number of violent crimes per 100,000 people, adjusted for underreporting. Violent crimes include robbery, assault, sexual violence and violence within the family.

Source: SESNSP

ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime is made up of the following sub-indicators: extortions, major offenses, retail drug crime offenses, and kidnapping or human trafficking investigations. Extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking rates are adjusted for underreporting.

Major organized crime offenses include:

- the federal crimes of production, transport, trade, supply, or possession of drugs or other crimes under the Crimes Against Public Health Law / *Los Delitos contra La Salud Pública*; and
- crimes classed under the Law Against Organized Crime / *La Ley Contra El Crimen Organizada*, which includes all of the above crimes when three or more people conspire to commit them.

Retail drug crimes are used as a proxy of the size of the market fueled by illegal drug production and distribution. Each *organized crime* sub-indicator is weighted and averaged to form the indicator score. Sub-indicator weights adjust the scores based on the distribution of crimes, the relative social impact of the offense, and the degree to which the crime represents the presence of criminal organizations in a particular state of the country.

Source: SESNSP

FIREARMS CRIME

The number of victims of an intentional or negligent homicide or assault committed with a firearm per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

FEAR OF VIOLENCE

The percentage of people that perceive the state in which they reside as unsafe.

Source: ENVIPE

UNDERREPORTING AND ADJUSTMENT

Two of the indicators – *violent crime* and *organized crime* – are adjusted for underreporting. More than 90 percent of crimes in Mexico do not make it into the official statistics because they are either not reported to the authorities or because no investigation is opened. IEP uses the National Survey of Victimization and Perceptions of Public Security / *Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad Pública* (ENVIPE) of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography / *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía* (INEGI) to calculate underreporting rates for each state and crime, and adjusts the official statistics for robbery, assault, sexual violence, extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking to approximate actual rates of violence.

2023 NATIONAL RESULTS

Mexico's peacefulness improved by 1.4 percent from 2022 to 2023. This marks the fourth year of improvement following large deteriorations from 2015 to 2019.

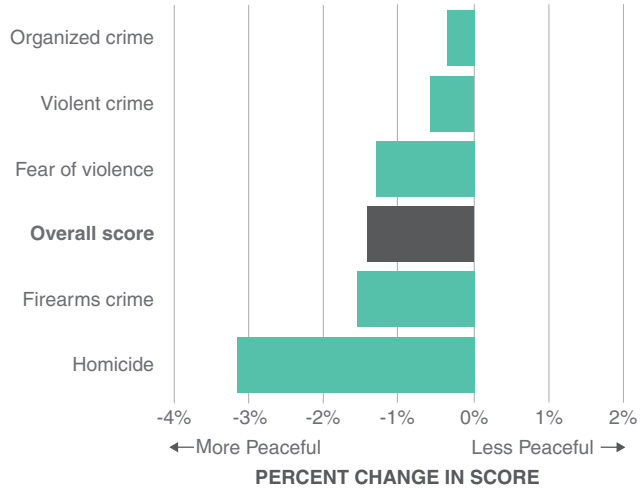
In 2023, all five MPI indicators improved, with the *homicide* indicator registering the biggest improvement, as shown in Figure 1.1. Seventeen states deteriorated in peacefulness last year, while 15 improved.

Figure 1.2 depicts the movements of all sub-indicators in both 2022 and 2023. While all indicators improved in 2023, six sub-indicators deteriorated. *Major offenses*, a sub-indicator of *organized crime* that includes federal drug trafficking crimes, recorded the largest deterioration. This reversed the trend of the prior year, when *major offenses* recorded the largest improvement. In 2023, its rate deteriorated by 12.5 percent.

FIGURE 1.1

Changes in peacefulness by Indicator, 2022–2023

All peace indicators improved in Mexico in 2023. A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.

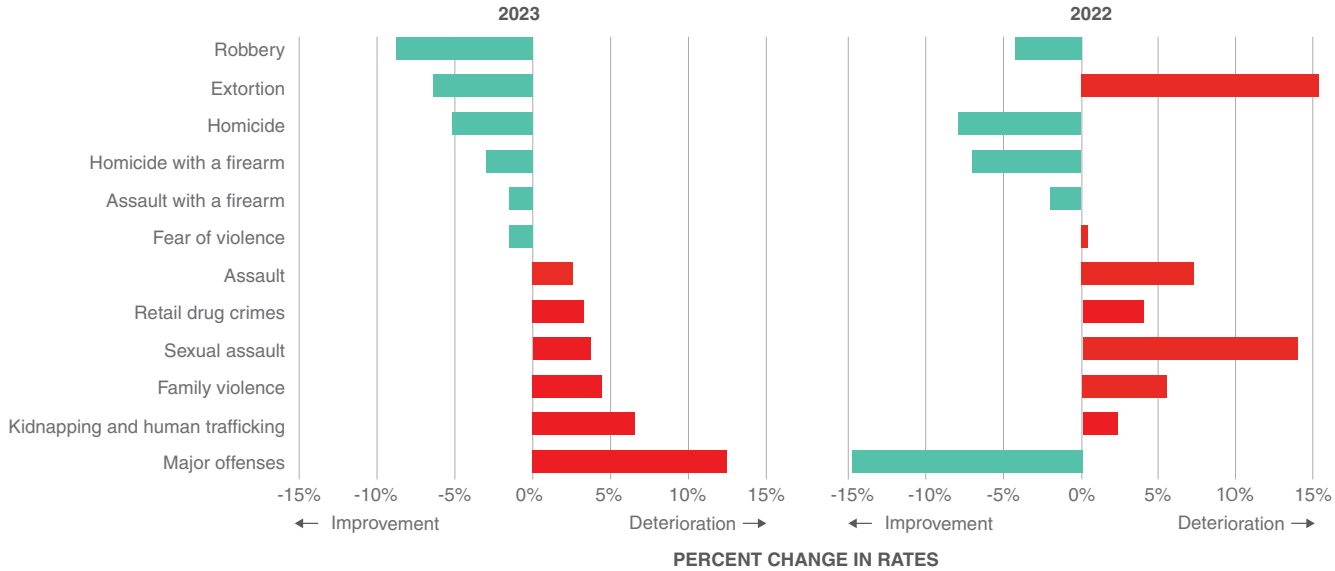


Source: IEP

FIGURE 1.2

Changes in peacefulness by sub-indicator, 2023 and 2022

In 2023, all but three sub-indicators moved in the same direction as the previous year, with major offenses and extortion showing the largest reversals in rates.



Source: IEP

The sub-indicator to register the largest improvement in 2023 was *robbery*, which fell by 8.9 percent. However, the primary driver in Mexico's overall improvement in peacefulness last year was the decline in the homicide rate, which fell by 5.3 percent. Zacatecas recorded the largest improvement in *homicide* in 2023, improving by 27.5 percent. Zacatecas also experienced the country's largest improvement in overall peacefulness.

Morelos recorded the largest deteriorations in both overall peacefulness and in homicides, with its homicide rate increasing by 24.9 percent. Morelos's rate of 72.5 homicides per 100,000 people was its worst on record. The state experienced deteriorations in all five MPI indicators.

For the second consecutive year, Colima was the least peaceful state in the country, followed by Baja California, Morelos, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas. Colima's poor performance was driven by its extremely high homicide rate. With 111 deaths per 100,000 people, Colima registered the country's worst homicide rate on record, beating the previous record that it set in 2022.

In 2023, Yucatán was the most peaceful state for the seventh consecutive year. It was followed by Tlaxcala, Chiapas, Durango, and Coahuila. Yucatán had the lowest homicide rate in the country last year, recording just 1.8 deaths per 100,000 people. This is about half of the rate of the second-best ranking state, Baja California Sur, which recorded 3.4 deaths per 100,000 people.

For the fourth year in a row, the *homicide* and *firearms crime* indicators recorded the largest improvements. These two indicators typically correlate strongly, as *homicide with a firearm* is one of the sub-indicators of *firearms crime*. In 2023, 70.2 percent of homicides were committed with a firearm. Overall, the rate of firearms crime improved by 2.7 percent.

Despite the consistent but modest declines in firearms crimes in recent years, criminal groups continue to engage in armed conflict for territorial control of drug trafficking routes and other illicit rackets across the country. Such groups are armed with conventional guns and, increasingly, with military-grade weaponry smuggled in from the United States.[1]

The *violent crime* indicator also registered an improvement in 2023, with its rate declining by 0.8 percent. Despite the national improvement, only 12 states experienced improvements, while 20 recorded deteriorations. The largest improvement in *violent crime* score occurred in Durango, where the rate fell by 12.8 percent. The largest deterioration occurred in Nayarit, where the rate rose by 35 percent. The overall improvement in *violent crime* was entirely a result of a decline in robberies, as the other sub-indicators – *assault*, *family violence*, and *sexual assault* – all deteriorated.

Organized crime also improved in 2023, with its overall rate falling by 1.7 percent. In a trend mirroring that of *violent crime*, the *organized crime* indicator has only improved in three of the past nine years – in 2016, 2020, and 2023. Last year's improvement in *organized crime* occurred entirely because of an improvement in *extortion*, which dropped by 6.5 percent, as all other sub-indicators experienced deteriorations. *Major offenses* recorded the largest deterioration, with its rate rising by 12.5 percent, while *kidnapping and human trafficking* and *retail drug crimes* also deteriorated, by 6.7 and 3.4 percent, respectively.

Despite its small deterioration in 2023, the rate of retail drug crimes had the largest deterioration of any indicator or sub-indicator in the MPI since 2015, increasing by 157 percent. Other *organized crime* indicators to record large deteriorations since 2015 were *extortion* and *major offenses*, which respectively increased by 50.9 and 33.3 percent. *Kidnapping and human trafficking* is the only sub-indicator to have recorded an overall improvement since 2015, with its rate having fallen by 52 percent.

The *fear of violence* indicator, which measures the degree to which citizens perceive the state they reside in to be unsafe, improved by 1.7 percent. This is equivalent to a 1.3 percentage point drop in the rate of fear. The indicator, which is generally slow moving, has gradually been improving since perceptions of insecurity peaked in 2018, at 79.4 percent. There is generally a strong correlation between lower levels of overall peacefulness and higher levels of fear. Three states among the five least peaceful states in the country – Zacatecas, Morelos, and Guanajuato – also place among the five states with the highest fear of violence rates. On the other hand, two of the most peaceful states in Mexico – Yucatán and Coahuila – rank among the five states with the lowest rates of fear.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND POLARIZATION IN MEXICO

The 2024 general elections are set to be the largest in Mexico's history. In addition to selecting a new president, the country will be electing an entirely new membership of both chambers of congress, as well as numerous governors and state-level legislative seats. In total, almost 20,000 positions will be elected.[2] Moreover, a woman is likely to be elected to lead the country for the first time, after both the governing party and the leading opposition coalition selected women as their candidates.

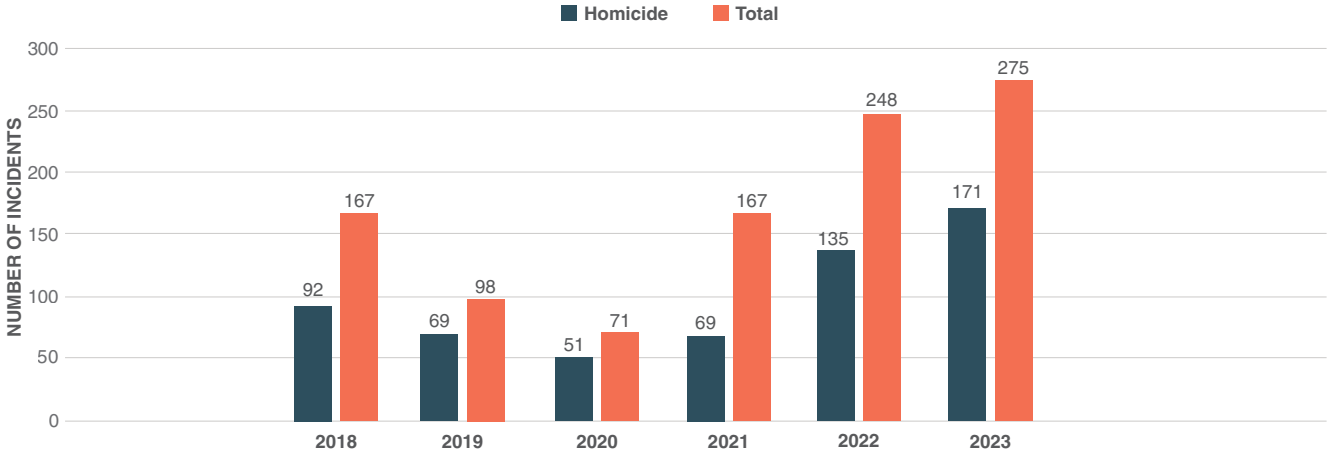
In recent years, however, elections have been associated with increases in violence. Mexico's highest homicide rate on record occurred in July 2018, the month following the last general election, when nationally there were 2.5 killings per 100,000 people, equivalent to more than 3,150 deaths.

Figure 1.3 shows the annual number of political violence events in Mexico since the last major election in 2018. Based on Data Cívica records, such events include killings, physical attacks, kidnappings, disappearances, and acts of intimidation.[3] The year of the last major election, 2018, saw a high level of political violence throughout Mexico, with 167 recorded incidents, 92 of which were homicides. Over the next two years, the recorded number of acts of violence declined, reaching a six-year low in 2020, with 71 events. Over the last three years, however, the number of events has been steadily climbing. Last year saw the highest number on record, with 275 political violence events, of which 171 were homicides.

FIGURE 1.3

Recorded political violence events in Mexico, 2018–2023

The recorded numbers of both total political violence events and political killings have increased each year since 2020.



Source: Data Cívica, IEP calculations
Note: Political violence events against current or former security forces and their family members are not included.

Between 2018 and 2023, political violence has mostly targeted political or governmental personnel operating at the municipal level. Of over 1,000 recorded incidents, more than three-quarters have been municipal-level attacks. Attacks against state-level officials, candidates, staff, and their family members have been the next most common, representing nearly one-fifth of all attacks. Attacks against federal-level individuals have been the least common, representing less than six percent of the total.

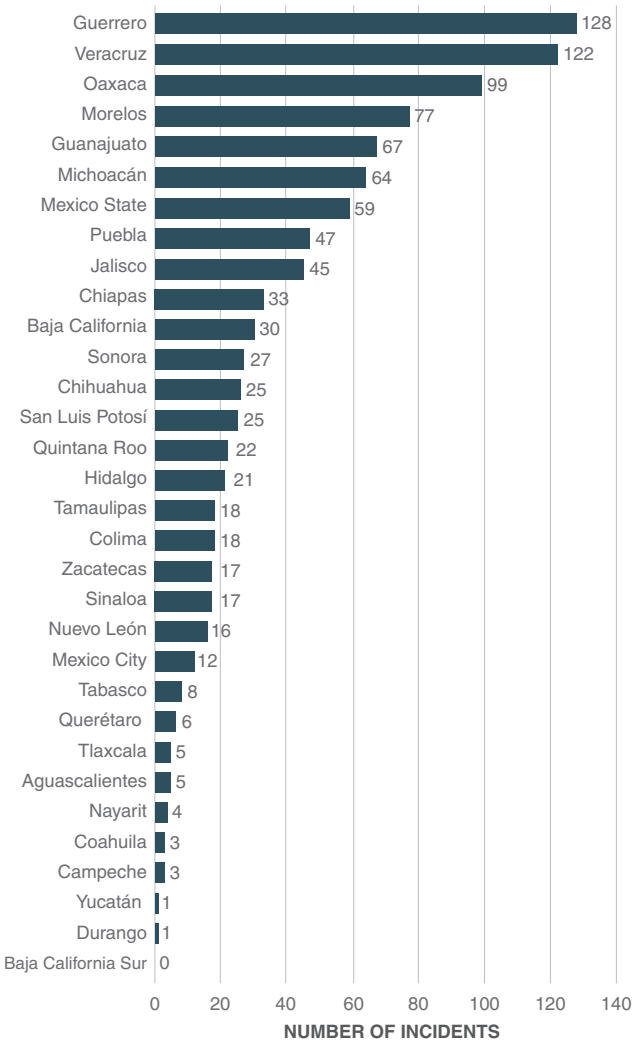
Analysts have cited a variety of factors driving the disproportionate levels of political violence associated with municipal elections and government officials. These include the substantial importance that local power holds for organized criminal groups, who tend to view control at the municipal level as central to their operations. Such motivations are suspected to have been at play, for example, in the murder of two mayoral hopefuls within hours of one another in the city of Maravatío, Michoacán in February 2024.[4] In addition to using violence for political ends, organized criminal groups have been known to finance the campaigns of candidates friendly to them or even put forward their own candidates. Moreover, municipal politicians and candidates – who are far more numerous than those at the state and federal levels – can also find themselves in more vulnerable positions because local security forces are often less well-equipped to provide protection against heavily armed criminal groups than state or federal forces.[5]

As shown in Figure 1.4, certain states also experience more political violence than others. Guerrero has recorded the most incidents, with 128 between 2018 and 2023, followed by Veracruz with 122 and Oaxaca with 99. These three states also had the highest number of political killings, with Guerrero experiencing 77, while Veracruz and Oaxaca each experienced 76.

FIGURE 1.4

Recorded political violence events in Mexico, by state, 2018–2023

Guerrero, Veracruz, and Oaxaca are the three states most affected by political violence in Mexico.



Source: Data Cívica, IEP calculations
Note: Political violence events against current or former security forces and their family members are not included.

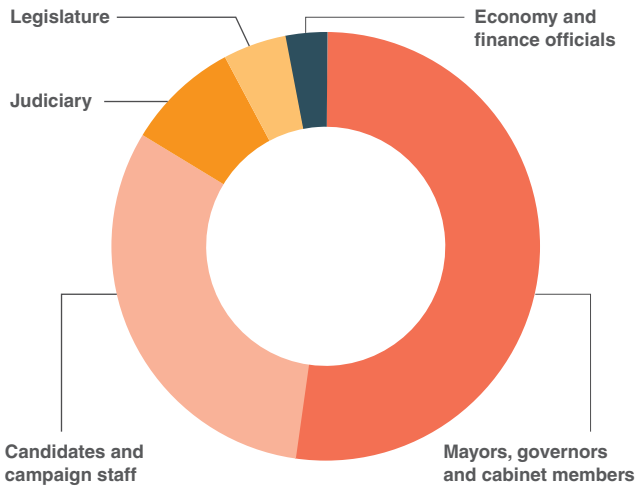
Homicides were the most recorded type of attack, accounting for 57.2 percent of all incidents, followed by non-lethal armed attacks, which accounted for 17.3 percent. A further 10.3 percent of incidents were threats, while kidnappings accounted for 8.5 percent, other attacks for 5.6 percent, and disappearances for 1.2 percent.

Figure 1.5 shows the proportion of victims by government area.[6] Current and former officials in executive positions, such as mayors, governors, and cabinet members, along with their family members, have been the targets of most of the violence, accounting for over half of victims between 2018 and 2023. [7] Candidates and their campaign staff were also significant targets, accounting for almost a third of the victims. In contrast, individuals affiliated with the judicial and legislative branches of government as well as economic and finance officials were less frequently targeted, together making up about one-sixth of the victims.

FIGURE 1.5

Recorded political violence events in Mexico, by victims' government area, 2018–2023

Mayors, governors, and cabinet members were the targets of over half of all politically motivated violence incidents, followed by candidates and campaign staff at almost a third.



Source: Data Cívica, IEP calculations
Note: Political violence events against current or former security forces and their family members are not included.

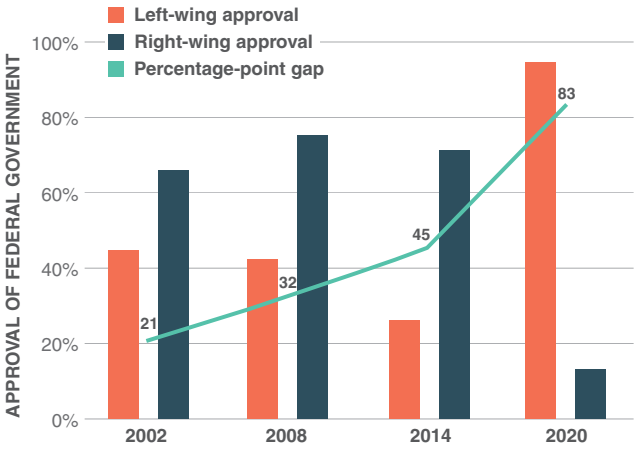
The rise in political violence in Mexico has coincided with growing political polarization. As with many countries, there has been a growing divide in the country's political landscape along partisan lines. There are long-standing factors that fuel polarization. In recent years, however, polarization has also been intensified by contentious electoral cycles as well as increasingly adversarial relationships between voices within government, on the one hand, and the news media, on the other.[8] The latter trend has led to a more polarized media environment,[9] which in turn feeds polarization within the citizenry at large.

Figure 1.6 shows opinion polling results over the past two decades, revealing that perspectives about the government have become much more polarized in that time.[10] In 2002, the gap in federal government approval ratings between citizens identifying as left-wing and those identifying as right-wing was only 21 points. That gap, however, has steadily climbed. By 2020, it had reached 83 percentage points, a nearly fourfold increase. This indicates that people that see themselves as either conservative or progressive have become much less likely to show divergence of opinions than they were 20 years ago. This has important implications for the entrenchment of views and the willingness of citizens and officials to collaborate with those of differing political perspectives for the common good.[11]

FIGURE 1.6

The growing political opinion gap, 2002–2020

Federal government approval rates by citizens identifying as left-wing and right-wing have become much more polarized over the last two decades.



Source: El Financiero, IEP calculations

Research has also shown that political polarization and fragmentation can exacerbate violence and undermine efforts at building peace. Organized criminal groups have been found to effectively exploit fissures in government at the local, state, and federal levels in order to increase their influence. A study on violence in Mexico between 2006 and 2012, for example, found that municipalities where both the municipal and state governments were of the same political party as the national government experienced 105 percent less violence than municipalities aligned with the ideological opposition.[12] More polarized states, where there are sharp divisions between rival political ideologies, tend to have weaker institutions and lower social cohesion.

In contrast, societies that can maintain a higher degree of social and political cohesion are better equipped to contain violence and foster peace. This has largely been the case in Yucatán, which consistently ranks as the country's most peaceful state. Research has credited the state's success to the ability of its political and security institutions to maintain cooperative intergovernmental relationships over the last several decades, even when the parties in power at the state and federal levels differed. The resulting continuity in the leadership of its security forces has contributed to permanence and cohesion within and across agencies.[13]

MEXICO PEACE INDEX

2023 STATE RESULTS

IMPROVEMENTS IN PEACEFULNESS

Fifteen states recorded improvements in peacefulness in 2023, while 17 deteriorated. Table 1.2 shows that the five states with the largest improvements experienced moderate to significant improvements in peacefulness.

Last year was the fourth consecutive year in which the national homicide and firearms crime rates improved. Of the most improved states, three were among those with the largest improvements in *homicide* and four were among those with the largest improvements in *firearms crime*. On average, these state's homicide and firearms crime rates respectively decreased by 26.1 and 25.4 percent, compared to the national rates which respectively decreased by 5.3 and 2.7 percent.

The states that improved the most in 2023 span the country, representing the northern, western, central, and southern regions of Mexico.

TABLE 1.2

Five most improved states, 2022–2023

Zacatecas recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness, despite being one of the most violent states in the country.

STATE	CHANGE IN SCORE	2022 RANK	2023 RANK	CHANGE IN RANK
Zacatecas	-0.836	31	28	↑ 3
Michoacán	-0.303	22	21	↑ 1
Sonora	-0.243	25	22	↑ 3
Durango	-0.191	6	4	↑ 2
Tabasco	-0.17	13	7	↑ 6

Source: IEP
Note: A negative change represents an improvement in peacefulness.

Zacatecas — Rank: 28

MPI SCORE IN 2024

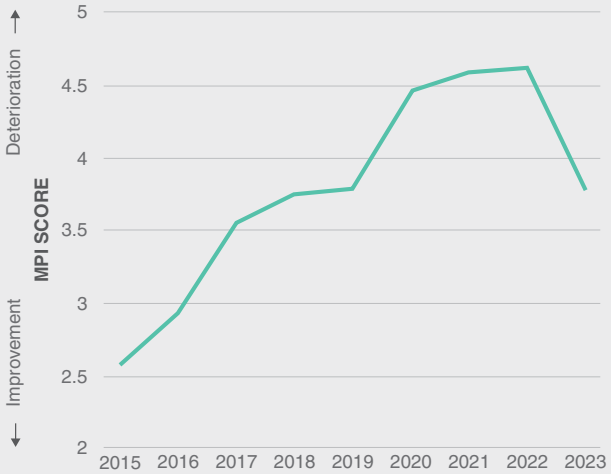
3.791

CHANGE IN RANK 2023–2024

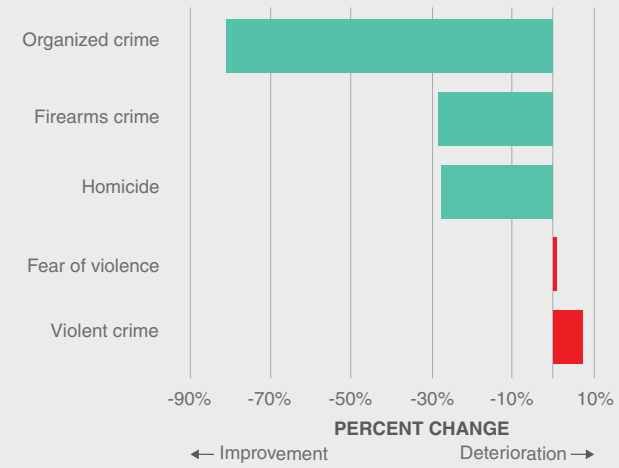
↗ 3

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **-0.836**

OVERALL SCORE, 2015–2023



CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



Zacatecas experienced the largest improvement in peacefulness in Mexico in 2023. This marks its first year of improvement since at least 2015. The state rose three places in 2023, from 31st to 28th, driven by an 81.6 percent decline in its organized crime rate as well as improvements of almost 30 percent in its rates of both homicide and firearms crime.

Zacatecas's significant improvement in *organized crime* can be attributed to an 85.1 percent improvement in the extortion rate. However, this decline was off an extremely high base, with the state recording extortion rates that were more than twice as high as any other state from 2020 to 2022. The 2023 improvement in *organized crime* was also supported by a 3.9 percent improvement in the rate of retail drug crimes. These improvements were somewhat offset by a 39.8 percent increase in the rate of kidnapping and human trafficking and 6.1 percent increase in the major offenses rate.

Zacatecas also recorded its worst violent crime rate on record in 2023, with 2,635 crimes per 100,000 people, a 7.7 percent increase from 2022. This increase was driven by a 22.9 percent increase in the assault rate, along with a 7.3 percent increase in the rate of family violence and a 6.3 increase in the rate of sexual assault.

In contrast, the firearms crime rate improved by 28.6 percent, driven by a 30.6 percent decrease in homicides with a firearm and a 11.7 percent decrease in assaults with a firearm. The percentage of homicides committed with a firearm fell from 81.2 percent in 2022 to 77.7 percent in 2023. The overall homicide rate also dropped substantially, falling by 27.5 percent.

Despite these improvements, Zacatecas continues to be one of the least peaceful states in Mexico. As a result, it recorded the worst *fear of violence* score in the country for the second year in a row. In 2023, 91.9 percent of Zacatecas population felt unsafe in the state, a 1.1 percentage point increase from the year prior and the worst level recorded in the state since 2015.

In Fresnillo, the most populous municipality in Zacatecas, 96.4 percent of the population felt unsafe in 2023, the highest rate of any municipality in the country, while 87.6 percent of people in Zacatecas City felt unsafe.[14] Fresnillo also had the 11th highest homicide rate for municipalities with a population of over 150,000, with 87.8 deaths per 100,000 people.[15] The municipality of Guadalupe, which forms part of the Zacatecas-Guadalupe metropolitan area, had the ninth highest rate, with 99.1 deaths per 100,000 people, while the municipality of Zacatecas itself had 68 deaths per 100,000 people. Across all of Zacatecas's 58 municipalities, including those with very small populations, almost a third had extreme homicide rates in 2023 – that is, more than 50 deaths per 100,000 people.

Zacatecas has become an epicenter of cartel violence in recent years, particularly between the New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG) and the Sinaloa Cartel, who often operate through local gangs.[16] The increase in violence can, in part, be attributed to Zacatecas's strategic position, with important drug trafficking routes crossing the state. In addition to cross-state trafficking, there have been increased reports in the past few years of organized crime groups victimizing local people through rackets such as extortion and kidnapping.[17] The lack of dominance by a single group leads to increased violence, with civilian deaths occasionally arising as collateral damage as competing groups foment disorder in their fight for territorial control.[18]

In December 2023, the CJNG's purported leader of operations in Zacatecas, Francisco "N", was arrested in Guadalupe. He was seen as a driver of the CJNG's violence in the state and was a top target of law enforcement. When police forces searched his property, they recovered a significant volume of weapons and drugs, including marijuana and methamphetamine.[19]

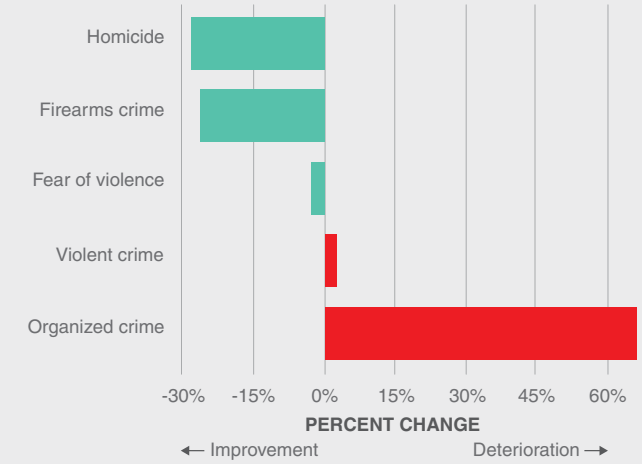
Michoacán — Rank: 21

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **3.000**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↗1

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **-0.303**

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



Michoacán had the second largest improvement in 2023, rising by one place to be the 21st most peaceful state in Mexico. The state recorded substantial improvements in homicide and firearms crime, and a smaller improvement in *fear of violence*. Despite this, Michoacán recorded deteriorations in *organized crime* and *violent crime*.

The homicide rate improved by 28.1 percent, dropping from 50.5 to 36 deaths per 100,000 people between 2022 and 2023. Michoacán's firearms crime rate also improved, falling by 26.7 percent from 55.2 to 40.4 crimes per 100,000 people. These improvements were driven by significant improvements in both assaults and homicides carried out with a firearm, with their rates falling 21.1 percent and 28.7 percent, respectively. *Fear of violence* in Michoacán also improved last year, with 80.8 percent of residents regarding the state as unsafe, down from 83.1 percent in 2022, which was the state's highest rate on record.

Despite these improvements, *organized crime* deteriorated, with its rate rising from 72.1 to 120 crimes per 100,000 people from 2022 to 2023, giving the state its highest crime rate on record. This was driven by the extortion rate more than tripling. Such extortions can take diverse forms in the state. Recently, one criminal group set up makeshift internet towers, referred to as "narco-antennas", and forced residents to pay to use their Wi-Fi, threatening dissenters with death.[20] Criminal groups have also infiltrated Michoacán's agricultural sector, with lime growers among their primary targets for extortion.[21]

The state also experienced a minor deterioration in *retail drug crimes*, with the rate rising by 5.6 percent. In contrast, the rate of kidnapping and human trafficking fell by 54.8 percent and the rate of major offenses fell by 3.1 percent.

The metropolitan area of Zamora, comprising the twin municipalities of Zamora and Jacona, saw its homicide rate fall by about half in 2023. Despite this, it continued to record the state's highest levels of homicide. Zamora and Jacona respectively recorded 114 and 116 deaths per 100,000, the highest rates among municipalities with at least 50,000 people.

Zamora is one of the main areas of activity of Cárteles Unidos, an alliance of several criminal organizations based in Michoacán, reportedly including the Knights Templar and Los Viagras cartels, whose main rival is the CJNG, which they seek to expel from the state.[22] The battles for territorial control between these groups continue to drive high levels of violence.[23] In August 2023, the federal government sent 1,200 additional troops to Michoacán in response to arson attacks on three convenience stores and five vehicles, a tactic utilized by cartels in the area to block roads and enforce their extortion demands.[24]

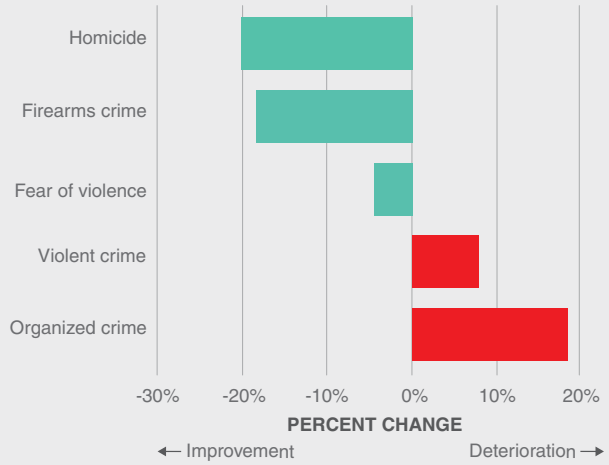
Sonora — Rank: 22

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **3.254**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↗3

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **-0.243**

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



Sonora had the third largest improvement in 2023, its second consecutive appearance among the five most improved states. The state improved in three of the five MPI indicators, with its homicide rate falling from 56.4 to 45.1 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023, the third largest decrease in rate of any state.

The other two indicators to improve, *firearms crime* and *fear of violence*, saw their rates fall by 18.6 and 4.3 percent, respectively. Sonora's rate of assault with a firearm dropped by 15.6 percent, while its rate of homicide with a firearm dropped by 19.1 percent.

Despite these improvements, *organized crime* and *violent crime* deteriorated, with their rates increasing by 18.5 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively. A 26.2 percent increase in family violence drove the deterioration in *violent crime*.

Three of four *organized crime* sub-indicators deteriorated, with a sixfold increase in the kidnapping and human trafficking rate, from 0.8 to 5.1 cases per 100,000 people between 2022 and 2023. This was the fifth largest increase in kidnapping and human trafficking rate in the country. In contrast, the major offense rate fell from 14.5 to 12.8 crimes per 100,000 people, the second largest decrease last year.

Despite its improvement in score, Sonora still ranked as one of Mexico's more violent states in 2023, placing in the bottom half of the index in *homicide, firearms crime, organized crime*, and *fear of violence*. Guaymas, a municipality located on the Gulf of California, had the fourth highest homicide rate among major municipalities last year,[25] with an estimated 133 deaths per 100,000 people, down from a high of 159 homicides per 100,000 people in 2022. The municipality of Cajeme, whose municipal seat is Ciudad Obregón, had the sixth highest rate in the country, with 120 deaths per 100,000 people, down from a high of 162 deaths per 100,000 people in 2021. The state is often the site of violent clashes between cartels due to its geographic positioning on Mexico's northern border which offers direct routes for drug trafficking into the United States.[26]

Since last year, with several high-profile arrests of members of the Sinaloa Cartel, which holds a dominant position in the state, there has been growing infighting among different factions of the organization for territorial control.[27] In addition, the Caborca Cartel and the CJNG are two of the Sinaloa Cartel's largest competitors in Sonora.[28] The Caborca Cartel maintains a presence in the northwestern part of the state, despite the 2022 arrest of its founder, Rafael Caro Quintero.[29]

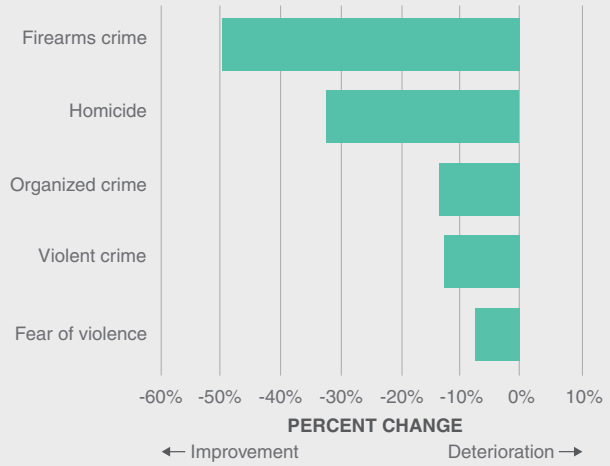
Durango — Rank: 4

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **1.961**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↗ **2**

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **-0.191**

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



In 2023, Durango recorded the fourth largest improvement in overall peacefulness score, rising two places to rank as the fourth most peaceful state in Mexico. The state's overall score improved by 8.9 percent, marking its third consecutive year of improvement as well as its first time ranking among the five most peaceful states in Mexico. All five MPI indicators improved, with each recording its best score on record and placing in the top ten states in the country in 2023.

The state's homicide rate decreased by 32.3 percent to 5.3 deaths per 100,000 people. Gómez Palacio, a municipality in Durango, recorded the fifth lowest homicide rate of all major municipalities in the country,[30] while the municipality of Durango City recorded the 22nd lowest rate.

Durango's rate of firearms crime fell by 50 percent, to 3.8 crimes per 100,000 people, driven by a 39.7 percent fall in the rate of homicides committed with a firearm and a 62 percent decline in assaults with a firearm. Additionally, *fear of violence* improved, with the percentage of residents regarding the state as dangerous falling from 56 to 51.7 percent between 2022 and 2023.

Violent crime improved in Durango last year, with the overall rate declining by 12.8 percent, the second largest improvement in violent crime rates in the country in 2023. This was driven by a decline in all four *violent crime* sub-indicators. The most significant change was a 56 percent decrease in the rate of robbery.

Organized crime also improved in 2023, with the overall rate of organized crimes falling by 13.5 percent. This improvement can be primarily attributed to a 39.9 percent decrease in the extortion rate. Despite this, there were deteriorations in two *organized crime* sub-indicators, *major offenses* and *retail drug crimes*, whose rates rose by 27.7 and 8.9 percent, respectively.

Durango, along with Chihuahua and Sinaloa, has historically formed part of the "Golden Triangle", an area known for producing marijuana and opium poppies for heroin.[31] The increase in peacefulness in Durango therefore coincides with drug trafficking organizations' shift away from plant-based drugs toward other synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl. With this shift, communities in the Golden Triangle have increasingly transitioned away from narcotics production and into sustainable forestry, helping improve peacefulness in the state.[32]

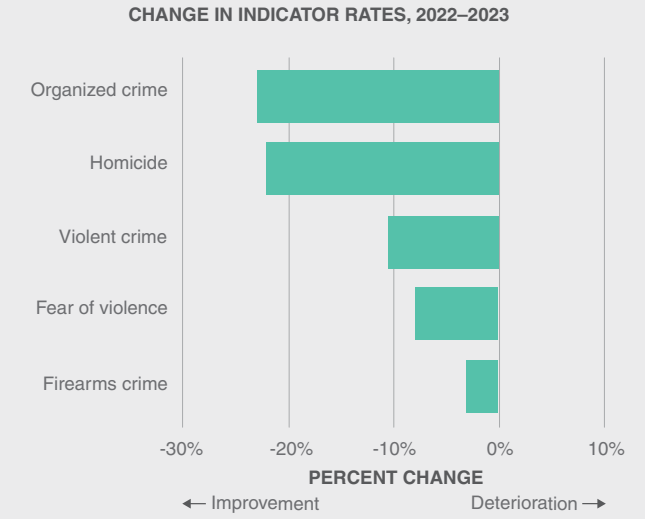
> Durango's overall score improved by 8.9 percent, marking its third consecutive year of improvement as well as its first time ranking among the five most peaceful states in Mexico.

Tabasco — Rank: 7

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **2.278**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↗ **6**

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **-0.170**



Tabasco recorded the fifth largest improvement in peacefulness last year, rising six places to rank as the seventh most peaceful state in Mexico in 2023. This marks its fifth consecutive year of improvement and the state's best performance on the index. All MPI indicators improved in the state, with rates of organized crime and homicide decreasing most significantly. Except for *firearms crime*, all indicators recorded their best scores on record in 2023.

Tabasco's 23.1 percent decrease in its overall organized crime rate was driven by improvements in two of the four sub-indicators. Tabasco's extortion rate dropped by 24.6 percent, while retail drug crime fell by 21.8 percent. With 1.1 retail drug crimes per 100,000 people, Tabasco recorded the lowest rate in the country for the fifth consecutive year. Tabasco also had the lowest rate of major offenses in the country, with 0.6 offenses per 100,000 people, though this is up from only 0.2 offenses per 100,000 people in 2022. The state also saw an uptick in kidnapping and human trafficking, with the rate increasing by about a third in 2023.

Tabasco's homicide rate fell by 22.2 percent in 2023. This coincided with a 20.2 percent decline in the rate of homicide committed with a firearm. However, there was a contrasting 23.4 percent increase in the rate of assault committed with a firearm. As such, the overall firearms crime rate moved relatively little, falling by just 3.2 percent.

Tabasco also experienced an improvement in *violent crime*, with the overall rate falling from 2,305 to 2,059 crimes per 100,000 people between 2022 and 2023, the third largest improvement in the country. This improvement was driven by a 29.2 percent decrease in the robbery rate. In addition, the rates of assault and sexual assault improved by 8.4 and 5.4 percent, respectively.

The *fear of violence* indicator improved, with the percentage of residents regarding the state as dangerous falling from 85 to 78.2 percent between 2022 and 2023. This was the third largest improvement in *fear of violence* in the country. More than 90 percent of the population in Tabasco claimed to have a high level of confidence in the state police in 2023.[33]

DETERIORATIONS IN PEACEFULNESS

Table 1.3 shows the five states that recorded the largest deteriorations in peacefulness from 2022 to 2023, all of which recorded deteriorations in *organized crime, firearms crime*, and *violent crime*. On average, the overall organized crime rate in these five states rose by 27.6 percent, compared with a national decline of 1.7 percent. Similarly, their average firearms crime rate increased by 11.7 percent, compared with a national decrease of 2.7 percent, and their average violent crime rate increased by 10.6 percent, compared to a national decrease of 0.8 percent.

The states with the largest deteriorations in 2023 represent the northern, central, western, and southern regions of Mexico. Much of the deterioration across these states arose from the activities of criminal groups, especially the violent territorial disputes between drug trafficking organizations.

TABLE 1.3

Five states with the largest deteriorations, 2022–2023

Morelos experienced a major deterioration in peacefulness in 2023, registering its worst score on record.

STATE	CHANGE IN SCORE	2022 RANK	2023 RANK	CHANGE IN RANK
Morelos	0.399	28	30	↓ 2
Sinaloa	0.275	14	19	↓ 5
Quintana Roo	0.195	24	27	↓ 3
Chihuahua	0.139	23	25	↓ 2
Nayarit	0.106	4	6	↓ 2

Source: IEP
Note: A positive change represents a deterioration in peacefulness.

Morelos — Rank: 30

MPI SCORE IN 2023

4.123

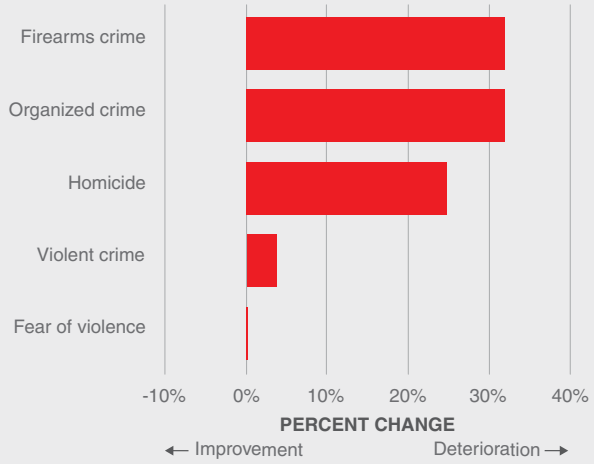
CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023

↘ 2

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **0.399**

OVERALL SCORE, 2015–2023

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



Morelos experienced the largest deterioration in peacefulness in Mexico in 2023, resulting in its worst peace score since the inception of the MPI. This marked its second consecutive year among the five least peaceful states in Mexico. Morelos's overall peace score fell by 10.7 percent, and the state fell two places to rank 30th in the MPI.

The state deteriorated across all indicators. It recorded its worst *homicide, firearms crime*, and *organized crime* scores on record, with the rates of each of these indicators rising by between 24 and 32 percent. This is noteworthy given that just three years ago in 2020, Morelos recorded one of the largest improvements in overall score, driven by reductions in homicides, firearms crimes, and organized crime.

Last year, Morelos recorded the largest deterioration in homicide rate in Mexico, resulting in a rate of 72.5 deaths per 100,000 people. This is the second worst rate in the country and three times the national rate. Firearms homicides accounted for 79 percent of all such deaths in the state. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of homicides involving a firearm increased by 33 percent, from 907 to 1,207.

Both overall homicides and homicides with a firearm have increased in Morelos in seven of the last nine years, which has driven the state's 33.2 percent deterioration in overall peacefulness since 2015. In that time, the homicide rate has almost tripled, while the firearms homicides rate has increased fivefold. In 2023, homicidal violence was widespread across the state, with most of Morelos's municipalities recording extreme homicide rates. Twenty-four of the state's 36 municipalities experienced more than 50 deaths per 100,000 people. Among major municipalities,[34] Cuautla had the state's highest homicide rate, with 122 deaths per 100,000, double the rate in 2022 and the fifth highest rate in the country.

In 2023, Morelos also had Mexico's third worst *fear of violence* score and fifth worst *violent crime* score, driven by the fourth highest robbery rate in the country, with 1,118 cases per 100,000 people. Morelos is widely considered a dangerous state, with 87 percent of residents regarding it as unsafe.

Last year, authorities in Morelos indicated that at least six criminal groups operate in the state, including the CJNG, the Northeast Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, and several independent groups.[35] Morelos has been one of the sites of the CJNG's highly violent and years-long expansion campaign across Mexico.[36]

In addition to cartel conflict driving up homicides in the state, the increased presence of criminal organizations has led to increases in organized crime, with Morelos recording the country's fifth highest kidnapping and human trafficking rate and sixth highest extortion rate in 2023.

Last year, Morelos recorded the largest deterioration in homicide rate in Mexico, resulting in a rate of 72.5 deaths per 100,000 people.

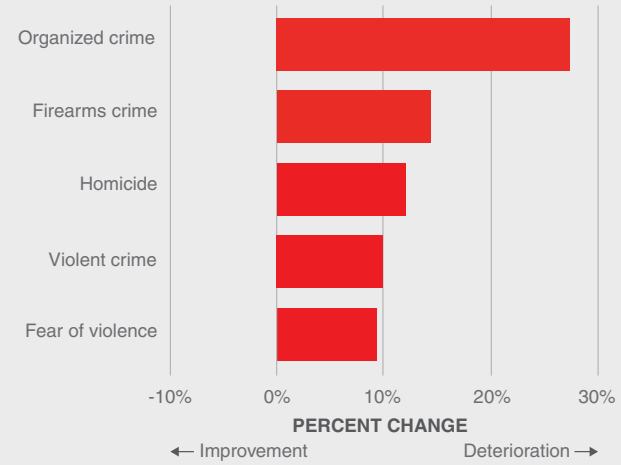
Sinaloa — Rank: 19

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **2.794**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↘ 5

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **0.275**

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



In 2023, Sinaloa experienced the second largest deterioration in peacefulness in Mexico. The state's overall score fell by 10.9 percent, falling five places to 19th. The state experienced deteriorations across all five indicators.

Organized crime experienced the largest deterioration among indicators in Sinaloa, with the overall rate rising by 27.4 percent, driven by deteriorations in three of the four sub-indicators. The overall deterioration was driven by a major rise in kidnappings and human trafficking, whose rate increased almost sevenfold, marking the largest increase in the country. With 26.8 cases per 100,000 people, Sinaloa's kidnapping and human trafficking rate was the highest in the country in the past six years. In addition, the rates of retail drug crimes and major offenses increased by 80.9 and 37.8 percent, respectively, while the extortion rate fell by 25.5 percent.

In 2023, the state also had its worst year on record in *violent crime*, with the overall rate rising by 9.9 percent to 2,576 cases per 100,000 people. This was driven by increases across all sub-indicators, robberies, family violence, and sexual assaults each increasing by more than ten percent, while assaults increased by less than four percent.

Homicide and *firearms crime* also deteriorated in Sinaloa in 2023, with their rates rising by 12 and 14.2 percent, respectively. Although homicides increased in Sinaloa last year, its rate of 17.4 deaths per 100,000 people is substantially lower than it was at its peak in 2017, when there were 50.6 deaths per 100,000 people. Moreover, in contrast to the national trend, the proportion of homicides in Sinaloa that are committed with firearms has fallen in recent years, with less than 65 percent of all murders employing guns in the past three years, compared to 82 percent in 2015.

Sinaloa's overall deterioration in peacefulness in the last year coincided with the Mexican authorities' January 2023 arrest of Ovidio Guzmán, son of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán and a key figure in the Sinaloa Cartel. Following the younger Guzmán's capture, cartel gunmen launched a series of retaliatory attacks in Sinaloa's capital of Culiacán, targeting the airport, major roads, and law enforcement.[37] The municipality of Culiacán recorded a homicide rate of 31.2 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023. This is up from 26.6 killings per 100,000 in 2022 but substantially lower than the high of 69.2 killings per 100,000 people in 2017.

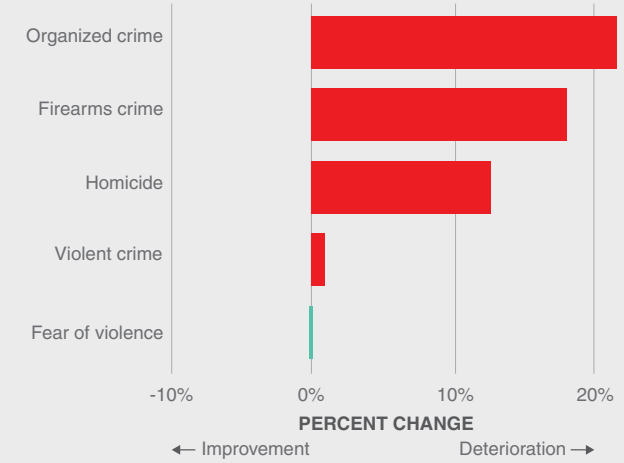
Quintana Roo — Rank: 27

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **3.678**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↘ 3

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **0.195**

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



Quintana Roo experienced the third largest deterioration of any state in Mexico in 2023, moving down three places from 24th to 27th. Since 2015, overall peacefulness in Quintana Roo has declined by 44.6 percent. The state recorded deteriorations across all MPI indicators except for *fear of violence*. The largest deterioration was recorded in the organized crime rate, which increased by 21.4 percent. In addition, the rates of firearms crime and homicide also increased, by 17.9 and 12.6 percent, respectively.

The deterioration in *organized crime* was driven by a more than doubling of the rate in kidnapping and human trafficking, a 29.9 percent increase in the extortion rate and a 14.7 percent increase in the retail drug crimes rate.

In contrast, Quintana Roo's change in *violent crime* was comparatively small, with the rate increasing by only 0.8 percent overall. The state saw a 5.2 percent drop in the robbery rate and a 7.8 percent drop in the sexual assault rate. However, these improvements were largely offset by a 7.3 percent increase in the family violence rate and a 5.4 percent increase in the assault rate. Last year, Quintana Roo recorded the country's highest assault rate since 2016, with 1,173 assaults per 100,000 people.

Formerly a relatively peaceful state, Quintana Roo's reduced levels of peacefulness in the past few years follows increased activity and competition among organized criminal groups, particularly the incursion of the CJNG into the state around 2018 and its challenging of the established Sinaloa Cartel for territorial dominance.[38] From 2015 to 2017, the state recorded homicide rates of fewer than 23 deaths per 100,000 people each year, but since 2018 it has recorded more than 35 deaths per 100,000 people each year.

Quintana Roo is highly strategic to cartels for logistical reasons, as it is the site of some of the Caribbean coast's most important seaports, which are exploited to traffic cocaine, weapons, and other contraband.[39] The municipality of Othón P. Blanco, whose municipal seat is the capital of Chetumal and which is the location of the state's largest port, experienced the largest relative increase in homicides of any major municipality in 2023.[40] The municipal homicide rate rose by 122 percent over the previous year, to 23.2 deaths per 100,000 people.

Quintana Roo is also home to several resort-filled cities and towns, such as Cancún and Tulum, with over 20 million tourists visiting in 2023.[41] Such tourist sites have also increasingly been affected by violence associated with organized crime. Last year, Tulum had the highest homicide rate of any municipality in the country with more than 10,000 residents. With 89 cases, its homicide rate was equivalent to 214 homicides per 100,000 people.

At present, four cartels reportedly operate in the greater Cancún area: the Sinaloa Cartel, the CJNG, the Gulf Cartel, and the Grupo Regional, with the latter made up of former members of Los Zetas.[42] The frequent, violent conflict has caused multiple tourist deaths and has likely driven the increases in kidnapping and human trafficking.

Chihuahua **Rank: 25**

MPI SCORE IN 2023

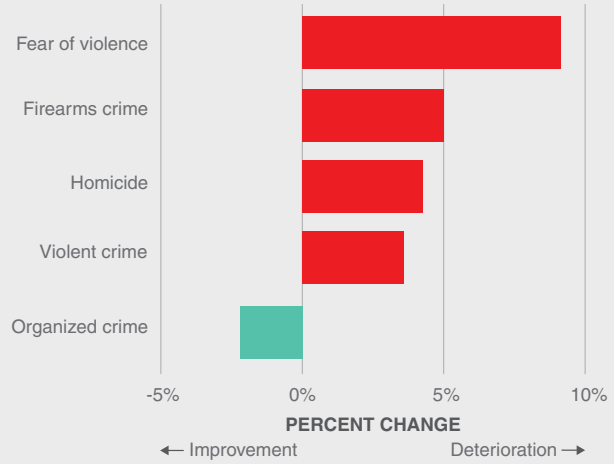
3.570

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023

↘ **2**

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **0.139**

CHANGE IN INDICATOR RATES, 2022–2023



Chihuahua experienced the fourth largest deterioration in peacefulness in 2023, falling two places to 25th. The state experienced a deterioration in all indicators, with *organized crime* experiencing a deterioration in score despite an improvement in its net rate. It experienced its worst year on record for *violent crime*, with 2,236 incidents per 100,000 people, an increase of 3.6 percent from 2022.

Chihuahua's higher violent crime rate was driven by an 8.1 percent increase in the assault rate. It also experienced increases in its rates of family violence and sexual assault, which respectively rose by 3.7 and 1.1 percent, and each recorded their highest rates on record.

The state also saw a deterioration in fear of violence. Last year, 78.1 percent of residents considered the state to be dangerous, compared to 71.6 percent in 2022. This represents the third largest percentage-point increase in the country.

Although Chihuahua's overall organized crime rate improved, its score deteriorated. This is because the state recorded a notable improvement in its most common form of organized crime, *retail drug crimes*, while other, more serious forms of organized crime deteriorated. In particular, its major offenses rate rose by 8.6 percent and its rate of kidnapping and human trafficking rose by 61.5 percent.

International migrants and refugees temporarily residing in the state are especially vulnerable to kidnapping by organized criminal groups,[43] with large numbers awaiting near the border as the United States processes asylum claims amid the ongoing implementation of its "Remain in Mexico" policy.[44] Criminal groups often target migrants that are found to have family in the United States in order to extract high ransoms, with lethal consequences for many of those that are unable to pay. In a nine-month period in 2022-2023, the bodies of seven murdered migrants were found abandoned in a single neighborhood in Ciudad Juárez.[45]

At least 15 criminal organizations, including large cartels and local gangs, are competing for control of territory and influence within the state. In particular, there is frequent fighting between the Sinaloa Cartel and La Línea, the leading faction of the Juárez Cartel, which has allied with the CJNG.[46] The Juárez municipality recorded 1,012 homicide cases in 2023, the second most of any municipality in the country, giving it an estimated homicide rate of 76.9 deaths per 100,000 people. The site of several of the most important border crossing points into the United States, Ciudad Juárez has long been a highly strategic location for criminal organizations and a hotspot for violent crime, with it being dubbed the "murder capital of the world" a decade ago.[47]

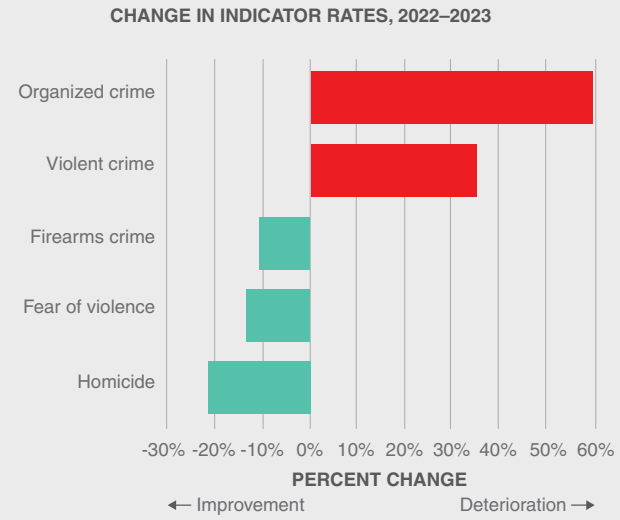
Twenty-four of Chihuahua's 67 municipalities recorded extreme homicide rates in 2023, equivalent to at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people. A mostly rural and sparsely populated state with a few major urban centers, municipal populations range from less than a thousand to over a million.

Nayarit — Rank: 6

MPI SCORE IN 2023: **2.080**

CHANGE IN RANK 2022–2023: ↘ 2

CHANGE IN SCORE 22/23: **0.106**



Nayarit registered the fifth largest deterioration in 2023. Despite this, the state remains one of the most peaceful in the country, ranking sixth in 2023, down from fourth the previous year. The state's decline in peacefulness was almost entirely driven by deteriorations in *organized crime* and *violent crime*.

Nayarit's organized crime rate rose by 59.5 percent, reaching 104 incidents per 100,000 people, the highest level since at least 2015. This was primarily the result of large increases in three of the four *organized crime* sub-indicators, with extortions and major offenses each more than doubling and reaching their highest rates on record. Retail drug crimes rose by more than half, while the kidnapping and human trafficking rate fell by more than half.

The violent crime rate rose by 35 percent to 1,777 incidents per 100,000 people, also the state's worst rate since at least 2015. This was driven by increases across all violent crime sub-indicators. The rates of assault, sexual assault, and family violence all recorded their worst rates on record, respectively rising by 49.6, 43.5, and 17.1 percent between 2022 and 2023. The robbery rate also rose, by 14 percent.

Nayarit's *firearms crime* score also deteriorated, despite its overall rate improving in 2023. Assaults carried out with a firearm more than doubled, while homicides with a firearm fell by more than a third. The state's overall homicide rate also declined, falling by 21.4 percent to 9.9 deaths per 100,000 people, the ninth lowest rate in the country.

No municipalities in Nayarit recorded extreme homicide rates in 2023,[48] with most recording fewer than ten deaths per 100,000 people. This includes Tepic, the state's capital and largest city, which recorded 34 homicide cases last year, resulting in an estimated homicide rate of 8.4 deaths per 100,000 people.

As a result of its relative peacefulness, Nayarit recorded the fourth best fear of violence score in the country. Last year, only 46.2 percent of residents regarded the state as unsafe, substantially lower than the national rate of 74.6 percent. Nayarit's fear of violence rate fell 7.1 percentage points between 2022 and 2023, the second largest drop in the country.

2 | Trends

KEY FINDINGS

- Mexico's peacefulness has deteriorated by 14.4 percent over the last nine years. However, in the past four years, peacefulness in the country has improved by 6.1 percent.
- Despite some positive gains, many crime indicators are still much higher today than in 2015. The national homicide rate recorded a 54.1 percent increase between 2015 and 2023, rising from 15.1 to 23.3 deaths per 100,000 people.
- Nine states have recorded improvements in *homicide* since 2015, while the remaining 23 have deteriorated.
- Mexico's national homicide rate ranks 14th worst in the world.
- Two-thirds of homicides since 2015 have been the result of gun violence. In 2023, a record 70.2 percent of homicides in the country were committed with a firearm.
- Since 2018, more than 2,600 police officers have been killed. This equates to an average annual police homicide rate of 96.8 killings per 100,000 officers, suggesting that being a police officer in Mexico is nearly four times as dangerous as being a member of the general public.
- In 2023, there were more than 12,000 reported cases of missing persons, the highest number on record.
- The organized crime rate has risen by 62.4 percent since 2015. The deterioration was driven by a 157 percent increase in the rate of retail drug crime.
- The past decade has seen major shifts in the drugs produced by criminal actors in order to adapt to changing consumption patterns in the United States, with synthetic opioids like fentanyl becoming increasingly central to their operations.
- Between 2019 and 2023, the volume of fentanyl seizures at the Mexico-US border rose by more than 900 percent.
- Between 2013 and 2017, clashes involving at least one of the two largest cartels in the country, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), accounted for 38 percent of all cartel conflict deaths, but between 2018 and 2022, they accounted for 64 percent of such deaths.
- In 2023, about six in ten homicides in the country were estimated to be associated with organized crime, equivalent to around 18,000 killings.
- Documentations of unauthorized international migrants in Mexico have surged in the past three years, reaching a record high of nearly 800,000 in 2023. Unauthorized migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by organized criminal groups.
- The violent crime rate increased by 17.9 percent from 2015 to 2023, driven by widespread deteriorations in the rates of family violence and sexual assault. In contrast, rates of assault deteriorated only marginally, while robbery rates improved by 19.8 percent.
- Largely tracking with overall peacefulness, levels of fear of violence deteriorated notably between 2015 and 2018 but have gradually improved in the years since. In 2023, 74.6 percent of people regarded the state in which they live to be unsafe.
- Colima recorded by far the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the last nine years, with its rates of firearms crime, organized crime, violent crime, and homicide all more than quadrupling since 2015.
- After Colima, the largest deteriorations in peacefulness were recorded in Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Quintana Roo, and Baja California.
- Tamaulipas has recorded the largest overall improvement in the last nine years, followed by Sinaloa, Coahuila, Durango, and Guerrero.

NINE-YEAR TRENDS

Mexico's peacefulness has declined by 14.4 percent since 2015. However, the past nine years have been marked by two distinct trends, with sharp deteriorations between 2015 and 2019, followed by modest but consistent improvements since then.

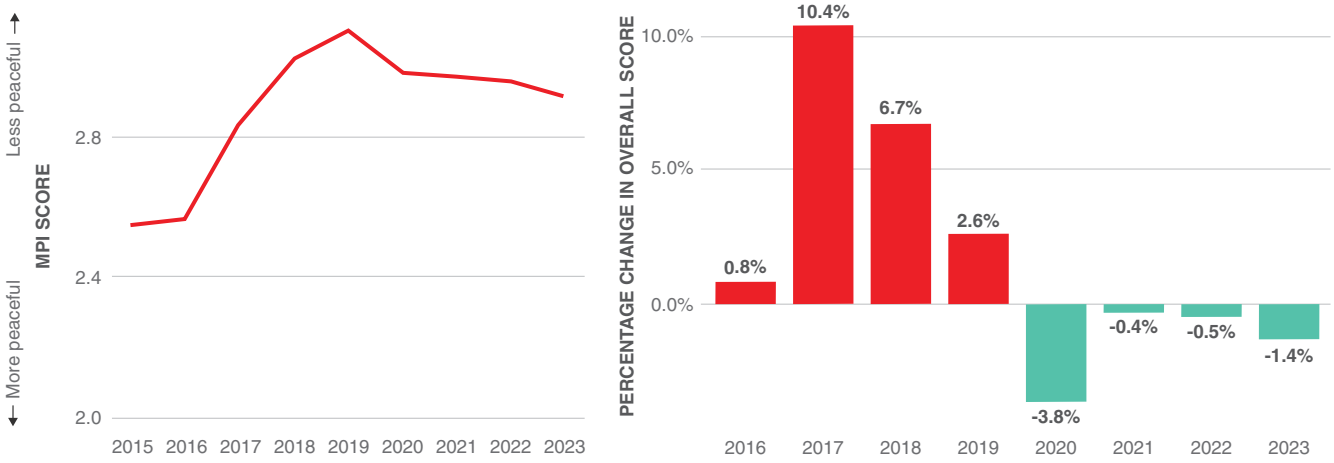
Figure 2.1 shows the changes in overall peacefulness since 2015. The largest single-year change was observed in 2017, when peacefulness deteriorated by 10.4 percent. Following this, the rates of deterioration gradually slowed. In 2020, the country experienced its first overall improvement, with peace rising by 3.8 percent, followed by much smaller improvements over the next two years. Last year, the country experienced its second largest improvement in the past nine years, with peace rising by 1.4 percent. However, national levels of peacefulness are still far from where they were before the significant deteriorations experienced between 2016 and 2019.

Figure 2.2 illustrates that the deterioration in peacefulness between 2015 and 2023 was primarily influenced by the significant rise in *homicide* and *firearms crime*, though both peaked in 2019 and have since improved. *Firearms crime* experienced the largest overall deterioration, with its rate increasing by 63.8 percent in the past nine years. This change has been driven by deteriorations in both its sub-indicators. Since 2015, the number of homicides with a firearm have nearly doubled, and the rate of assaults committed with a firearm have risen by 28.3 percent.

FIGURE 2.1

Change in overall peacefulness, 2015–2023

Peacefulness has improved slightly in the past four years, following four consecutive years of deteriorations.

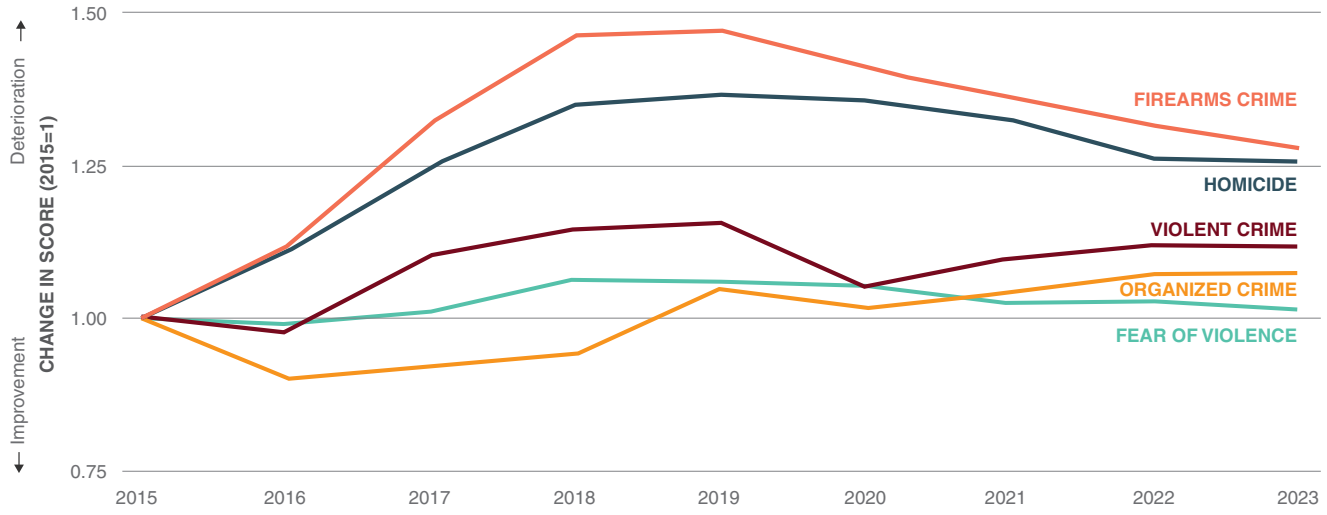


Source: IEP

FIGURE 2.2

Indexed trend in peacefulness by indicator, 2015–2023

Three out of five indicators recorded their worst scores in 2019 and have improved in the years since.



Source: IEP

The homicide rate in Mexico has increased by 54.1 percent since 2015. Beginning in 2015, Mexico experienced four consecutive years of deterioration in *homicide* until it reached its peak in 2019, with a rate of 28.2 homicides per 100,000 people. Since then, the rate has gradually improved, although year-on-year changes have been modest compared to the deteriorations recorded before 2019. The largest deterioration in a single year was in 2017, when the homicide rate rose by 26.4 percent, whereas the greatest improvement in a single year was in 2022, when there was a 7.9 percent drop. Mexico has recorded more than 30,000 homicides in each of the past six years.

Since 2015, the rate of organized crime has increased by 62.4 percent. However, the rate improved marginally in 2023, one of just three years that the score recorded an improvement. The overall deterioration in the past nine years was mainly driven by a significant increase in the rate of retail drug crime, which has risen each year since 2016, almost tripling in that time.

The violent crime rate has risen by 17.9 percent since 2015, also increasing in all but three years during that time. This long-term deterioration is due to significant increases in the rates of sexual assault and family violence, which have both consistently risen each year, more than doubling in that time. In contrast, the national assault and robbery rates have remained relatively consistent during that time, never moving more than 33 percent from their 2015 baselines. Overall, the assault rate has deteriorated by just 2.6 percent in the past nine years, while the robbery rate has improved, decreasing by 19.8 percent.

Fear of violence, which measures the degree to which citizens perceive the state in which they reside to be unsafe, is the indicator to record the least movement since 2015. In that time, the national percentage of people who feel unsafe has risen and fallen, but there has been a net deterioration of 1.4 percentage points. In 2015, 73.2 percent of people felt unsafe in their states of residence, which subsequently rose to a high of 79.4 percent in 2018. As of 2023, however, the rate had declined again to 74.6 percent. These trends in people's perceptions of security largely track with the country's levels of peacefulness over the past nine years.

Since 2015, 23 states have deteriorated in peacefulness, while nine have improved. Tamaulipas recorded the largest improvement in overall peacefulness, driven by improvements across all indicators and particularly in its rates of organized crime, homicide, and firearms crime. These changes caused it to climb 21 places, rising from the 29th to the 8th most peaceful state in the country in the past nine years. Following Tamaulipas, the four states which improved the most in peacefulness were Sinaloa, Coahuila, Durango, and Yucatán.

The largest deterioration in peacefulness was recorded in Colima, whose rates of firearms crime, organized crime, violent crime, and homicide all more than quadrupled in the past nine years. Guanajuato, Oaxaca, Zacatecas, and Quintana Roo recorded the next largest deteriorations in peacefulness. These states all recorded significant deteriorations in their *homicide* and *firearms crime* scores.

> Mexico experienced four consecutive years of deterioration in homicide until it reached its peak in 2019, with a rate of 28.2 homicides per 100,000 people.

HOMICIDE

Since 2015, more than 270,000 people have been murdered in Mexico. During that time, the country's homicide rate has been marked by two distinct trends. From 2015 and 2019, the rate rose rapidly, climbing from 15.1 to 28.2 deaths per 100,000 people. In the past four years, however, there has been a modest but steady decline in killings.

Last year, the rate continued to fall, dropping by 5.3 percent, to 23.3 homicides per 100,000 people. Despite these recent improvements, homicidal violence remains widespread in Mexico. In 2023, there were over 30,500 homicide victims, equivalent to an average of about 84 killings per day.

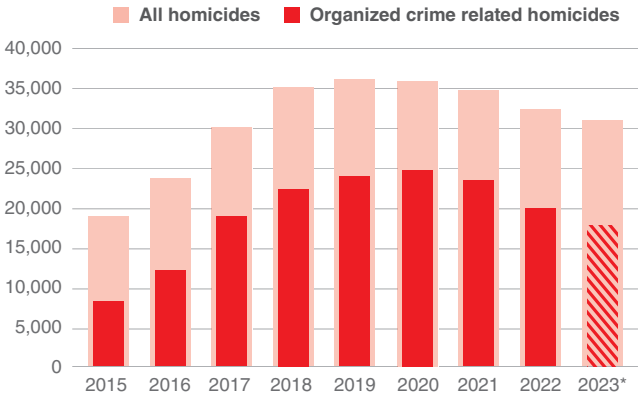
Figure 2.3 depicts the national monthly trend in homicide rate. Following three years of significant increases, the monthly homicide rate peaked in July 2018 at 2.52 deaths per 100,000 people, after which it remained near that level for the next three years. The rate began to decline more significantly in mid-2021, falling from 2.41 deaths per 100,000 people in May 2021 to 1.81 deaths per 100,000 people in December 2023.

The changes in levels of homicide over the past nine years have been driven by organized criminal groups. Drawing on 2015-2022 figures from Lantia Intelligence, the annual number of killings estimated to be linked to organized crime rose by 145 percent, while all other homicides rose by 18.3 percent. This means that, even as organized crime-related homicides increased from about 8,000 to about 20,000, the number of homicides not linked to organized crime have shown comparatively little change, consistently hovering between 10,000 and 12,500 per year, as shown in Figure 2.4. In the absence of organized crime-related killings, Mexico's homicide rate would be substantially lower, at around ten deaths per 100,000 people. At this rate, Mexico would have the 37th worst rate in the world, far better than its actual ranking of 14th worst in the world.

FIGURE 2.4

Annual homicides, overall and estimated number associated with organized crime, 2015–2023

Killings associated with organized crime have been the driver of the overall increase in homicides across Mexico.

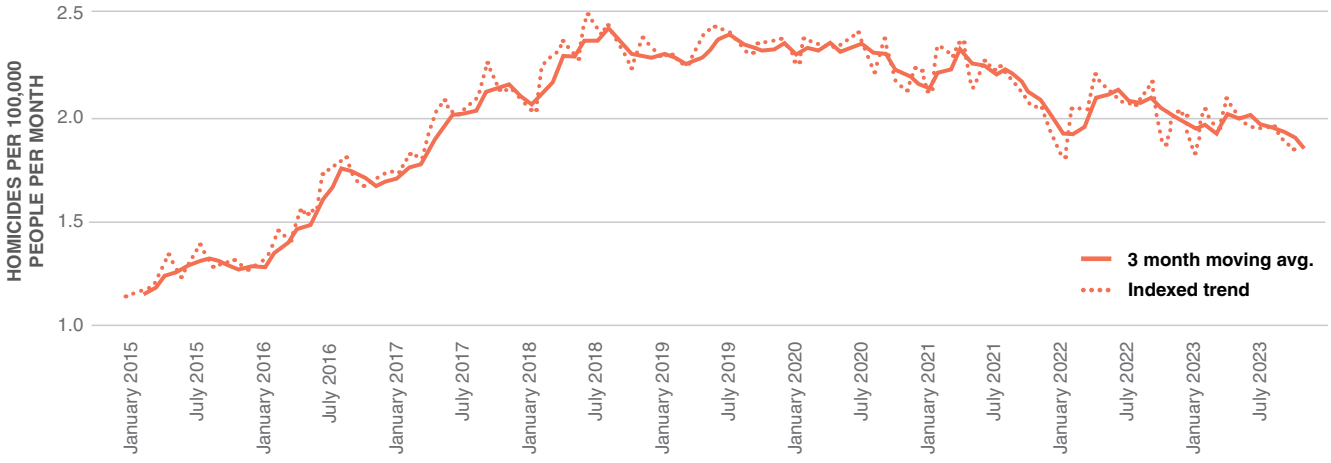


Source: SESNSP, Lantia Intelligence, IEP calculations
Note: The organized crime-related homicides figure for 2023 is an estimate based on trends from the previous three years.

FIGURE 2.3

Monthly homicide rate, 2015–2023

The monthly homicide rate peaked in July 2018 at 2.52 deaths per 100,000 people.



Source: SESNSP, IEP Calculations

CHANGES IN HOMICIDE BY STATE, 2015–2023

Despite the national improvements in the past four years, most states' homicide rates have increased overall since 2015. This is because the deteriorations between 2015 and 2019 significantly outweigh the improvements experienced since then. In all, only nine states recorded improvements in their homicide rates over the entire nine-year period, while 23 deteriorated.

Table 2.1 details the number of states with homicide rates in the low, moderate, high, very high, and extreme categories by year. In this analysis, a low homicide rate is considered less than five deaths per 100,000 people, a moderate rate is between five and 15, a high rate is between 15 and 30, and an extreme rate is more than 50. Homicide rates at the extreme level are more than three times higher than the national average in 2015. For comparison, the global homicide rate is 5.8 per 100,000 people and the rate for the overall Latin America and the Caribbean region is 19.9.[1]

In 2015, only one state had more than 50 homicides per 100,000 people. But over the next several years, the number of states with extreme homicide rates rose, reaching eight in 2021 and 2022, and then declining to five last year. Last year also represented the year with the lowest number of states on record in the middle category. The low number of states in the middle range reflects the continued divergence in homicide rates nationwide. The country is marked by relatively moderate levels of homicide in most states, coupled with very high or extreme homicide levels in a sizable minority of states.

TABLE 2.1

State homicide levels by year, 2015–2023

The number of states with an extreme homicide rate fell to five in 2023.

	LOW (<5 homicides per 100,000)	MODERATE (5-15 homicides per 100,000)	HIGH (15-30 homicides per 100,000)	VERY HIGH (30-50 homicides per 100,000)	EXTREME (>50 homicides per 100,000)
2015	3	16	10	2	1
2016	3	14	6	7	2
2017	1	11	11	3	6
2018	1	8	11	7	5
2019	1	10	10	5	6
2020	1	11	9	4	7
2021	1	11	10	2	8
2022	2	13	7	2	8
2023	3	14	5	5	5

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

Yucatán, Baja California Sur, and Coahuila were the three states to record a low homicide rate in 2023. Yucatán has consistently registered the country's lowest rate each year since 2015. Last year, Yucatán's homicide rate was 1.8 deaths per 100,000 people, about half the rate of Baja California Sur, the state with the next lowest rate.

Colima, Morelos, Baja California, Zacatecas, and Chihuahua recorded extreme homicide rates in 2023, after also recording extreme rates in both 2022 and 2021. Since 2015, the rates in Colima have more than quadrupled, those in Zacatecas have more than tripled, those in Morelos and Baja California have more than doubled, and those in Chihuahua rose by more than two-thirds. Despite their significant long-term increases in homicides, both Zacatecas and Baja California experienced substantial declines in homicides between 2022 and 2023, with their rates respectively dropping by 27.5 and 12.7 percent.

In 2023, Colima recorded the highest homicide rate of any state over the past nine years, with 111 deaths per 100,000 people. This follows its previous record-setting year of 110 homicides per 100,000 people in 2022. Unique among states, Colima has registered extreme homicide rates each year since 2016.

The least peaceful state in the country, Colima, has seen violence rise in recent years, driven by cartel conflict. Colima represents a key entry point for precursor chemicals from Asia for synthesizing fentanyl and methamphetamines.[2] Drug cartels, particularly the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), which holds a dominant but not uncontested position in the state,[3] have therefore engaged in highly lethal battles for control of the territory. According to the records of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), violence associated with the CJNG peaked in early 2022, following the dissolution of an alliance between the group and a local affiliate known as Los Mezcales. The dissolution arose after a dispute in a Colima prison left nine inmates dead, and Los Mezcales reportedly formed a new alliance with the CJNG's main national rival, the Sinaloa Cartel. At least 50 fatalities were associated with the CJNG in Colima in both January and February 2022.[4]

The city of Manzanillo, which as Mexico's busiest port handles about 30 percent of the country's maritime imports, is of particular strategic importance for the acquisition of precursor chemicals that subsequently are taken to northern states and used to make fentanyl pills.[5] In 2023, Manzanillo had an estimated homicide rate of 133 deaths per 100,000 people, the third highest rate of any major municipality in the country.[6] However, in the past two years, the locus of the conflict appears to have shifted from the coast to the inland capital of the state, Colima City, which recorded a homicide rate of about 184 deaths per 100,000 people, a threefold increase from 2021 and the highest rate of any major municipality in the country.[7]

In 2023, there were over 30,500 homicide victims, equivalent to an average of about 84 killings per day.

GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF HOMICIDES

Mexico's high levels of homicide are primarily driven by violence in a relatively small number of urban centers. In 2023, half of all homicide cases were recorded in just 53 of Mexico's 2,470 municipalities. However, relative to population sizes, high levels of homicide are present in urban, semi-urban, and rural settings across the country.

Figure 2.4 depicts the homicide rate across Mexico's municipalities. At the municipal level, Mexico's National System for Public Security (SESNSP) only provides the number of homicide cases, which is often distinct from the number of homicide victims, as a single homicide case may involve multiple victims. However, both figures are provided at the state level. To estimate the municipal homicide rate, therefore, each municipal homicide case rate has been adjusted based on the level of state-wide discrepancy between victims and cases – differences which range widely across states. In Nuevo León and Yucatán, for example, every homicide victim is associated with a unique case and there are therefore no discrepancies. In contrast, Zacatecas and Jalisco had the highest discrepancies between the two figures in 2023, with the total number of victims being, respectively, 27.2 and 25.9 percent higher than the total number of cases.

In 2023, there were about 270 municipalities with a homicide rate of at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people, meaning that approximately 11 percent of municipalities nationally suffer from extreme levels of homicidal violence. In contrast, about 1,010 had a rate of less than five deaths per 100,000 people, including more than 890 with zero deaths, meaning that in about 41 percent of municipalities there were either no recorded murders or relatively few murders last year. The remaining municipalities, constituting about half of the total, fall roughly within the moderate to very high homicide level ranges: about 22 percent of all municipalities recorded a rate of 5-15 deaths per 100,000 people, about 17 percent recorded a rate of 15-30, and about nine percent recorded a rate of 30-50.

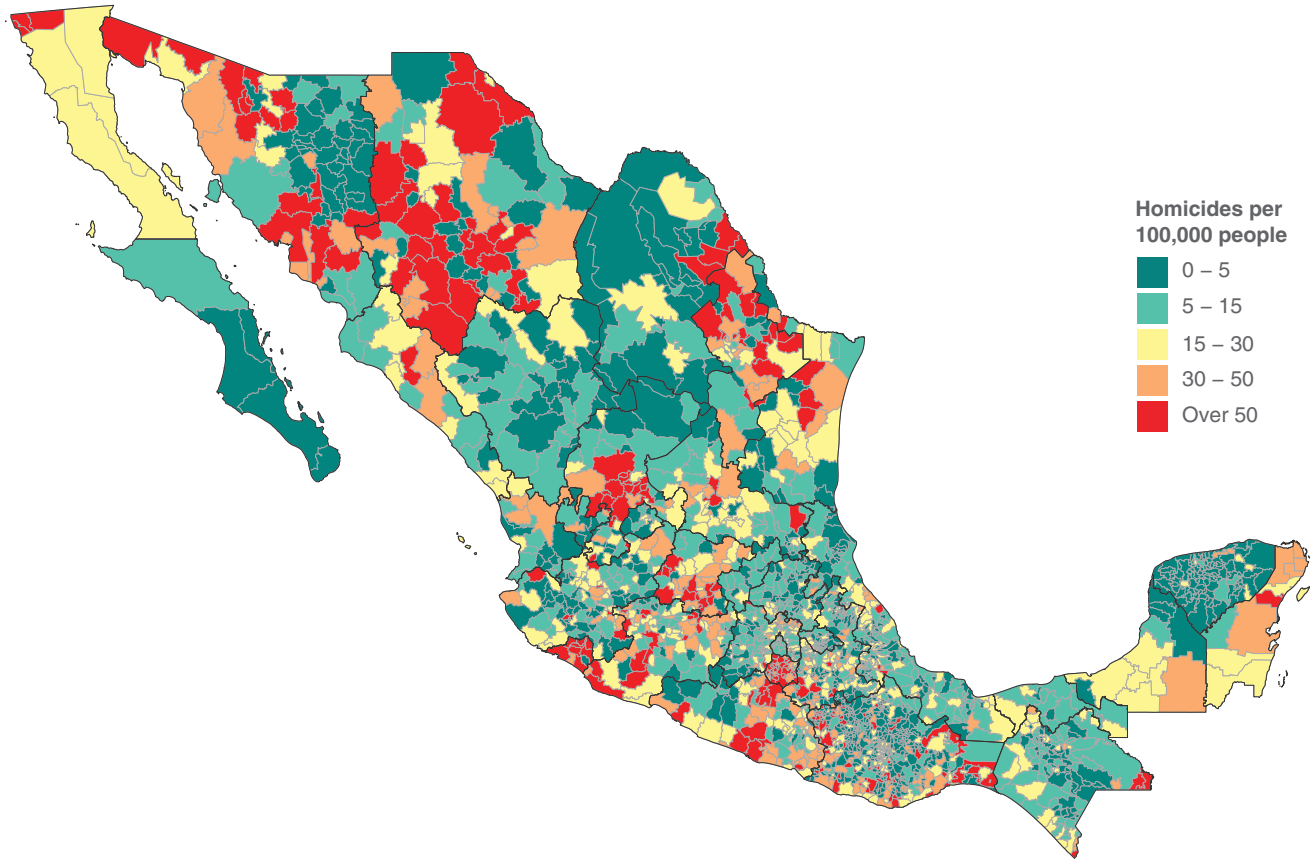
As shown in Figure 2.4, municipalities experiencing extreme levels of homicidal violence are often clustered together in the same geographic area. These clusters commonly cross state boundaries and represent strategic places for the production or trafficking of illegal drugs. They tend to be in areas in dispute by two or more criminal organizations, whose turf wars drive up homicide rates.

While these clusters often cross state borders, there are three states within which the clusters are particularly pronounced. The most striking of these is Colima, where eight out of the

FIGURE 2.4

Municipal homicide rates, 2023

In 2023, about 11 percent of municipalities had a homicide rate of at least 50 deaths per 100,000 people.



Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations

state's ten municipalities had homicide rates of over 50 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023. Similarly, two-thirds of the 36 municipalities of Morelos also had extreme homicide rates, with most of the remaining municipalities having rates above 40. Finally, Chihuahua also had several extreme homicide clusters, as more than one third of its municipalities registered extreme rates. Most of Chihuahua's 67 municipalities are rural, with populations of less than 20,000 people, and it is notable that the majority of its extreme homicide rates were in these settings.

Naturally, Mexico's least peaceful states are home to many of its least peaceful municipalities. However, there may be significant differences in the levels of violence within states. For example, Juárez in Chihuahua recorded 1,012 homicide cases in 2023, the second most of any municipality in the country, giving it an estimated homicide rate of 76.9 deaths per 100,000 people. The site of several of the most important border crossing points into the United States, Ciudad Juárez has long been a highly strategic location for criminal organizations and a hotspot for violent crime, with it being dubbed the "murder capital of the world" a decade ago.[8] However, the sparsely populated municipality of Ascensión, which is adjacent to Juárez and also has a border crossing into the United States, had no recorded murders in 2023, after recording just three in 2022 and two in 2021.[9]

Table 2.2 lists the 30 mid-sized and large-population municipalities with the highest homicide rates in 2023, along with the 30 with the lowest rates.[10] Collectively, the highest homicide municipalities accounted for 35.6 percent of all homicide cases in Mexico. While Colima City recorded the highest homicide rate in the country, Tijuana had the highest number of homicides overall, with over 1,600 registered cases. Tijuana has had the highest number of total homicides since 2017, when it overtook Acapulco, Guerrero, which held the record in 2015 and 2016.

TABLE 2.2

Major municipalities with the highest and lowest homicide rates, 2023

Homicide rates in Mexican cities range from 1.1 to over 180 deaths per 100,000 people.

HIGHEST HOMICIDE RATES				
RANK	MUNICIPALITY	STATE	HOMICIDE CASES	HOMICIDE RATE
1	Colima	Colima	260	184
2	Iguala	Guerrero	194	147
3	Manzanillo	Colima	229	133
4	Guaymas	Sonora	175	133
5	Cuautla	Morelos	205	122
6	Cajeme	Sonora	442	120
7	Zamora	Michoacán	198	114
8	San Luis Río Colorado	Sonora	189	113
9	Guadalupe	Zacatecas	165	99.1
10	Tijuana	Baja California	1,648	96.3
11	Fresnillo	Zacatecas	166	87.8
12	Celaya	Guanajuato	372	83.3
13	Valle de Santiago	Guanajuato	107	83.3
14	Salamanca	Guanajuato	191	81.6
15	Juárez	Chihuahua	1,012	76.9
16	Cuauhtémoc	Chihuahua	119	75.7
17	Acapulco	Guerrero	452	67.9
18	Uruapan	Michoacán	203	67.1
19	Cuernavaca	Morelos	210	62.0
20	Chilpancingo	Guerrero	139	57.4
21	Pénjamo	Guanajuato	74	55.8
22	León	Guanajuato	781	53.0
23	Tlaquepaque	Jalisco	282	51.7
24	Jiutepec	Morelos	95	49.3
25	Tlajomulco de Zúñiga	Jalisco	254	43.9
26	Irapuato	Guanajuato	219	43.1
27	Benito Juárez	Quintana Roo	345	42.7
28	El Salto	Jalisco	74	40.0
29	Chihuahua	Chihuahua	322	39.5
30	Juárez	Nuevo León	179	38.0

LOWEST HOMICIDE RATES				
RANK	MUNICIPALITY	STATE	HOMICIDE CASES	HOMICIDE RATE
1	Mineral de la Reforma	Hidalgo	2	1.12
2	Mérida	Yucatán	16	1.61
3	Torreón	Coahuila	16	2.35
4	Ciudad Madero	Tamaulipas	4	2.38
5	Gómez Palacio	Durango	8	2.42
6	Corregidora	Querétaro	5	2.58
7	Lerdo	Durango	4	2.76
8	Benito Juárez	Mexico City	11	2.79
9	Ixtlahuaca	Mexico State	4	2.82
10	Tampico	Tamaulipas	8	3.29
11	Saltillo	Coahuila	28	3.37
12	Tulancingo	Hidalgo	5	3.38
13	Los Cabos	Baja California Sur	11	3.46
14	San Andrés Tuxtla	Veracruz	5	3.49
15	La Paz	Baja California Sur	10	3.78
16	Comitán	Chiapas	6	4.03
17	Cuajimalpa	Mexico City	8	4.05
18	Aguascalientes	Aguascalientes	39	4.53
19	Acuña	Coahuila	7	4.55
20	Pachuca	Hidalgo	13	4.70
21	Monclova	Coahuila	11	4.90
22	Durango	Durango	30	4.92
23	Altamira	Tamaulipas	11	4.995
24	Coyoacán	Mexico City	28	5.02
25	Metepec	Mexico State	11	5.12
26	Piedras Negras	Coahuila	10	6.01
27	Ocosingo	Chiapas	13	6.19
28	Magdalena Contreras	Mexico City	14	6.23
29	Ahome	Sinaloa	28	6.54
30	Tuxtla Gutiérrez	Chiapas	36	6.66

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations
Note: The municipal homicide rate has been estimated by adjusting the municipal homicide case rate based on state-wide discrepancies between the recorded numbers of victims and cases. Only includes municipalities with a population of at least 150,000.

In contrast, there are several major cities and municipalities across Mexico that recorded low homicide rates in 2023. With just two homicide cases, Mineral de la Reforma in Hidalgo, which forms part of the Pachuca metropolitan area, had the lowest homicide rate in the country. Pachuca itself, the state capital and the most populous municipality in Hidalgo, also recorded one of Mexico's lowest homicide rates, with 4.7 deaths per 100,000. Other state capitals with among the lowest homicide rates in the country were Mérida (Yucatán), Durango City (Durango), Saltillo (Coahuila), La Paz (Baja California Sur), Aguascalientes City (Aguascalientes), and Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Chiapas), while four of Mexico City's 16 boroughs were also among the municipalities with the lowest homicide rates.

HOMICIDE RATES DISAGGREGATED BY SEX

Men are much more likely than women to be victims of homicide in Mexico, consistently accounting for nearly nine in ten victims.[11] Male homicides can be linked to organized crime trends, with a strong positive relationship between organized crime, gun violence and male homicide. Conversely, female deaths are more likely to be associated with intimate partner violence.[12]

Table 2.3 shows that since 2015 male homicides have risen by 75 percent, increasing by a larger percentage than female homicides. However, both male and female homicides peaked in 2019, and the two categories of killings have fallen since. Male homicides have declined by 14.5 percent over the past four years, while female homicides have declined by 10.8 percent, mostly driven by a 9.4 percent decline between 2022 and 2023.

Since 2015, for example, nearly one in five female homicides occurred in the home, compared to one in 13 for male homicides.[13] Looking at the dynamics of homicides by sex highlights the necessity for tailored approaches to address distinct patterns of violence affecting men and women in Mexico.

Femicides, defined in Mexican law as the murder of a woman for gender-based reasons, also rose significantly in this period, from 427 reported victims in 2015 to 848 in 2023, a 98.1 percent increase. While femicides are usually included in female homicide figures, not all female homicides can be considered femicides. In this analysis, femicide data is presented as separate from female homicide to assess the different dynamics of reported femicides compared to female homicide. Box 2.1 outlines the legal definition of femicide in Mexico and current limitations in data collection.

BOX 2.1

Femicide in Mexico

Femicide is defined as the criminal deprivation of the life of a female victim for reasons based on gender.[14] The murder of a woman or girl is considered gender based and included in femicide statistics when one of seven criteria is met, including evidence of sexual violence prior to the victim's death; a sentimental, affective or trusting relationship with the perpetrator; or the victim's body being displayed in public.[15]

The number of femicides reported in Mexico has grown rapidly over the past nine years. While they represented 19.8 percent of female homicides in 2015, this proportion had increased to 24.7 percent by 2023. As a relatively new crime category that requires added levels of investigation and analysis to identify, femicides have not been uniformly classified as such by different law enforcement institutions since the category's introduction.

At present, about one in four female killings in Mexico are classified as femicides. However, the rates at which the 2015-2023 murders of women have been classified as femicides have varied substantially across states, from as high as 76.5 percent in Sinaloa to as low as 6.9 percent in Guanajuato. It is therefore difficult to determine with certainty the true number of femicides in different states and over time.[16]

TABLE 2.3

Homicides by sex, 2015–2023

Both male and total female homicides peaked in 2019, while femicides peaked in 2021.

YEAR	TOTAL HOMICIDES	MALE HOMICIDES	FEMALE HOMICIDES	% MALE	% FEMALE	*FEMICIDES*	*% FEMALE HOMICIDES IDENTIFIED AS FEMICIDES*
2015	18,312	15,158	2,161	87.5%	12.5%	*427*	*19.8%*
2016	23,189	20,007	2,835	87.6%	12.4%	*648*	*22.9%*
2017	26,636	25,898	3,301	88.7%	11.3%	*766*	*23.2%*
2018	34,656	30,420	3,678	89.2%	10.8%	*919*	*25.0%*
2019	35,687	31,008	3,844	89.0%	11.0%	*969*	*25.2%*
2020	35,539	30,893	3,776	89.1%	10.9%	*976*	*25.8%*
2021	34,367	29,677	3,766	88.7%	11.3%	*1,017*	*27.0%*
2022	31,936	27,219	3,775	87.8%	12.2%	*968*	*25.6%*
2023	30,523	26,523	3,429	88.6%	11.4%	*848*	*24.7%*
% Change, 2015–2023	**66.7%**	**75.0%**	**58.7%**	-	-	***98.1%***	-

Source: SESNSP, IEP calculations
Note: Female homicides includes femicides. Total homicides include homicides where the sex of the victim is unknown, but the male and female percentages do not.

Figure 2.5 shows the types of weapons used in different forms of murder in 2023. While male homicides and non-femicide female homicides show almost identical patterns, with seven in 10 deaths resulting from a gun, femicides were mostly carried out without firearms. Nearly a quarter of femicide victims were killed with knives, while the largest share – more than two-fifths – were killed by "other means". These latter cases likely include beatings and strangulations, though official records do not provide additional detail. Moreover, a fourth category not included in Figure 2.5 is "unspecified" means, and femicides had the highest rate of unspecified means of any homicide type, at six percent. This means that, in total, the weaponry used in more than half of femicides is not known, which highlights the need for more granular data to understand the unique dynamics driving violence against women across the country.

Femicide is often discussed in the context of the rise in Mexico's overall rates of homicides and generalized violence over the past decade,[17] which have been especially driven by increased rates of firearms crime. Considering the relative infrequency of registered femicides being carried out with a firearm, it is therefore noteworthy that there has been a growing relationship between the prevalence of firearms crime and the prevalence of femicides across states. In 2015, there was no statistically significant correlation between the two (r=-0.06), but over the past eight years the strength of the relationship has grown, reaching its highest ever level (r=0.62) in 2023. This growing relationship between femicides and firearms crime highlights the reciprocal dynamics of violence within a society. It demonstrates the ways in which a rising climate of violence and associated increases in levels of impunity can have flow-on effects within a population, including in other forms of violence, such as gender-based violence.

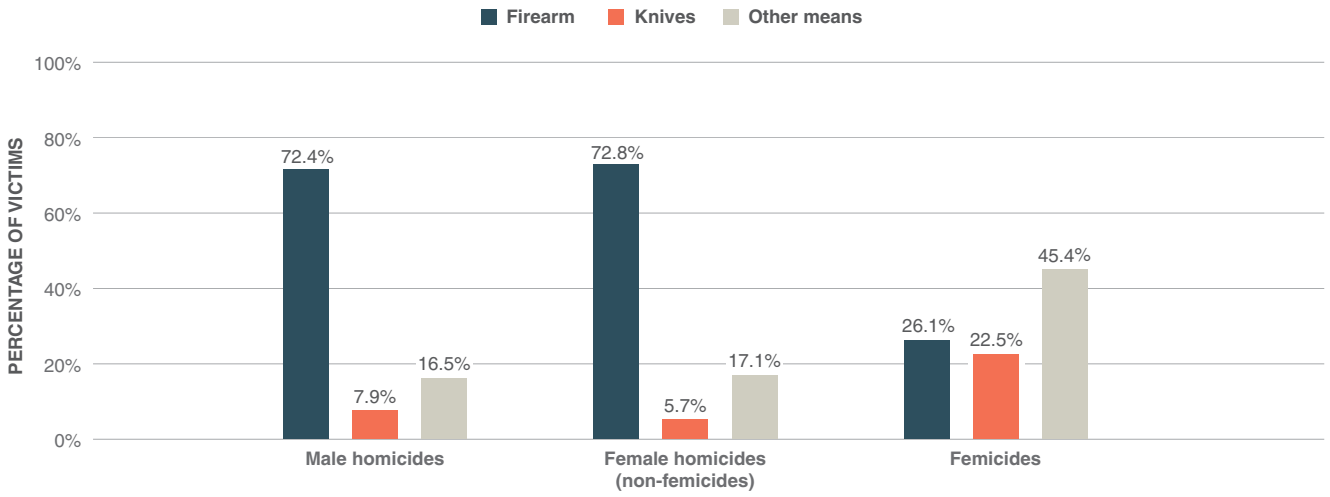
VIOLENCE AGAINST POLICE

High levels of violence in Mexico have also been characterized by increasing violence targeting security forces. Table 2.4 shows the number of police deaths across Mexico from 2018 to 2023. More than 2,600 officers have been killed in the past six years, with at least 412 killed in 2023.[18] The table further outlines the estimated size of each state's total police force, comprising municipal police forces, state police forces, and members of the National Guard deployed in each state. On this basis, it also includes estimates on the number of police per 1,000 inhabitants and the average annual police homicide rate by state since 2018.

FIGURE 2.5

Homicides by weapon and sex, 2023

Male homicides and non-femicide female homicides show very similar patterns in relation to weapons used, while femicides show distinct patterns.



Source: SESNSP, IEP Calculations

TABLE 2.4

Police killings by state, 2018–2023

Over the past six years, Guanajuato has had the most police officers killed, while Zacatecas has had the highest rate of officer killings.

STATE	TOTAL POLICE HOMICIDES (2018-2023)	TOTAL POLICE	POLICE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	AVERAGE ANNUAL POLICE HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 POLICE
Guanajuato	387	15,764	2.6	409
Guerrero	197	15,530	4.4	211
Mexico State	193	51,163	3.0	62.9
Zacatecas	172	5,188	3.2	553
Chihuahua	165	11,194	3.0	246
Veracruz	161	22,021	2.7	122
Michoacán	155	11,427	2.4	226
Jalisco	147	25,512	3.1	96.0
Sonora	106	8,349	2.8	212
Puebla	100	16,908	2.6	98.6
Mexico City	94	100,546	10.9	15.6
Baja California	91	6,638	1.8	228
Oaxaca	91	25,080	6.1	60.5
Nuevo León	72	17,641	3.0	68.0
Morelos	71	5,831	3.0	203
Colima	62	2,382	3.3	434
San Luis Potosí	61	7,582	2.7	134
Tamaulipas	50	7,435	2.1	112
Sinaloa	47	8,931	3.0	87.7
Tabasco	39	13,857	5.8	46.9
Quintana Roo	33	7,103	3.8	77.4
Chiapas	27	18,657	3.4	24.1
Coahuila	23	5,985	1.9	64.0
Durango	22	4,917	2.7	74.6
Hidalgo	19	10,578	3.4	29.9
Tlaxcala	15	5,810	4.3	43.0
Querétaro	13	4,529	1.9	47.8
Nayarit	10	4,876	3.9	34.2
Baja California Sur	5	3,324	4.2	25.1
Aguascalientes	4	3,670	2.6	18.2
Yucatán	4	9,793	4.2	6.8
Campeche	2	2,585	2.8	12.9
National	**2,638**	**454,219**	**3.6**	**96.8**

Source: Causa en Común, INEGI, CASEDE, IEP calculations

With at least 387 officers killed since 2018, Guanajuato has experienced by far the most police homicides of any state. It is followed by Guerrero, Mexico State, Zacatecas, and Chihuahua, each with more than 160 officers killed. In contrast, Campeche, Yucatán, Aguascalientes, Baja California Sur, and Nayarit have each recorded ten or fewer police homicides in the past six years.

The true lethality of work as a police officer, however, is perhaps better understood in terms of police homicide rates. Against a national police force of over 450,000 officers, the more than 2,600 police killings recorded over the past six years equates to an estimated annual police homicide rate of 96.8 deaths per 100,000 officers. This suggests that being a police officer in Mexico is nearly four times as dangerous as being a member of the general public, as Mexico's overall homicide rate has on average been 26.4 deaths per 100,000 people since 2018.

Moreover, in certain states, the dangers associated with police work are considerably greater. While Guanajuato ranks first in terms of total officers killed, it ranks third in terms of the rate of police killings. As a proportion of the overall police force and relative to the overall population of the state, Zacatecas ranks as the most dangerous place to serve as a police officer. Zacatecas has an average annual police homicide rate of 553, meaning that officers in the state have had about a 0.55 percent chance of falling victim to homicide each year since 2018. This is nearly nine times higher than the average 2018-2023 homicide rate for the general public in Zacatecas.

In the past several years, Zacatecas has been a key battleground in the bloody multi-state conflict between the CJNG, the Sinaloa Cartel, and their respective allies. The state's highways are of particular importance for the transportation of drugs northward to the United States. Across Mexico, these groups have repeatedly shown themselves willing to target government security forces in pursuit of heightened influence.[19] According to the records of Causa en Común, Zacatecas experienced 32 police killings in 2023, down from a high of 60 the previous year.[20] The state's most lethal 2023 attack on police involved five officers being kidnapped by an armed criminal group in the small municipality of Villa Hidalgo in early August. The officers were found dead a week later.[21]

In contrast, police officers in Yucatán – the most peaceful state in Mexico – face the lowest police homicide rate in the country. Based on homicide rates alone, it is safer to be a police officer in Yucatán than it is to be an average citizen in Mexico. The state's police homicide rate of 6.8 falls far below the national homicide rate for the general public. However, Yucatán's police homicide rate is still substantially higher than the state's overall homicide rate, which has on average been just 2.1 deaths per 100,000 people since 2018.

In the past six years, police have not fallen victim to homicidal violence at equal rates across all police forces. In both relative and absolute terms, municipal police forces have seen the most officers killed, with more than 1,400 deaths, representing 53.8 percent of the total. While in most states municipal police forces represent the largest share of the total officers, nationally their membership accounts for only about a third of the total police

force. After municipal forces, state police forces have experienced the most killings, with more than 1,050 deaths, representing 39.9 percent of the total. State police are the second largest overall force in most states, and they account for nearly half of the total national police force, though more than two-fifths (about 95,000 officers) of all state-level police operate in Mexico City alone. Finally, federal-level police, which since 2019 have formed part of the National Guard, have experienced the fewest fatalities, with about 170 deaths, representing 6.3 percent of all police killings since 2018. National Guard members account for about one fifth of the national police force.

MISSING PERSONS

The homicide rate in Mexico is likely underestimated. There are significant numbers of missing people in the country, a proportion of which may have been victims of homicide, especially given the growing trend of victims' bodies being later discovered in mass and unmarked graves. Analysts have suggested that cartels sometimes carry out forced disappearances – rather than open homicides – as a tactic to maintain political control.[22]

In 2017, the Mexican government established the National Search Commission / *Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda* (CNB) in an effort to better track the number of missing and disappeared people in the country, as historical and contemporary figures on these cases had long been viewed as unreliable.[23] Between 2006 and mid-2023, more than 5,600 clandestine graves have been found in Mexico. As shown in Figure 2.6, there has been a rise in the number of graves found each year since 2010, with such discoveries peaking in 2019, when 970 were found.[24]

Many clandestine graves are mass graves, holding the bodies of two or more victims, though some graves have been found to hold more than a hundred. The state of Jalisco, which since 2019 has recorded more than 1,640 exhumed bodies, far more than any other state, stands out in this regard. All the bodies found in Jalisco have been discovered in fewer than 180 graves, meaning the average clandestine grave in the state contains around ten victims. In particular, certain areas surrounding the capital of Guadalajara have become major sites of clandestine mass graves, especially the municipalities of Tlajomulco and El Salto. In December 2019, a clandestine grave containing 110 bodies was discovered in Tlajomulco, and in October 2020 a record 134 bodies were found in a grave in El Salto.[25]

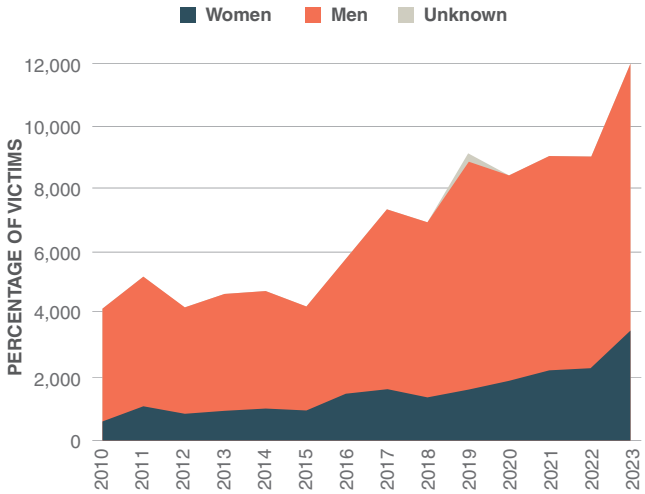
Nationwide, clandestine graves tend to be much smaller than in Jalisco. A 2022 CNB report stated that, between 2006 and 2021, there were 4,839 graves found from which 8,278 bodies were exhumed,[26] indicating that the average unmarked grave contained between one and two bodies. Against the total of more than 5,600 graves found between 2006 and mid-2023, this suggests that there been more than 9,500 bodies found across Mexico in the past 18 years.

While it is not known how many missing people end up the victims of homicide, there have been similarly alarming increases in disappearances in recent years. Since 2010, there have been more than 95,000 reported cases of missing and disappeared persons in Mexico. Half of these have been registered in the past five years, as the number has been steadily climbing since 2015, as shown in Figure 2.7. Last year saw by far the most cases on record, with over 12,000 missing persons reported.

FIGURE 2.7

Number of people reported missing or disappeared, by sex, 2010–2023

In 2023, there were over 12,000 reported cases of missing persons, the highest number on record.

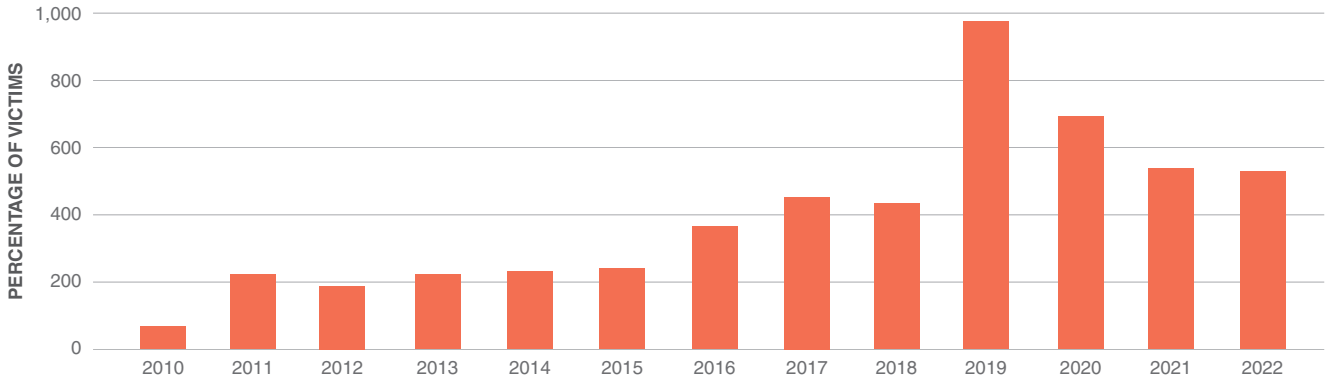


Source: Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda
Note: Figures accurate as of 15 February 2024.

FIGURE 2.6

Unmarked grave discoveries, 2010–2022

More than 5,000 clandestine graves have been identified in Mexico since 2010, including 970 in 2019 alone.



Source: Quinto Elemento Lab, Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda

Last year saw the highest number of reported cases of both missing men and missing women. Historically, more men than women are reported missing each year in Mexico, but in the past few years a growing share of missing people have been women, with a record 29.1 percent of the total being women last year. There are also diverging dynamics associated with the disappearances of men and women. While a large majority of all those that disappear tend to be youth or young adults, with two-thirds falling between the ages of 15 and 34 since 2010, disappeared females tend to be younger than disappeared males. The largest cohort of female disappearances are young women aged 15-19, while the largest cohort of men are aged 25-29.[27]

Moreover, the states with the most reported disappearances are somewhat different for women and men. With more than 2,900 cases, Mexico State has recorded the most female disappearances since 2010, followed by Tamaulipas and Mexico City. In contrast, Jalisco has recorded both the most male disappearances, with over 11,200, and the most overall disappearances, with more than 13,100, as shown in Table 2.5.

Despite recording the most disappearances in the past 13 years, Jalisco registered a comparatively low number of cases in 2023, with fewer than 180, a 67.9 percent decline from 2022. In fact, the major increase in recorded disappearances in 2023 was primarily the result of upticks in just two states: Mexico State and Puebla. In Mexico State, recorded disappearances rose by more than 1,100 cases, or 139 percent, from the previous year, while in Puebla they rose by more than 900 cases, equivalent to a nearly tenfold increase from 2022.

The reason for the substantial rise in reported disappearances in Puebla is unclear, with civil society organizations struggling to find explanations for the increase.[28] However, it is noteworthy that nearly half of all the cases occurred in the late summer months of July, August, and September. Further, at least 43 percent of cases were in just one municipality, Puebla City, the capital and most populous of the state's 217 municipalities. Compared to national rates, women and girls made up a very large share of those that disappeared in Puebla in 2023, at 47.1 percent. Among these, by far the largest age cohort was made up of those in their late teens, with a total of 182 disappearances of females aged 15-19.

TABLE 2.5

Recorded cases of missing people by state, 2015–2023

Jalisco has the largest number of people reported missing, though the national increase in 2023 was driven by large upticks in Mexico State and Puebla, which each had more than 900 more cases than in 2022.

STATE	MISSING PEOPLE (2010-2023)	MISSING PEOPLE (2023)	% CHANGE IN CASES, 2022-2023
Jalisco	13,118	172	-67.9%
Tamaulipas	11,228	658	8.9%
Mexico State	7,229	1,986	139%
Mexico City	6,262	1,830	34.1%
Veracruz	6,182	316	-40.3%
Nuevo León	6,052	874	44.9%
Michoacán	5,277	839	98.3%
Sinaloa	5,052	367	28.8%
Sonora	4,098	209	9.4%
Guerrero	3,437	323	35.1%
Zacatecas	3,428	801	74.1%
Chihuahua	3,043	136	25%
Coahuila	2,633	125	-39.3%
Puebla	2,627	1,056	887%
Guanajuato	2,304	169	-39.6%
Baja California	1,856	271	-24.3%
Morelos	1,714	284	-5.3%
Nayarit	1,365	178	17.1%
Quintana Roo	1,024	260	-27.2%
Chiapas	974	311	29.0%
San Luis Potosí	886	230	27.1%
Colima	862	21	-64.4%
Durango	801	90	26.8%
Baja California Sur	703	142	86.8%
Hidalgo	670	143	31.2%
Oaxaca	545	81	-44.5%
Querétaro	431	42	-16.0%
Aguascalientes	264	55	400%
Yucatán	255	12	-14.3%
Tabasco	237	19	-52.5%
Tlaxcala	129	14	-36.4%
Campeche	80	23	-11.5%
National	**95,092**	**12,051**	**33.5%**

Source: Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda
Note: Figures accurate as of 15 February 2024. The national total includes cases for which the state is unknown.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Over the past nine years, the national organized crime rate has risen by 62.4 percent. This rise was driven by substantial increases in the two most prevalent *organized crime* sub-indicators, *retail drug crimes* and *extortion.* Despite the long-term trend of deterioration, the *organized crime* score improved modestly in 2023, with its rate falling by 1.7 percent. This improvement was exclusively the result of a decline in the extortion rate, as the three other *organized crime* sub-indicators registered deteriorations last year.

This subsection presents the trends and results for the four sub-indicators that make up the overall measure of organized crime. The four sub-indicators are *extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking*, *retail drug crimes*, and *major organized crime offenses*. Major offenses include federal drug trafficking crimes and criminal offenses committed by three or more people. Figure 2.8 shows the monthly indexed trends in the rates of each of these sub-indicators from their levels in January 2015.

Over the nine-year period from 2015 to 2023, the national rate of extortion has increased by 50.9 percent, though last year it declined by 6.5 percent.

Despite this recent improvement in overall rate, according to national survey data, monetary losses from extortion reportedly increased by 55 percent in 2023, suggesting that the average act of extortion may have become more profitable.[29]

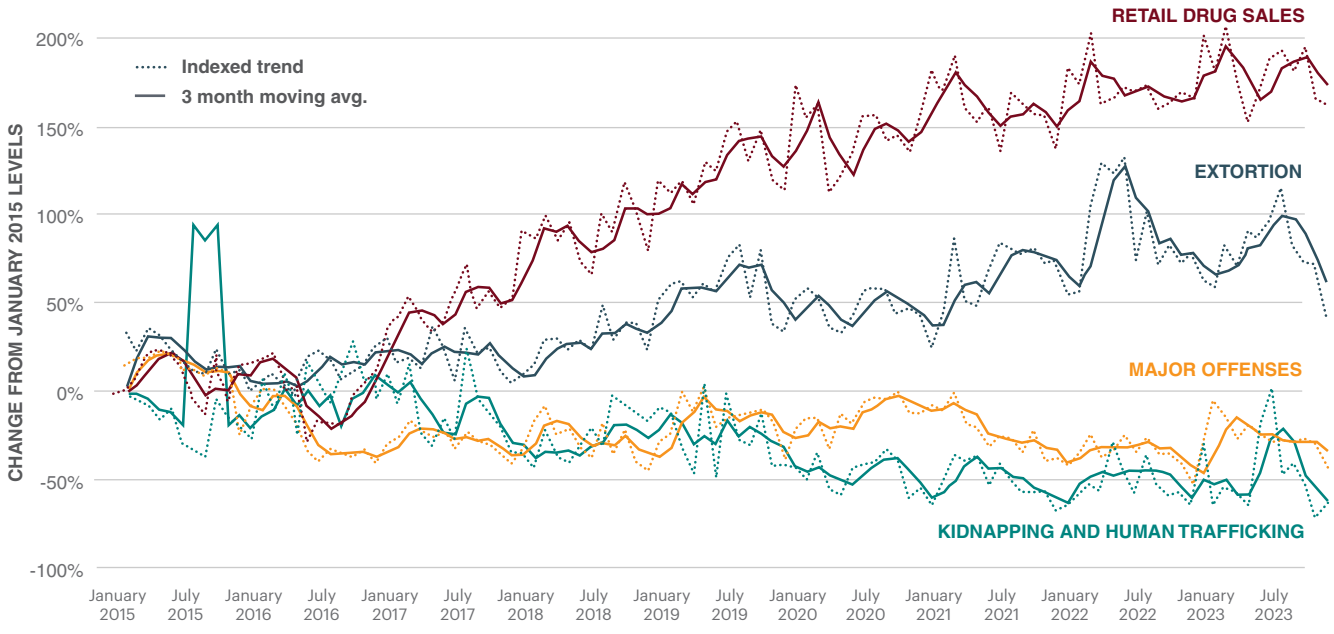
Extortion committed through fraudulent phone calls remains by far the most common type of extortion in the country, with 92 percent of all extortion crimes conducted this way.[30] Such extortions often take the form of "virtual kidnappings", in which offenders cold-call victims, falsely claim to have taken a loved one hostage, and demand a ransom payment.

Even though phone call extortions are by far the most prevalent form of extortion, they tend to be the least successful. A recent study suggests that just 5.4 percent of phone call extortions are successful, compared to 66.7 percent for protection rackets ("cobro de piso").[31] In states where "cobro de piso" is most common, such as Quintana Roo, Zacatecas, and Guanajuato, paying to be "protected" by organized crime groups has become the norm rather than the exception, especially when the organization has exerted dominance over the territory.[32]

FIGURE 2.8

Indexed change in organized crime offenses, 2015–2023

In the past nine years, retail drug crimes have risen more than any other indicator or sub-indicator in the MPI.



Source: SESNSP, IEP Calculations

In the past decade, increasing levels of extortion and the tendency of citizens not to trust authorities to adequately address the crime, as shown in high rates underreporting, has led some civilians to engage in a "self-defense" movement involving the practice of vigilante justice against criminal groups. In December 2023 in Texcapilla, Mexico State, for example, villagers killed ten members of the Familia Michoacana cartel, after being pressured into paying protection money.[33] However, those engaging in vigilante justice put themselves at risk of reprisal, and last year witnessed the death of Hipólito Mora in Michoacán, a lime farmer and one of the founders of Mexico's "self-defense" movement.[34]

In the past nine years, the rate of retail drug crimes has risen by 157 percent, by far the largest deterioration of the four organized crime sub-indicators. It has consistently risen each year since 2016, and it registered a 3.4 percent increase from 2022 to 2023. The deterioration for this sub-indicator has been widespread, with only nine states recording an improvement in the past nine years. According to national survey data, the rate of people reporting knowledge of drug dealing in their neighborhood rose from 27.3 percent in 2015 to 34.9 percent in 2023.[35]

In 2023, Guanajuato held the highest retail drug crime rate in the country for the third consecutive year, with 312 crimes per 100,000 people, though this is down from a rate of 353 crimes in 2022. Guanajuato is located along the fentanyl and cocaine smuggling routes between Pacific ports and the United States, making it a prime location for drug trafficking organizations. Government officials have stated that the majority of the homicides that occur in the state are related to drug dealing.[36]

Colima had the second highest rate of retail drug crimes in 2023, with 273 offenses per 100,000 people. It was followed by Coahuila, which had 271 offenses per 100,000 people, down from 334 offenses in 2022. Coahuila has been among the five states with the highest retail drug crime rates since at least 2015.

With regard to the *kidnapping and human trafficking* sub-indicator, its rate has declined by 52 percent since 2015, dropping from 9.6 to 4.6 cases per 100,000 people. Despite this long-term improvement, the sub-indicator has been on the rise in the past two years, increasing by 2.5 percent in 2022 and by 6.7 percent in 2023. Sinaloa experienced the most significant increase in human trafficking and kidnapping occurrences, with its rate growing nearly seven-fold between 2022 and 2023, recording 26.8 cases per 100,000 people, by far the highest rate in the country.

International migrants passing through Mexico are among those most vulnerable to kidnapping and human trafficking in the country. Traffickers often lure and take advantage of women and children, and to a smaller degree men, for sex trafficking in Mexico and the United States by offering false job opportunities, misleading them with romantic pretenses, or through coercion. Most instances of trafficking involve family members, romantic partners, social media contacts, or deceptive job offers.[37] The offenders often exploit the low rates at which migrants report crimes and sometimes engage in mass kidnapping operations to extort ransom from their relatives at home. In April and May 2023, for example, operations by security forces led to the discoveries of two large groups of migrants being held against their will in San Luis Potosí, the first involving 100 kidnapped individuals and the second involving 49.[38]

With the number of unauthorized migrants entering Mexico drastically increasing (see Figure 2.11), cases of human trafficking and kidnappings are expected to increase, especially in Mexico's northern and southern border regions. Between 2022 and 2023, the southern region experienced an increase from an average of 2.6 to 4.1 cases per 100,000. The northern region remains most heavily affected by kidnapping and human trafficking, with an average of 7.6 cases per 100,000 people. Two of the five states with the highest rates are in the northern region.

In relation to *major offenses*, its rate has improved markedly in the past nine years. However, the rate has fallen and risen repeatedly over the period. Between 2020 and 2022, major offenses showed a downward trend, dropping by 25.1 percent, but last year it partially rebounded, rising by 12.5 percent to 5.4 cases per 100,000.

Six out of the ten states with the worst rates are located in northern Mexico, suggesting that Mexico's major offenses, which tend to be coordinated drug trafficking activities, disproportionally occur in the areas where drugs are smuggled into the United States. The four states with the highest average major offenses rates over the past nine years are all states located along or near the Mexico-US border. Baja California and Sonora have registered the worst average major offenses rates since 2015.

MEXICO'S ORGANIZED CRIMINAL LANDSCAPE

The substantial deterioration in peacefulness in Mexico in the second half of the 2010s was largely driven by the activities of criminal organizations, particularly the violent contests between them over territory and control of illicit rackets. According to data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), in 2013 there were just 160 recorded incidents of cartel clashes that resulted in at least one death. In 2021, the number of such clashes peaked at 3,753 and fell to 2,248 in 2022.

The sustained high levels of conflict between organized crime groups follow the fragmentation of Mexican cartels after the launch of the war on drugs in 2006 and the implementation of the kingpin strategy, which sought to combat criminal organizations by targeting their leadership. While drug trafficking operations were formerly controlled by a handful of dominant organizations, in several instances the kingpin strategy contributed to such organizations breaking up into smaller but more violent groups.[39] According to UCDP records, the number of criminal organizations involved in at least one death, increased from just four in 2007 to 25 in 2022. Throughout the 2010s, this trend was seen, for example, in the emergence of Los Caballeros Templarios as an offshoot of La Familia Michoacana,[40] the independence of Los Zetas from the Gulf Cartel,[41] the separation of the CJNG from the Sinaloa Cartel,[42] and the subsequent split of the Santa Rosa de Lima

Cartel (CSRL) from the CJNG.[43] The Sinaloa Cartel has also seen violent fissures following the arrest of its former leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, specifically between a faction affiliated with Guzmán's former partner, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, and a faction affiliated with Guzmán's sons, known as Los Chapitos.[44]

The heavily militarized CJNG, considered by the US Department of Justice to be one of the world's five most dangerous transnational criminal organizations,[45] rose to prominence in the past decade, and particularly since 2017, through a violent national expansion campaign and by catering to the high demand for fentanyl and methamphetamine in the US market.[46] The CJNG now holds a dominant presence in six states and a significant presence in an additional 20. Its stronghold is on the western coast, in Jalisco and neighboring states, but its operations span across all the country's regions.[47] The CJNG's expansion increased cartel conflict across Mexico.

Figure 2.9 shows the number of cartel conflict deaths by year associated with the six most lethal criminal groups in Mexico since 2004. While each group was connected with at least 7,000 deaths, the killings associated with the two most powerful cartels in the country, the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG – including from their clashes with each other and with other cartels – are several times more numerous than those associated with the other groups. Moreover, the vast majority of both the overall killings and those specifically associated with these two groups have occurred since 2017, the year that an alliance between them reportedly broke down. In the period between 2013 and 2017, clashes involving at least one of these two groups accounted for just 38 percent of all cartel conflict deaths, but from 2018 to 2022 they accounted for 64 percent of such deaths. Despite this, the UCDP data suggests that in more recent years, the deaths from cartel conflict have been on the decline.

Between 2021 and 2022, its records show the number of such killings dropping by about one fourth. A similar trend is observable in data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which shows fatalities associated with cartel violence dropping by about one fifth between 2021 and 2022. The ACLED data, however, also shows cartel-related fatalities remaining virtually unchanged between 2022 and 2023.

CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC DRUG MARKETS

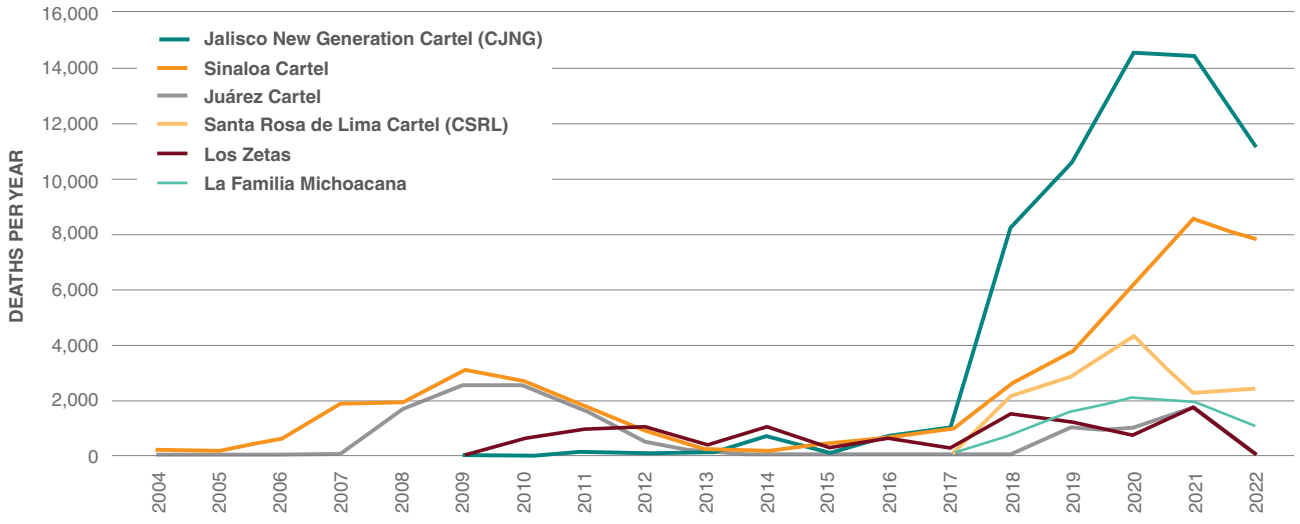
Mexico's drug trafficking organizations have made major shifts in the drugs that they produce in the past decade in order to adapt to the significant changes in the United States market. Most notably, these changes include the decreased demand for plant-based drugs like marijuana and heroin and a massive upsurge in the demand for synthetic drugs, particularly opioids.

The decreasing demand for marijuana from Mexico can be attributed to the legalization and decriminalization of marijuana in most US states. In 2013, when only a few US states had legalized the recreational use of marijuana, marijuana seizures along the Mexico-US border were just under 1,350 metric tons.[48] By 2023, with the majority of the US population able to legally access the drug, the volume of seizures declined to around 60 metric tons, a 96 percent drop. With marijuana's massive decline in profitability, drug trafficking organizations have had to expand their trafficking of other drugs, with fentanyl being the most prevalent. As shown in Figure 2.10, the amount of fentanyl seized by US Customs officials at the Mexico-US border has skyrocketed; the amount seized increased tenfold between 2019 and 2023.

FIGURE 2.9

Cartel conflict deaths associated with Mexico's six most lethal groups, 2004–2022

Deaths from cartel conflict have risen steeply since 2017, largely driven by conflicts associated with the CJNG and Sinaloa Cartel.

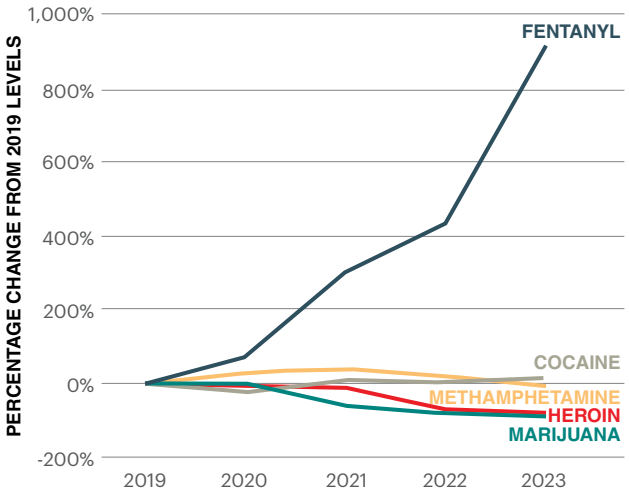


Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program
Note: Included are the six cartels whose clashes with other groups have resulted in the most total deaths since 2004. Deaths associated with clashes between two of these cartels are shown in the totals of both.

FIGURE 2.10

Indexed change in drug seizure volumes at the Mexico-US border, by drug type, 2019–2023

Between 2019 and 2023, the amount of fentanyl seized at the border rose by more than 900 percent.



Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, IEP calculations

The shift to fentanyl production has been highly lucrative, as fentanyl is extremely potent, relatively cheap to produce and is often sold in pill form, meaning that crime groups are able to profit far more, relative to the volume of the drug that is trafficked. The markup of fentanyl prices when it is being sold and distributed can be as much as 2,700 times the price it takes to produce.[49] Because of its low price, fentanyl is often laced into other drugs such as heroin or cocaine in order to make them more powerful and cheaper to produce. The potency of the drug has led to a spike in overdose deaths in both the United States and in Mexico over the past few years. Fentanyl and similar opioids are reportedly linked to more deaths of Americans under 50 than any other cause.[50]

While Mexico has traditionally been seen as a producer or transit point for drugs destined for the United States, its internal drug market has also been growing in recent years. The rate of retail drug crimes was the *organized crime* sub-indicator to experience by far the largest increase over the past nine years, and it was also the only sub-indicator to consistently rise each year since 2016. This trend reflects the increasing reliance of drug traffickers on sales to local consumers.

As at the border with the United States, the amount of fentanyl seized within Mexico has also been increasing. In just the first half of 2023, 1,727 kilograms of fentanyl were seized by Mexican authorities, almost as much as what had been seized over the course of a whole year in 2022, which was previously the highest year on record for domestic seizures.[51]

However, it was seizures of another synthetic drug that experienced by far the most dramatic rise within Mexico. In the first half of 2023 alone, more than 138,000 kilograms of methamphetamine were seized by Mexican authorities, three times as much as in the entire year of 2021, which previously held the record.[52]

Data from the Mexican Observatory for Mental Health and Drug Consumption reveals that abuse of methamphetamine by Mexican citizens is a rising problem in the country. Over the past few years, the drugs that people have sought treatment for have shifted from predominantly alcohol and marijuana toward amphetamine-type substances, which include methamphetamine and ecstasy. Between 2014 and 2022, the rate of people seeking treatment for amphetamine-type substances increased by 400 percent, compared to a 34 percent decline in the rate for alcohol.[53]

The rise in domestic consumption of amphetamine-type substances is a result of the market shift to synthetic drugs. Mexican organized crime groups became the primary producers and suppliers of methamphetamine to the United States after 2005, when legislation was passed in that country that limited the importation of key precursor ingredients for methamphetamine production. The upsurge in synthetic drug consumption, both in Mexico and the United States, has been driven by their extreme addictiveness; the ease with which they can be produced, transported, and sold; and their high levels of profitability for organized crime groups.[54]

ORGANIZED CRIME, FORCED RECRUITMENT AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN CHIAPAS

The state of Chiapas has consistently been among the most peaceful states in the country, ranking in the top five since 2017. In particular, it has recorded some of the lowest organized crime rates in Mexico in that time, with the state registering the second lowest organized crime score in the country in both 2022 and 2023. Despite these statistical measures, there has been growing attention in the past year on the incursion of national organized crime groups into the state,[55] highlighting that even places with a baseline of low levels of violence and organized crime are not immune to the destructive influence of such groups.

Chiapas's increasing attractiveness to criminal groups arises primarily from its location as the main border crossing state with Guatemala – and by extension Central America. Among other things, it is an important entry point for cocaine from South America that passes through Mexico en route to the United States.[56]

For the past several years, the Sinaloa Cartel has controlled the trafficking activities along large stretches of Chiapas's border with Guatemala. In 2022, however, the CJNG began fighting for control in certain border areas.[57] Of the state's 124 municipalities, only three – Suchiate, Benemérito de las Américas, and Marqués de Comillas – registered extreme homicide rates in 2023. Each of these are border municipalities with relatively small populations. The most extreme rate was in Suchiate, whose homicide rate was 121 deaths per 100,000 people in 2023, a 56.2 percent increase over the previous year and the highest municipal homicide rate on record in Chiapas. Suchiate is located on the southern end of the Chiapas-Guatemala border, which is reportedly the focal point of the CJNG's incursion into the state.[58]

The intensifying violence has been highly destructive to local populations. Non-governmental organizations estimate that, since mid-2021, more than 10,000 people in Chiapas's border areas have been driven from their homes because of the violence, including from the threat of forced recruitment into criminal groups.[59]

Recent studies show that, across Mexico, cartels have between 160,000 and 185,000 members, making them the fifth largest employer in the country. Given the high death rate of gang members, however, it is estimated that cartels must recruit upwards of 350 individuals per week to continue growing.[60] Common targets of recruitment are children and young people experiencing a combination of poverty, abusive homes, and lacking supportive social agencies.[61]

Chiapas has among the lowest levels of Positive Peace in the country, as shown in Section 4. With high levels of social inequality and poverty, Chiapas ranks among the bottom five states in half of the Pillars of Positive Peace, namely, *Equitable Distribution of Resources*, *Sound Business Environment*, *Acceptance of the Rights of Others*, and *High Levels of Human Capital*, ranking last in the latter Pillar.

Moreover, according to the Ecological Threat Report (ETR), Chiapas is also the most ecologically threatened state in Mexico. It is the only state in the country to record high levels of threat in two of the four ETR domains, namely, food insecurity and natural disasters. Chiapas is the most food insecure state in the country, with government estimates indicating that 70-77 percent of the population is at risk.[62] It is also one of only three states to record a high ETR threat level for natural disasters, as both earthquakes and flooding routinely affect the state. In 2017, for example, an 8.1 magnitude quake off the coast of Chiapas killed dozens of people, damaged tens of thousands of homes, and impacted nearly 1.5 million residents.[63]

The combination of such ecological threats and Chiapas's comparatively low levels of Positive Peace leaves the state's population especially vulnerable to recruitment efforts by cartels.[64] In January 2024, residents of the small municipality of Chicomuselo reported that members of the Sinaloa Cartel and the CJNG carried out a "criminal census" to identify individuals in the communities that could be recruited into their ranks. If such individuals refused, they were reportedly threatened; had their electricity, water or internet cut; or were killed. That month, more than 2,000 residents of Chicomuselo and two neighboring municipalities fled their homes as a result of the violence.[65]

The conflict has also begun interfering in the tourism sector, on which the economy of Chiapas heavily depends. The state has seen closures of several tourist destinations, and large tourist agencies have refused to take clients to others due to the threat of violence.[66]

In addition to the impacts on residents and the local economy, the growing presence of organized criminal groups has been felt by the rising number of international migrants in Chiapas. The state's border is not only a key entry point for drugs into the country; it is also the gateway into Mexico for most Central American migrants headed to the United States, along with a growing number from South America and the Caribbean.

As measured by Mexican officials' documentations of encounters with and detentions of migrants, the numbers of unauthorized migrants in both Chiapas and Mexico in general have surged in the past three years. Documentations of unauthorized migrants in the country have increased eightfold in the past decade, from around 86,000 in 2013 to nearly 800,000 in 2023. In most of those years, Chiapas recorded the highest number of unauthorized migrants, though in 2023 its 229,000 documentations placed it second to Tabasco, which had 292,000.

Until 2019, documentations in Chiapas made up around 50 percent of the national total each year. Since then, that number has fallen to about 30 percent, despite the absolute number of migrants documented in Chiapas increasing significantly. This indicates that the points of entry into Mexico have increased and that migrants' countries of origin have become more diverse. Between 2007 and 2023, the number of unauthorized migrants entering Mexico from Asia and Africa increased by about 80-fold and 110-fold, respectively. Figure 2.11 depicts the number of documentations of unauthorized migrants nationally and in Chiapas from 2001 to 2023.

Recent studies show that, across Mexico, cartels have between 160,000 and 185,000 members, making them the fifth largest employer in the country.

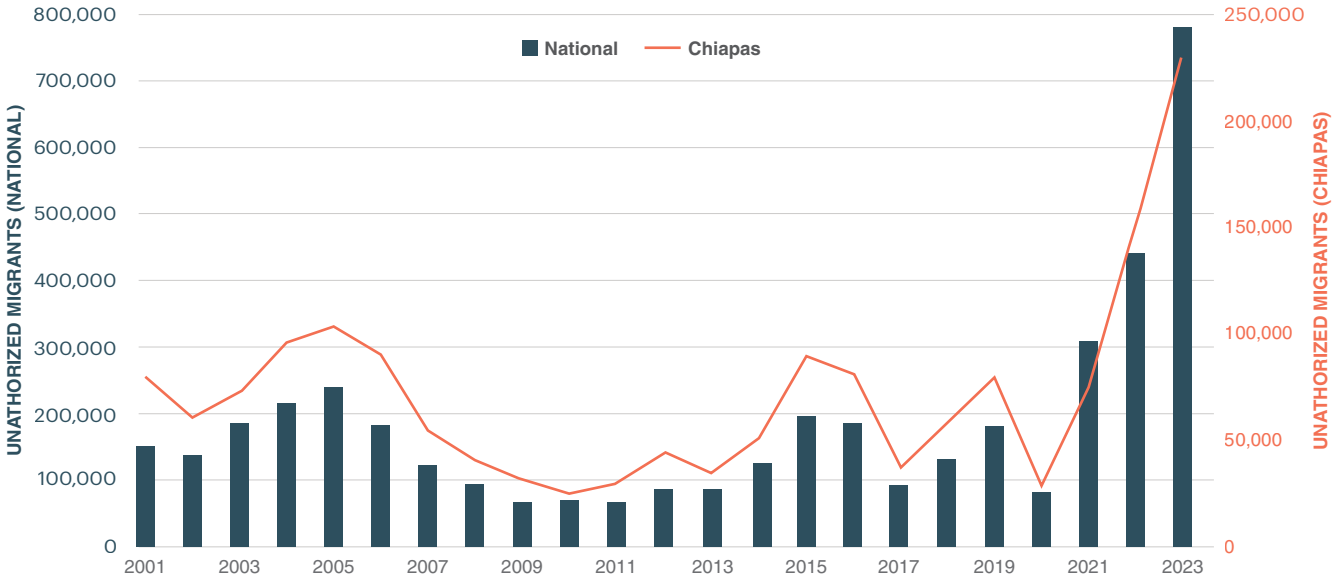
To perhaps a greater degree than Chiapas's local rural residents, unauthorized migrants represent a population that is particularly vulnerable to the violence perpetrated by organized criminal groups. While Chiapas ranks as one of the most peaceful states in the country in almost all indicators and sub-indicators of the MPI, one of the few measures in which it ranks in the bottom half of the index is *kidnapping and human trafficking*. With 4.8 cases per 100,000 people, it had the 11th worst rate in the country in 2023.

Calculating the incidence of kidnapping and human trafficking offenses against migrants is challenging given the extremely low rates at which migrants report crimes. Moreover, it may be difficult to distinguish between situations in which migrants have volunteered to be smuggled and those in which they are held or trafficked against their will, as migrants sometimes place themselves at the mercy of smugglers who may exploit their vulnerable situation in various ways. Despite this, as shown in Figure 2.12, various forms of kidnapping and human trafficking are among the most commonly reported crimes perpetrated against unauthorized migrants in the country.

FIGURE 2.11

Documentations of unauthorized migrants nationally and in Chiapas, 2001–2023

The number of unauthorized migrants in Mexico rose drastically from 2020 to 2023.



Source: Unidad de Política Migratoria

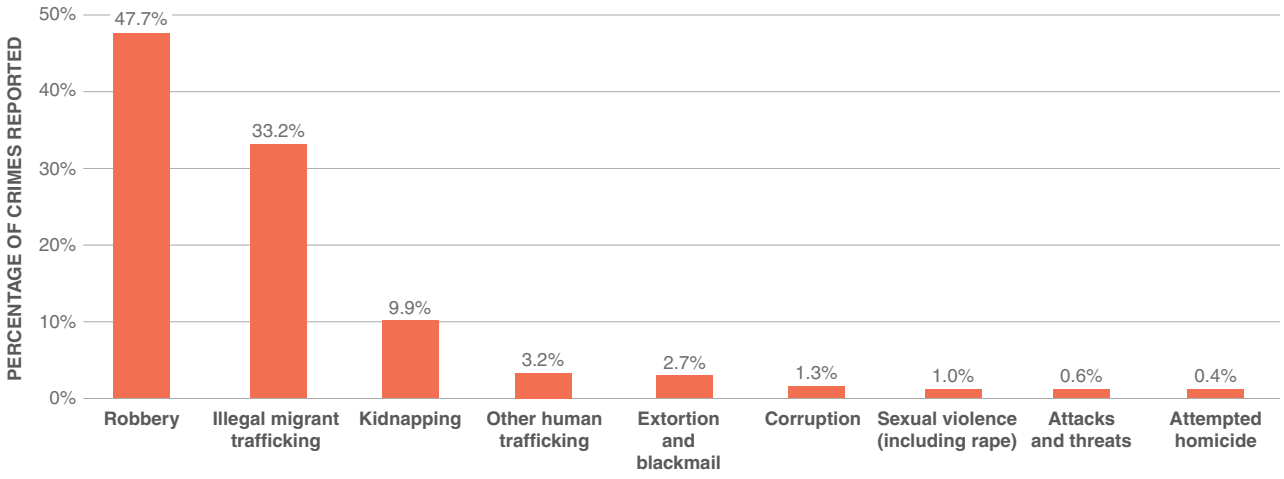
Part of a trend of diversification in organized crime groups' illicit activities, human smuggling has become a growing source of their revenues.[67] While it is estimated that cartels profit between US$700 million and US$1 billion annually from the fentanyl trade,[68] the trafficking of unauthorized migrants is estimated to be worth about US$13 billion each year.[69] Northern states are typically the most affected by kidnapping and human trafficking, as migrants accumulate at the US border, but with the recent increases in migration, southern states such as Chiapas are also experiencing rising levels of kidnapping and human trafficking, with its rates almost tripling since 2021.

Recent reports indicate that, in the rivalry between the two main factions of the Sinaloa Cartel, the faction associated with the sons of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán – Los Chapitos – has found itself in a diminished position following the early 2023 arrest of the eldest brother, Ovidio Guzmán. As a result, Los Chapitos have reportedly created a pact with the rival faction headed by Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, which involves Los Chapitos pivoting away from the fentanyl trade and into other illicit rackets, including human trafficking. Los Chapitos reportedly plan to make use of their established trafficking routes to move migrants, including through mass kidnappings, from southern states like Chiapas and Tabasco to northern states like Baja California, Sonora, and Chihuahua.[70]

FIGURE 2.12

Crimes against unauthorized migrants in Mexico, by most commonly reported, 2016–2022

While unauthorized migrants report experiences of crime at extremely low rates, they most commonly report robberies.



Source: Unidad de Política Migratoria, IEP calculations

VIOLENT CRIME

The *violent crime* indicator comprises four sub-indicators: *robbery*, *assault*, *family violence*, and *sexual assault*. Over the past nine years, Mexico's violent crime rate has deteriorated by 17.9 percent, driven by deteriorations in the rates of sexual assault and family violence.

While robberies and assaults have remained relatively close to their 2015 levels, family violence and sexual assault rates have consistently deteriorated each year. As a result, their rates have more than doubled nationally, respectively climbing by 108 and 141 percent over the last nine years. Only three states – Yucatán, Chiapas, and Tlaxcala – have registered improvements in these sub-indicators, while the remaining 29 states have registered deteriorations.

In the same period, the national assault rate has deteriorated by just 2.6 percent, while the robbery rate has improved, decreasing by 19.8 percent. These diverging trends are shown in the indexed monthly trends in violent crime rates (Figure 2.13).

Since 2015, ten states have recorded overall improvements in *violent crime*, while 22 states have deteriorated. Tabasco recorded the largest improvement in that period, with its rate dropping from 3,464 to 2,059 crimes per 100,000 people. Colima recorded the largest increase, with its rate jumping from 729 to 3,204 crimes per 100,00 people.

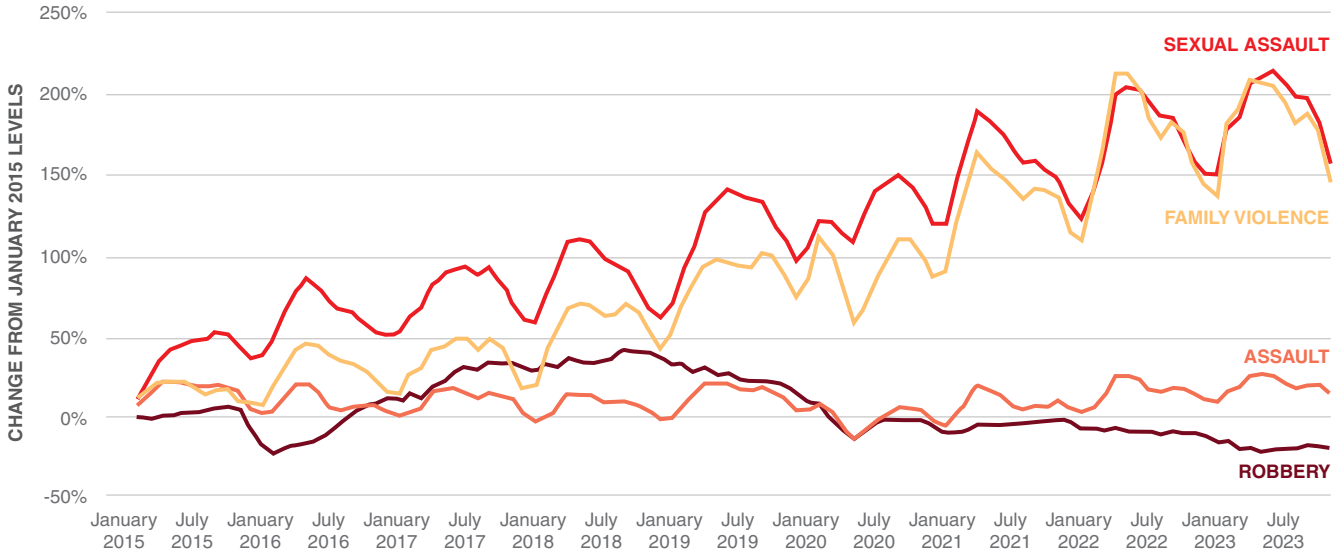
Last year, the national violent crime rate improved by less than one percent, from 2,500 to 2,480 crimes per 100,000 people. Yucatán has held the lowest rate of violent crime for the last four years. In 2023, it had recorded just 102 crimes per 100,000 people, less than a third of the rate in Tlaxcala, the second-best ranked state. Since 2015, Yucatán's rate has dropped by 89.8 percent, the largest relative decline in the country.

Quintana Roo recorded the highest violent crime rate in the country last year, with 4,230 crimes per 100,000 people. It overtook Mexico State, which has held the highest rate in six of the past nine years. Since 2015, Quintana Roo's violent crime rate has increased by 45.3 percent. Quintana Roo's poor ranking in 2023 was driven by the highest rate of assaults in Mexico, though it also had among the worst rates of family violence, sexual assault, and robbery.

FIGURE 2.13

Indexed monthly change in violent crime rates, 2015–2023

The rates of family violence and sexual assault have both more than doubled since 2015, while the rates of assault and robbery have remained comparatively unchanged.



Source: SESNSP, IEP Calculations
Note: This figure shows the three-month moving average of the indexed trend.

Mexico State recorded the country's highest robbery rate, nearly double the rate in Mexico City, which had the country's second-worst rate. According to national survey data, robbery in Mexico City and Mexico State is by far the most common type of crime experienced by the residents of any state.[71] Nationwide, robbery on the street or on public transportation is the most widely experienced type of robbery, making up 19.8 percent of all crimes recorded in the survey. Other forms of robbery, including vehicular theft and home burglary, made up an additional 20.6 percent of all crimes recorded.[72]

Despite improving by nine percent last year, Colima had the worst rate of family violence for the seventh year in a row, with 1,645 cases per 100,000 people, more than twice the national average. Nuevo León had the highest sexual assault rate for the ninth consecutive year, at 433 cases per 100,000 people, more than four times the national average.

In relative terms, the state that recorded the highest overall increase in *violent crime* since 2015 is Campeche, whose rate rose more than 1,000 percent, driven by a 16-fold increase in the rate of assaults and an 11-fold increase in the rate of family violence.

Analysis reveals a relatively high degree of seasonality in violent crime rates. Internationally, it has been found that violent crime tends to be more common in warmer seasons, while property crimes are more common in cooler seasons. This dynamic has generally been attributed to a greater degree of public and social interaction when the weather is warmer, increasing opportunities for crimes against people.[73] As shown in Figure 2.14, three of the four *violent crime* sub-indicators in Mexico spiked in early spring and early summer last year, specifically in March and June.

Robbery is the only sub-indicator for which a seasonal trend does not appear, with rates changing little through the year.

Analyzing average monthly crime rates from 2015 to 2023, robbery rates were found to fluctuate by less than 13 percentage points. In contrast, sexual assault shows the most seasonal variation, with its average monthly rates fluctuating by 33 percentage points. The average monthly family violence and assault rates fluctuated by 28.7 and 21.7 percentage points, respectively.

Although it was not the case in 2023, crime statistics from 2015-2022 show that, in addition to the spring and summer spikes, October also typically sees upticks in the rates of sexual assault, assault, and family violence. However, the reason for these October increases is unclear.

There are important gender dimensions to family violence, sexual assault and abuse. National survey data indicates that girls between the ages of five and nine are three times more likely to be sexually abused than boys, while girls between 15 and 17 years old are abused eight times more than boys the same age. Moreover, seven in ten women over the age of 15 report experiencing some form of violence in their lifetimes, including 39.9 percent that had experienced it from their partner.[74] According to the measures of the MPI, there are more than 1,150 instances of sexual assault in Mexico every day.

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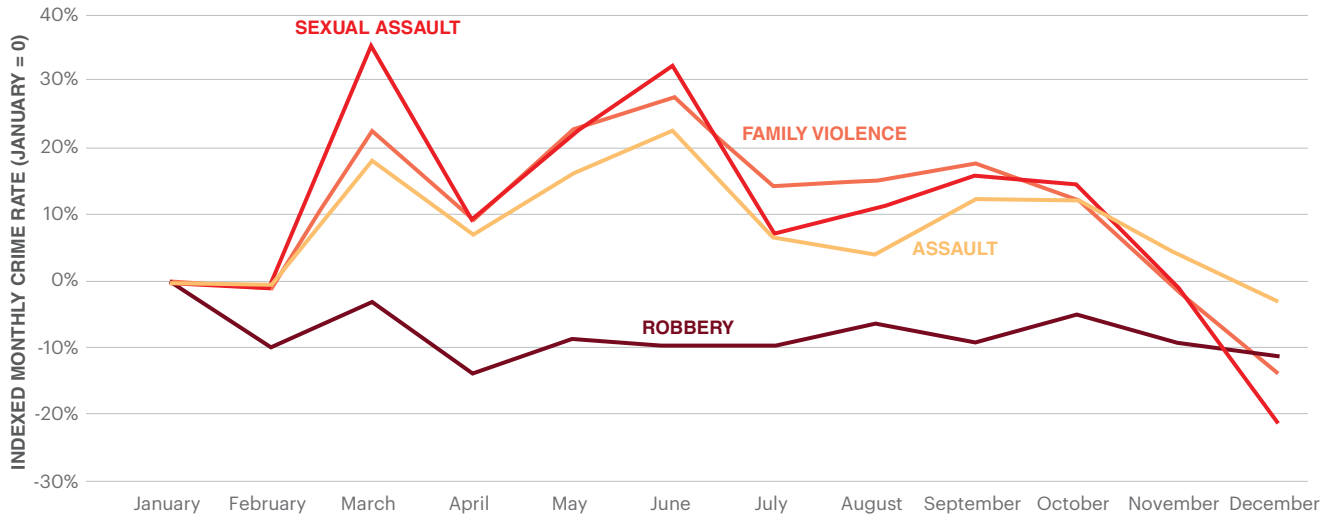
FIGURE 2.14

Seasonality of violent crime, 2023

Most violent crime categories peaked in March and June, with sexual assault exhibiting the greatest seasonal variation and robbery exhibiting the least.



Source: SESNSP, IEP Calculations

FIREARMS CRIME

In the past nine years, *firearms crime* has been a principal driver of Mexico's widespread increases in homicides, with more than 185,000 people having been killed with guns. The proportion of homicides committed with a firearm has increased substantially, from 57.4 percent in 2015 to a record 70.2 percent in 2023.

Since 2015, the firearms crime rate has deteriorated by 63.8 percent, rising from 14.6 to 24 incidents per 100,000 people. During that time, 25 states have recorded deteriorations and seven have recorded improvements. As shown in Figure 2.15, the rate of homicides with a firearm has increased by 88.3 percent, while the rate of assaults with a firearm has increased by 28.3 percent.

Despite these long-term deteriorations, *firearms crime* in Mexico has been marked by two distinct trends over the past nine years, with a steep deterioration between 2015 and 2019, followed by modest but consistent improvements in each of the next four years. In 2023, the firearms crime rate recorded an overall improvement of 2.7 percent. The rate of assaults with a firearm improved by 1.7 percent, and the rate of homicides with a firearm improved by 3.1 percent.

The state of Colima recorded the highest rate of firearms crime in 2023, with 99 incidents per 100,000 people. It is also the state to have experienced the largest deterioration in *firearms crime* in the past nine years, with incidents rising from just 21 per 100,000 people in 2015. In 2023, Colima had the highest rate of homicides with a firearm, while Guanajuato had the highest rate of assaults with a firearm.

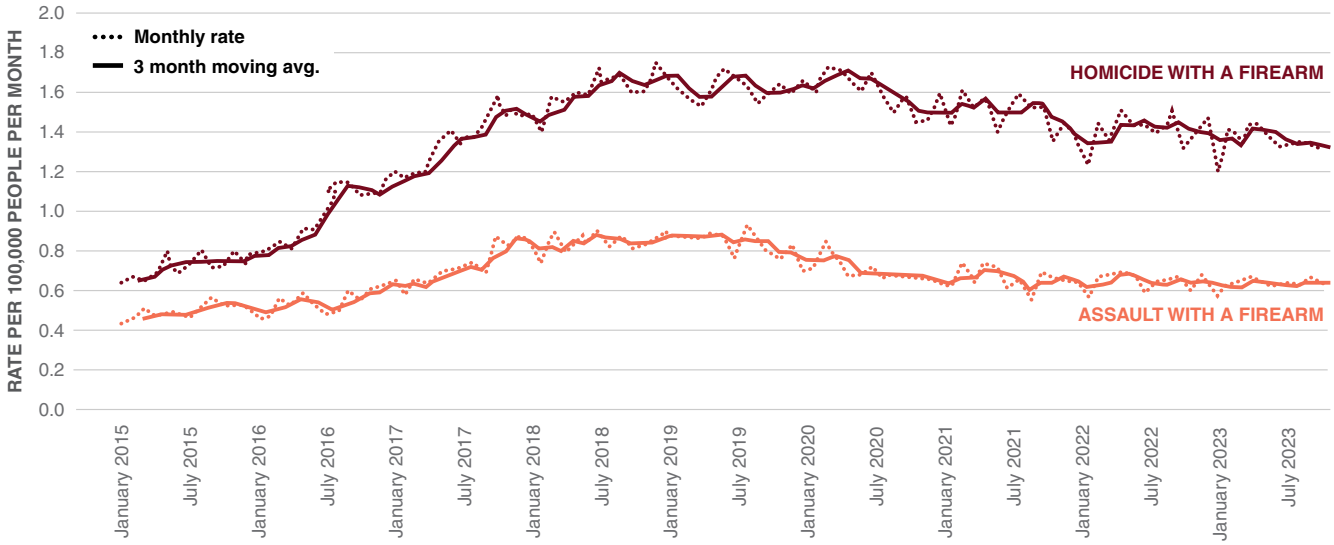
For the fifth year in a row, Yucatán had the lowest firearms crime rate in the country. With just 0.5 incidents per 100,000 people, its rate was more than 45 times lower than the national rate and one third the rate of the second-best ranking state, Baja California Sur. Yucatán had the country's lowest rate of homicide with a firearm, while Tlaxcala had the lowest rate of assaults with a firearm.

Sinaloa has experienced the largest improvement in *firearms crime* since 2015, with its rate falling by 60.4 percent. Between

FIGURE 2.15

Monthly rates in gun violence, 2015–2023

The combined rate of firearms homicides and assaults has increased by 63.8 percent since 2015.



Source: SESNSP, IEP Calculations

2022 and 2023, Zacatecas, which has been plagued with high levels of gun violence in the past few years, registered the country's largest improvement, with its rate dropping by 28.6 percent. In contrast, Morelos registered the largest deterioration, with its rate increasing by 32 percent.

Legally obtaining a gun in Mexico requires a letter from local authorities confirming the lack of a criminal record, the submission of employment details, and a background check that includes information on current gun ownership status. It also entails visiting the one store in Mexico that legally sells firearms, which is located in Mexico City. Once there, fingerprints of potential purchasers are taken.[75]

While there are many challenges to legally obtaining a gun in Mexico, the country has a thriving black market for firearms. Multiple studies have found that over 70 percent of firearms used to commit crimes in Mexico are smuggled in from the United States.[76] Mexican authorities have claimed that roughly two percent of the 40 million firearms made annually in the United States are smuggled into Mexico.[77] Recent reports have also indicated a rise of military-grade weaponry being smuggled in from the United States to arm criminal groups in their battles with each other and with law enforcement.[78]

As a result of these dynamics, in 2021, the Mexican government filed a lawsuit in US court against several large US gun manufacturers. The lawsuit argued that such companies were liable for facilitating the influx of the weapons across the border, claiming that this movement had been a major contributor in Mexico ranking third in the world in gun-related deaths. In addition to the massive human cost, the lawsuit argued that influx was associated with firearms-related violence that had adversely impacted investment and economic development in Mexico. While the lawsuit was originally dismissed, a US appeals court revived the case in January 2024.[79]

For the fifth year in a row, Yucatán had the lowest firearms crime rate in the country with just 0.5 incidents per 100,000 people.

FEAR OF VIOLENCE

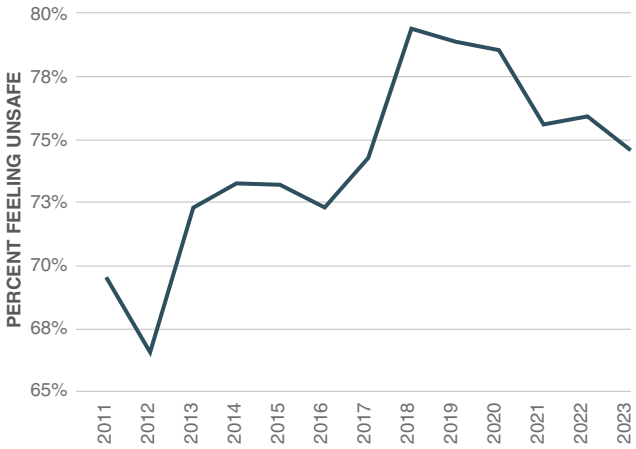
The *fear of violence* indicator refers to the degree to which citizens perceive the state in which they reside to be unsafe. In the past nine years, the national percentage of people who feel unsafe in their states of residence has risen and fallen, but there was a net deterioration of 1.3 percentage points.

In 2015, 73.2 percent of the population reported feeling unsafe, compared to 74.6 percent in 2023. Overall, 11 states have improved in this indicator and 21 have deteriorated. The state that improved the most since 2015 was Coahuila, with the proportion of its population feeling unsafe falling from 74.9 to 44.1 percent, a more than 30-point drop. Colima experienced the largest deterioration, with 80.9 percent of the population feeling unsafe in 2023, compared to 56.5 percent in 2015.

FIGURE 2.16

Percent of people fearing violence in their state of residence, 2011—2023

The proportion of people feeling unsafe peaked in 2018 at 79.4 percent but has fallen in the years since.



Source: ENVIPE

As shown in Figure 2.16, fear of violence had its lowest rate on record in 2012, with 66.6 percent of the country feeling unsafe that year. It then rose by 5.8 percentage points over the next four years. Beginning in 2016, fear of violence in Mexico began to deteriorate again, quickly rising to a high of 79.4 percent in 2018. However, the fear of violence rate has gradually improved since then, dropping 4.8 percentage points to 74.6 percent in 2023.

National perceptions of insecurity have generally tracked with the country's overall peace score. Similar to the *fear of violence* indicator, the overall peace score in Mexico got rapidly worse beginning in 2016, deteriorating by 17.2 percent in the next three years and then gradually improving in the years since. This reciprocal relationship is reflective of IEP's underlying definition of peace, which comprises both the absence of external manifestations of violence as well as the absence of fearfulness about violence.[80]

Figure 2.17 shows states by their *fear of violence* scores in 2023, along with their overall MPI scores. Baja California Sur was the best scoring state in the *fear of violence* indicator last year, with only 33.4 percent of residents reporting feeling unsafe. Baja California Sur overtook Yucatán, which had the lowest rate each year from 2015 to 2022 but which came in second in 2023, with a fear rate of 37.8 percent. Coahuila had the third best rate, with 44.1 percent of residents considering the state unsafe.

The worst scoring state in 2023 was Zacatecas, with 91.9 percent of residents feeling unsafe. It was also the worst performing state in 2022, when it overtook Mexico State for last place. Mexico State, which ranked second worst in both 2022 and 2021, has placed last five times in the past nine years. Morelos was the third worst performing state in this indicator, with 87 percent of residents considering the state unsafe in 2023.

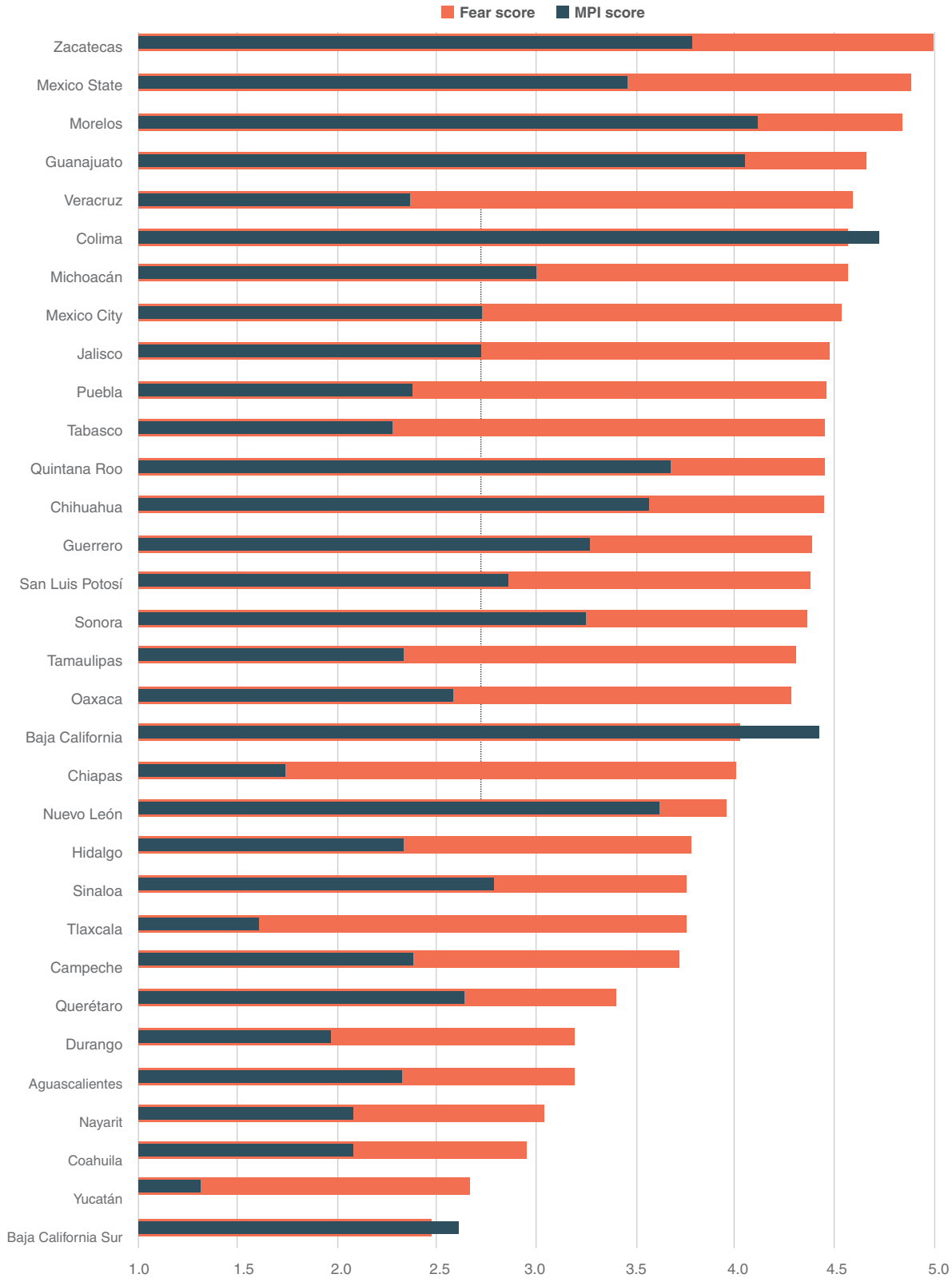
The figure also shows that states' fear of violence scores tend to be worse than their overall peace scores, with only three states – Colima, Baja California, and Baja California Sur – registering worse MPI scores. Several states score notably worse in this indicator than in overall peace, suggesting that citizens' perceptions of insecurity are substantially higher than recorded levels of crime and violence. With a *fear of violence* score of 4.007 and an overall MPI score of 1.738, Chiapas recorded the largest discrepancy on this front. As outlined in the organized crime subsection, these heightened levels of fear may be partially explained by rising awareness of the incursion of national organized crime groups into the state.[81] The second and third largest discrepancies were recorded in Veracruz and Tabasco, respectively.

The relationship between overall levels of peacefulness and perceptions of safety is a multifaceted one. Global survey data has revealed, for example, that across an array of domains with the potential to cause a person harm – including road accidents, severe weather, food and water risks, and workplace hazards – violence elicits the most disproportionate levels of worry relative to actual experience.

FIGURE 2.17

Peace scores and fear of violence, by state, 2023

In the vast majority of states, fear of violence scores are higher than overall peace scores. Chiapas recorded the greatest discrepancy between the two, with a fear of violence score of 4.007 and an overall MPI score of 1.738.



Source: ENVIPE, IEP
Note: A higher score denotes a lower level of peacefulness.

According to the *Safety Perceptions Index* 2023, an average of 35.8 percent of survey respondents across 121 countries reported being "very worried" about violent crime, while an average of only 5.6 percent reported having a first-hand experience of it in the previous two years. This equates to more than six times as many people being fearful of violence than having recently experienced it, by far the most significant discrepancy of any domain. This is not necessarily surprising given that the effects of violent crime can be severe, but also because perceptions are often inflated by the disproportionate amount of attention that violence receives in the news media.

The report also found that "crime and violence" was the most cited safety concern in Mexico, with 46.3 percent of the population identifying it as the top risk in their everyday lives. Only four countries had higher rates of citing "crime and violence" as their top concern.[82]

In addition to how violence is represented in local and national media, fears about violence can be influenced by people's first- and second-hand experiences of it. Table 2.6 shows the degree of correlation between the rates of MPI indicators and rates of fear across states from 2015 to 2023.

TABLE 2.6

Correlations between fear of violence and peace indicators, 2015–2023

Robbery was the sub-indicator to show the highest level of correlation with people's perceptions of safety, while firearms crime was the composite indicator with the highest level of correlation.

Indicator / sub-indicator	Correlation with fear of violence
Robbery rate	0.54
Firearms crime rate	0.48
Assault with a firearm rate	0.45
Violent crime rate	0.45
Homicide rate	0.43
Homicide with a firearm	0.42
Extortion rate	0.30
Assault rate	0.19
Organized crime rate	0.19
Family violence rate	0.18
Kidnapping and human trafficking rate	0.13
Sexual assault rate	0.00
Retail drug crime rate	-0.04
Major offenses rate	-0.23

Source: IEP
Note: Correlations based on 2015-2023 data.

The variable with the strongest level of correlation is the robbery rate (r = 0.54). This is somewhat unsurprising, as robbery is the form of violence most likely to directly or indirectly touch the average citizen's life in Mexico, with survey data revealing that two-fifths of the crimes experienced in the country are robberies.[83]

After robberies, the crime rates that show the highest levels of correlation with fear of violence rates are those associated with firearms as well as the overall homicide rate. This suggest that the real or perceived threat of lethal violence, particularly in relation to the ubiquity of gun violence, can have an especially strong influence on citizens' sense of safety. The prevalence of firearms in societies have been shown to have a significant impact on limiting a community's access to a full range of human rights, in turn contributing to the proliferation of fear in society. Research has shown that gun violence directly affects the right to health and life, while also exacerbating discrimination and disrupting education and employment in communities.[84]

In contrast, with the exception of extortion rates, none of the *organized crime* sub-indicators show a meaningful level of correlation with rates of fear. In fact, the rates of two of the sub-indicators – *major offenses* and *retail drug crimes* – actually show minutely negative levels of correlation. While the reasons for this are not immediately apparent, it likely related to crimes centered on the movement and sale of drugs not having a direct impact on the life of the average citizen, and therefore not eliciting high levels of concern. Among *organized crime* sub-indicators, *extortion* is the most common type of crime, so it is unsurprising that it would correlate moderately (r = 0.30) with fear rates.

A similar dynamic may be at play in relation to *violent crime*. With the exception of robbery, all violent crime sub-indicators demonstrate relatively low levels of correlation (r < 0.20) with fear of violence rates. This may also arise from *assault, family violence*, and *sexual assault* tending to affect certain segments of the population but not necessarily having direct impacts on most citizens.

> Across an array of domains with the potential to cause a person harm, violence elicits the most disproportionate levels of worry relative to actual experience.

3 | Economic Value of Peace

KEY FINDINGS

- The economic impact of violence in Mexico was 4.9 trillion pesos (US$245 billion) in 2023, equivalent to 19.8 percent of the country's GDP.
- The economic impact of violence improved for the fourth year in a row in 2023, decreasing by one percent, or 49 billion pesos, from the previous year.
- The economic impact of violence was six times higher than public investments made in health care and more than five times higher than those made in education in 2023.
- Mexico's spending on *domestic security* and the *justice system* in 2023 was equal to 0.65 percent of GDP, less than half of the average for both Latin America and other members of the OECD.
- Spending on *domestic security* decreased by 41.9 percent from 2015 to 2023, whilst spending on the *justice system* decreased by 9.1 percent.
- In 2023, homicide constituted 42.5 percent of the economic impact of violence. This was equivalent to 2.1 trillion pesos (US$104 billion).
- A five percent reduction in the economic impact of violence is equal to the federal government's spending on transport in 2023.
- Protection costs peaked in 2019 and dropped below 2015 levels in 2023.
- The economic impact of violence was 37,430 pesos per person in 2023, more than double the average monthly salary in Mexico.
- There were four states where the economic cost of violence was substantially higher than in all others. In Morelos, Colima, Guerrero and Zacatecas, the cost represented about half of each state's GDP.
- The per capita economic impact varied significantly from state-to-state last year, ranging from 12,407 pesos in Yucatán to 112,660 pesos in Colima.
- In 2023, the economic impact of *violent crime* recorded the largest increase of all the indicators in the model. Government expenditure on the *military* recorded the largest decrease.
- Since 2015, 21 states have recorded deteriorations in their economic impact, with each state deteriorating on average by 52.4 percent. In contrast, 11 states have recorded improvements, with each state improving by an average of 25.1 percent.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE IN 2023

In 2023, the estimated economic impact of violence in Mexico was 4.9 trillion pesos in constant 2023 terms (US$245 billion). This is equivalent to 19.8 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP) or 37,430 pesos per person.[1] This is the equivalent of nearly two and a half months of income for the average Mexican worker.[2]

The economic impact of violence improved for the fourth year in a row in 2023, falling by one percent, or 49.8 billion pesos, from the previous year. The peak of the economic impact of violence occurred in 2019 at approximately six trillion pesos. Since then, it has steadily declined and in 2023 it fell to approximately its 2016 level. Although the impact of violence declined in 2023, it is equivalent to more than three times the government's expenditure on economic development.[3] Box 3.1 gives a brief explanation of the economic costing model. A summary of the methodology is provided at the end of this section, and a comprehensive explanation of how the economic impact of violence is calculated is provided in Section 5.

BOX 3.1

The economic impact of violence – definition and model

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic effect related to "containing, preventing and dealing with the consequences of violence." It comprises the economic cost of violence – both direct and indirect – plus a multiplier effect (Table 3.1).

Direct costs are incurred by the victim, the government and the perpetrator. These include medical expenses, policing costs and expenses associated with the justice system. Indirect costs accrue after the fact and include the present value of long-term costs arising from incidents of crime, such as lost future income and physical and psychological trauma.

The multiplier effect represents the economic benefits that would have been generated if all relevant expenditure had been directed into more productive alternatives.

TABLE 3.1

Components of the economic impact of violence model

The economic impact of violence comprises the economic cost of violence plus a multiplier effect.

Impact			Commentary
Economic impact of violence	Economic cost of violence	i) Direct costs	Costs directly attributable to violence or its prevention
		ii) Indirect costs	Medium- and long-term losses arising from acts of violence
	iii) Multiplier effect		Economic benefits forgone by investing in violence containment and not in other more productive activities

Source: IEP

Table 3.2 presents a full breakdown of the 2023 economic impact of violence cost estimates. This outlines the direct costs, the indirect costs, and the multiplier effect for each indicator that, combined, gives the total economic impact of violence.

TABLE 3.2

The economic impact of violence in 2023, billions of pesos

The total economic losses amounted to 4.9 trillion pesos in 2023.

INDICATOR	ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE (BILLIONS PESOS)		MULTIPLIER EFFECT	THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (BILLIONS PESOS)
	DIRECT	INDIRECT		
Homicide	182.3	1,735.3	182.3	2,099.8
Violent Crime	263.7	1,250.7	263.7	1,778.1
Organized Crime	-	21.1	-	21.1
Fear	-	56.7	-	56.7
Protection Costs	175.6	-	175.6	351.2
Military Spending	151.2	-	151.2	302.4
Domestic Security Spending	42.2	-	42.2	84.3
Justice System Spending and Incarceration	119.4	6.8	119.4	245.5
Total	**934.3**	**3,070.6**	**934.3**	**4,939.2**

Source: IEP
Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding.

Between 2019 and 2023, Mexico recorded improvements each year in the economic impact of violence following four consecutive years of deteriorations.

In 2023, there was a 2.9 percent decline in the economic impact of homicides. However, this improvement was partially offset by a 5.4 percent increase in the economic impact of violent crime. As captured by defense funding allocated by the federal government to states,[4] there was also a reduction in military expenditure, which contributed to the largest decrease in the economic impact of violence in 2023. Spending on *domestic security* and the *justice system* also recorded a reduction compared to 2022.

Figure 3.1 displays the economic cost of violence by state as a percentage of state GDP in 2023. Four states – Morelos, Colima, Guerrero, and Zacatecas – had economic costs that were substantially higher than all other states. In these states, the cost of violence represented nearly half or more than half of the state's GDP. In contrast, a state like Yucatán which ranks first in the MPI, had a substantially lower cost, less than five percent of the state's GDP.

> The economic impact of violence was six times higher than public investments made in health care and more than five times higher than those made in education in 2023.

FIGURE 3.1

The economic cost of violence by state, percentage of state's GDP, 2023

The economic cost of violence ranges from 4.4 percent of GDP in Yucatán to 53 percent of GDP in Morelos.

Source: IEP

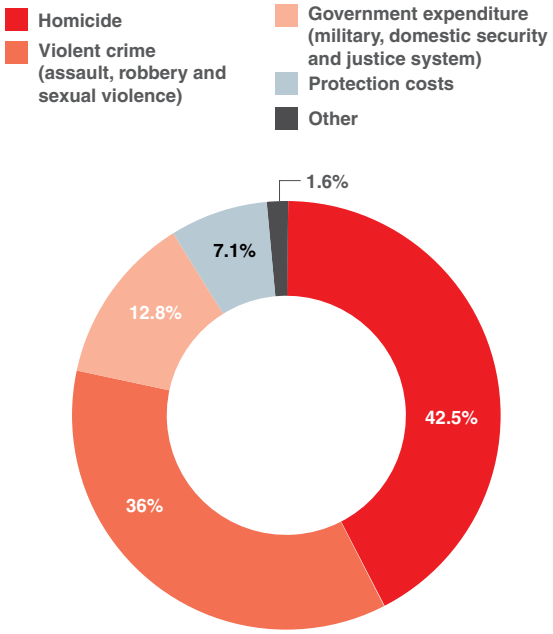
Violence and the *fear of violence* create significant economic disruptions. Violent incidents incur costs in the form of property damage, physical injury and psychological trauma. *Fear of violence* also alters economic behavior, primarily by changing investment and consumption patterns, which diverts public and private resources away from productive activities and towards protective measures. Violence and the *fear of violence* generate significant losses in the form of productivity shortfalls, foregone earnings and distorted expenditure. Therefore, measuring the scale and cost of violence has important implications for assessing its effects on economic activity. Figure 3.2 illustrates the share of the total economic impact of violence in 2023 by the categories used in the model.

The data also shows that the costs from violence in Mexico are significantly greater than government expenditure on violence containment. In 2023, 19.9 percent of Mexico's economic impact from violence was in government expenditures and private protection expenditures, whereas 80.1 percent was associated with *homicide*, *violent crime*, *organized crime* and *fear of violence*. This differs significantly from the global economic impact of violence, in which 80.3 percent of the impact is made up of government and private expenditures on containing and preventing violence.[5] Moreover, spending on violence containment in Mexico (632 billion pesos) represents approximately six percent of total government spending. In contrast, health care and education represent, respectively, seven and eight percent of total government spending. These figures suggest that violence containment expenditure is disproportionately low in Mexico.

FIGURE 3.2

Breakdown of the economic impact of violence, 2023

Homicide and violent crime represent 78.5 percent of the economic impact of violence.



Source: IEP

In 2023, two-fifths (42.5 percent) of the economic impact of violence was a result of *homicide*, costing the country 2.1 trillion pesos (US$104 billion). This is equivalent to 8.4 percent of Mexico's GDP. By contrast, in the global economic impact model, *homicide* is 6.5 percent of the total, equal to 0.85 percent of global GDP.[6] If Mexico were to achieve a ten percent decline in its homicide rate, the economic impact of violence would decrease by 210 billion pesos – more than three times than government spending on science, technology and innovation in 2023.[7]

Violent crime, which comprises robbery, assault and sexual violence, was the second most expensive form of violence, representing 36 percent of the total economic impact or 1.7 trillion pesos. This includes Mexican households' and businesses' financial and health-related losses from *violent crime*.

Government spending on activities aimed at reducing violence – *domestic security*, the *military* and the *justice system* – amounted to 632 billion pesos, accounting for 12.8 percent of the total economic impact. Also included in government spending is the economic impact of *incarceration*, calculated as the lost wages of those imprisoned. The prisoners' lost wages are assumed to equal the Mexican minimum wage of 54,764 pesos per year in 2023. In 2023, the cost of *incarceration* was estimated at 6.7 billion pesos.

The economic impact model includes the costs households and businesses incur in protecting themselves from crime and violence. *Protection costs* amounted to 351 billion pesos in 2023 – 7.1 percent of the total.[8] This indicator includes insurance, *private security spending*, the cost of firearms for protection, changing place of residence or business due to violence, and the installation of alarms, locks, doors, windows, bars and fences. Protection costs peaked in 2019 and dropped below 2015 levels in 2023.

The remaining 1.6 percent of economic losses are related to the costs of *organized crime* and the *fear of violence*. The economic impact of organized criminal activity is calculated for two types of crimes – extortion and kidnapping – and amounted to 21 billion pesos in 2023. However, this is a conservative estimate as the model does not include all of the losses imposed by organized criminal groups, particularly commodity theft or drug trade-related economic activity such as production, transport and distribution. Furthermore, the presence of organized criminal groups can increase costs incurred to businesses due to the risks of kidnapping and extortion.[9] Data on the economic impact of these crimes is extremely difficult to capture.

Fear of violence affects consumer and business behavior, which in turn causes economic losses. These losses were calculated at 56 billion pesos in 2023.[10]

TRENDS IN THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

Since 2015, the economic impact of violence has increased by 13.6 percent, reflecting the deterioration in peacefulness in Mexico over the same period. Having peaked in 2019 at six trillion pesos (US$301 billion), the economic impact of violence has since declined by 1.1 trillion pesos.

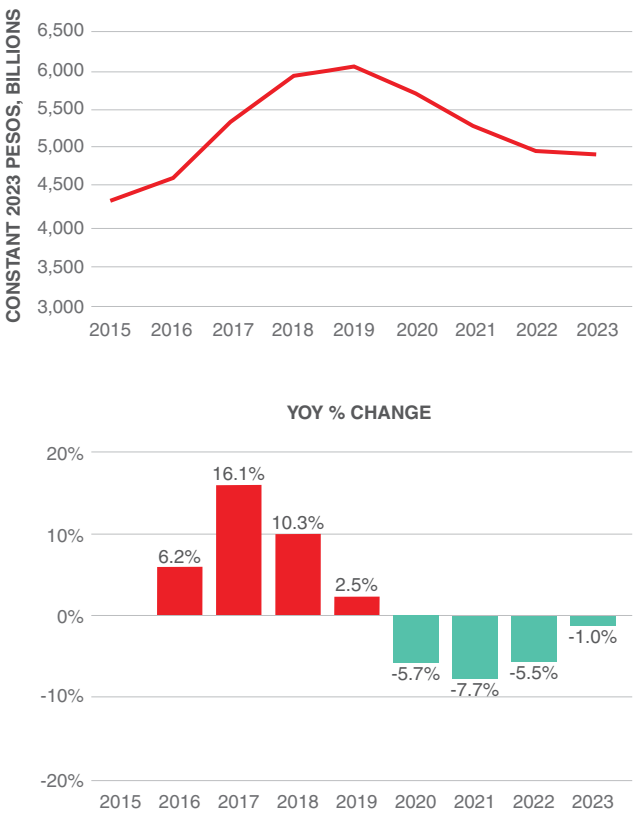
The largest improvement came in 2021, with the economic impact falling by 438 billion pesos from the previous year. Declines in military spending drove the improvements over the last two years. For the fourth consecutive year since the inception of the index, the homicide rate in Mexico fell, decreasing from 28.2 homicides per 100,000 people in 2019 to 23.3 per 100,000 people in 2023. This improvement is positively reflected in the economic impact of *homicide*, which fell by 711 billion pesos, or 25.3 percent from 2019. Figure 3.3 displays the trend in Mexico's economic impact from violence.

The impact of *violent crime* was the indicator with the largest increase from the previous year. The economic impact of *violent crime* increased by 5.4 percent, or by 90 billion pesos. All other indicators except for the fear domain recorded declines in impact from 2022, as shown in Table 3.3. Between 2015 and 2019, the economic impact of violence rose each year, in total by 39.4 percent. These four years of continuous increases coincided with Mexico's rising homicide rate and the overall deterioration in peacefulness.

FIGURE 3.3

Trend in the economic impact of violence and year-on-year percentage change, 2015–2023

The largest annual increase occurred in 2017, equal to 744 billion pesos. This represents a 16.1 percent increase from 2016.



Source: IEP

TABLE 3.3

Trend in the economic impact of violence, constant 2023 pesos, billions, 2015–2023

In 2023, military spending recorded the largest percentage decrease from 2022.

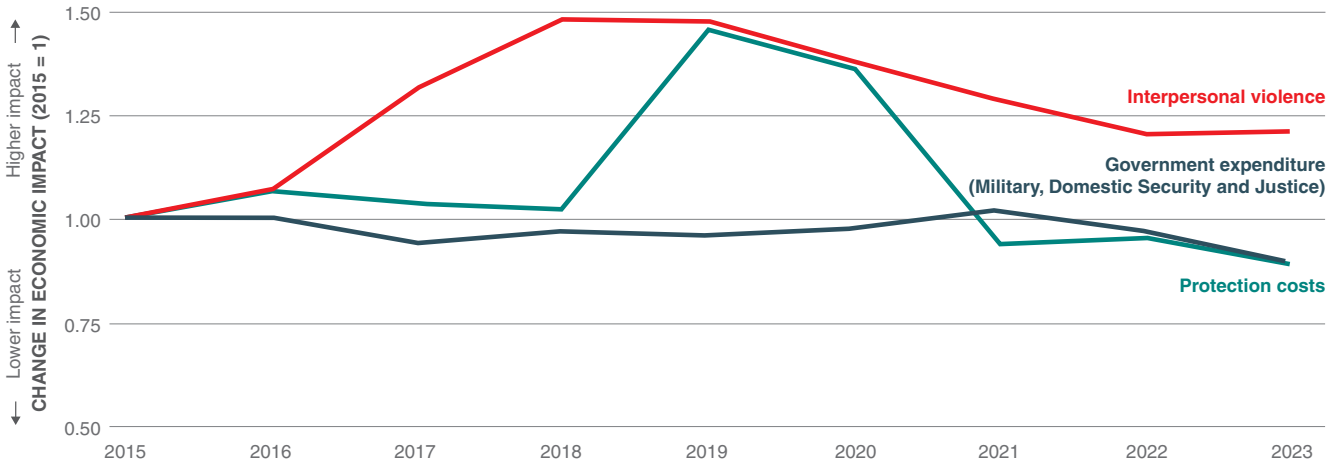
INDICATOR	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	CHANGE (BILLIONS) 2022–2023	PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2022–2023
Homicide	1,485.12	1,848.87	2,439.36	2,803.95	2,811.62	2,673.82	2,425.87	2,163.57	2,099.84	-63.73	-2.9%
Violent Crime	1,687.01	1,618.66	1,768.64	1,937.20	1,912.06	1,737.58	1,682.92	1,687.23	1,778.13	90.90	5.4%
Organized Crime	21.24	17.76	18.94	19.82	22.81	19.48	19.64	21.52	21.09	-0.43	-2.0%
Fear	58.15	0.85	60.16	63.36	63.50	59.99	57.91	56.52	56.75	0.23	0.4%
Protection Costs	393.20	422.65	409.70	404.64	573.72	536.65	370.11	376.49	351.20	-25.30	-6.7%
Military Spending	289.36	275.52	269.54	272.70	307.71	331.17	379.83	347.24	302.39	-44.85	-12.9%
Domestic Security Spending	145.09	132.45	121.02	121.15	104.22	99.57	91.15	85.17	84.31	-0.87	-1.0%
Justice System Spending and Incarceration	269.94	301.73	275.34	290.46	266.10	258.88	251.37	251.26	245.49	-5.77	-2.3%
Total	**4,349.11**	**4,618.49**	**5,362.70**	**5,913.27**	**6,061.74**	**5,717.13**	**5,278.80**	**4,989.01**	**4,939.19**	**-49.8**	**-1.0%**

Source: IEP
Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding.

FIGURE 3.4

Indexed trend in the economic impact of violence, 2015–2023

The economic impact of violence peaked in 2019, driven by record high personal and business protection costs.



Source: IEP

Figure 3.4 shows the trend in the economic impact of violence in Mexico across three categories: personal and business protection costs, interpersonal violence, and government expenditure. Government spending on violence containment decreased in 2023 compared to 2015.

The near ten percent decline in government spending from 2022 appears to be largely driven by the decline in *military* spending. The large increase in *homicide* also explains the near 22 percent increase in the economic impact of interpersonal violence.

The economic impact of protection costs has decreased 10.7 percent from 2015. Protection costs are an aggregate of surveyed responses on expenditures made by businesses and citizens to protect themselves and are sourced from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE). Business expenditures include higher insurance premiums and installing additional locks, alarms, video surveillance cameras, and tracking devices.

Table 3.4 shows the change in the economic impact of violence by indicator from 2015 to 2023. *Homicide* recorded the largest rise, having increased by 614.7 billion pesos. Government spending on *domestic security* recorded the largest decline, having decreased by 60.8 billion pesos.

TABLE 3.4

Change in the economic impact of violence by indicator, constant 2023 pesos, billions, 2015–2023

The economic impact of homicide was 614.7 billion pesos more in 2023 than it was in 2015.

INDICATOR	2015	2023	CHANGE (BILLIONS) 2015-2023	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (2015–2023)
Homicide	1,485.1	2,099.8	614.7	41.4%
Violent Crime	1,687.0	1,778.1	91.1	5.4%
Organized Crime	21.2	21.1	-0.2	-0.7%
Fear	58.1	56.7	-1.4	-2.4%
Protection Costs	393.2	351.2	-42.0	-10.7%
Military Spending	289.4	302.4	13.0	4.5%
Domestic Security Spending	145.1	84.3	-60.8	-41.9%
Justice System Spending and Incarceration	269.9	245.5	-24.4	-9.1%
Total	**4,349.1**	**4,939.2**	**590.1**	**13.6%**

Source: IEP
Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE BY STATE

In 2023, 19 states in Mexico recorded a higher economic impact of violence compared to the previous year, in contrast to 13 that recorded a lower impact. Morelos experienced the largest percentage increase, at 14.5 percent, followed by Guerrero, at 13.9 percent. The increases in Morelos and Guerrero can be attributed to the increases in their homicide rates from 2022.

Figure 3.5 displays the five states with the largest improvements and the five states with the largest deteriorations in their economic impact from 2022 to 2023. Zacatecas had the largest improvement, with the economic impact of violence in the state declining by 17.4 percent.

In Morelos and Colima, which recorded their highest ever homicide rates in 2023, the economic impact of violence represented more than 50 percent of the states' GDPs. The main drivers of the higher economic impact of violence are homicide, organized crime, and violent crime, whose rates are highest in the most economically impacted states. Table 3.6 presents the per capita and total economic impact of violence by state.

The economic impact of violence differs significantly between states. Of the 32 Mexican states, Morelos recorded the highest impact, equivalent to 53 percent of its GDP. Table 3.5 lists the five most and least affected states as a percentage of GDP. States with the higher costs as a percentage of GDP all have higher homicide rates compared to the five states with the lowest economic cost from violence.

TABLE 3.5

The five most and least affected states, 2023, percentage of state's GDP

The five states with the highest economic cost of violence are less peaceful than the states with the lowest cost.

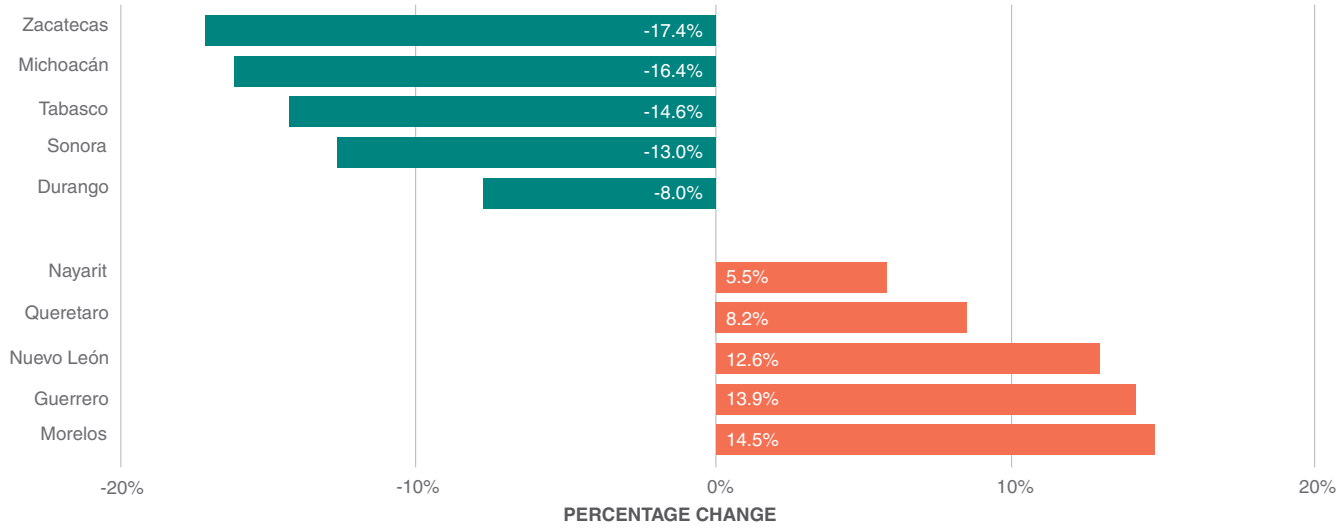
HIGHEST COST		LOWEST COST	
STATE	**ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE (% OF STATE GDP)**	**STATE**	**ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE (% OF STATE GDP)**
Morelos	53.0%	Yucatán	4.4%
Colima	51.3%	Coahuila	4.7%
Guerrero	45.2%	Campeche	5.7%
Zacatecas	44.6%	Mexico City	6.4%
Quintana Roo	26.3%	Tabasco	7.7%

Source: IEP

FIGURE 3.5

Changes in the economic impact of violence by state, 2022–2023

Morelos recorded the largest increase in the economic impact of violence of any state, increasing by 14.5 percent from the previous year.



Source: IEP calculations

TABLE 3.6

Per capita economic impact of violence, 2023, constant 2023 pesos

The per capita economic impact of violence varies significantly across states, from Yucatán at 12,407 pesos per person to Colima at 112,660 pesos per person.

MPI RANK	STATE	PER CAPITA ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (CONSTANT 2023 PESOS)	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (CONSTANT 2023 PESOS, BILLIONS)
1	Yucatán	12,407	28.9
2	Tlaxcala	19,751	28.2
3	Chiapas	19,487	116.4
4	Durango	22,804	43.7
5	Coahuila	18,792	62.9
6	Nayarit	34,214	45.9
7	Tabasco	24,975	66.3
8	Tamaulipas	24,572	91.8
9	Aguascalientes	27,239	40.6
10	Hidalgo	27,795	88.6
11	Veracruz	22,548	195.7
12	Puebla	28,171	191.0
13	Campeche	34,660	36.4
14	Oaxaca	31,713	133.4
15	Baja California Sur	37,066	31.6
16	Querétaro	37,208	89.2
17	Mexico City	36,345	325.9
18	Jalisco	36,091	312.0
19	Sinaloa	29,343	94.8
20	San Luis Potosí	32,794	95.9
21	Michoacán	42,893	211.0
22	Sonora	50,863	161.8
23	Guerrero	45,607	168.3
24	Mexico State	34,620	620.9
25	Chihuahua	57,291	223.6
26	Nuevo León	57,596	336.0
27	Quintana Roo	62,823	115.3
28	Zacatecas	69,523	118.2
29	Guanajuato	54,294	346.4
30	Morelos	77,500	163.2
31	Baja California	69,271	263.1
32	Colima	112,660	92.5
	National	**37,430**	**4,939.20**

Source: IEP

TABLE 3.7

The percentage change in the per capita economic impact of violence, 2015–2023 and 2022–2023, constant 2023 pesos

The per capita economic impact in Colima was three times higher in 2023 than in 2015. This was the largest percentage increase of any Mexican state.

STATE	2015–2023	2022–2023
Aguascalientes	4.5%	-1.4%
Baja California	24.6%	-6.7%
Baja California Sur	-31.6%	-8.1%
Campeche	36.8%	-1.2%
Chiapas	-25.0%	1.9%
Chihuahua	27.3%	2.7%
Coahuila	-36.7%	3.6%
Colima	167.4%	2.9%
Durango	-32.6%	-8.8%
Guanajuato	64.4%	-0.6%
Guerrero	-30.6%	13.6%
Hidalgo	25.1%	-5.9%
Jalisco	7.9%	-4.3%
Mexico State	-5.9%	4.3%
Mexico City	-22.4%	-6.5%
Michoacán	15.1%	-17.0%
Morelos	40.1%	13.5%
Nayarit	34.8%	4.2%
Nuevo León	56.3%	11.2%
Oaxaca	91.8%	0.7%
Puebla	5.8%	0.8%
Querétaro	17.6%	6.5%
Quintana Roo	43.8%	1.2%
San Luis Potosí	35.4%	-5.7%
Sinaloa	-38.6%	2.6%
Sonora	24.6%	-13.9%
Tabasco	-28.2%	-15.5%
Tamaulipas	-44.9%	0.4%
Tlaxcala	-8.9%	-7.7%
Veracruz	12.0%	-0.5%
Yucatán	-42.6%	0.6%
Zacatecas	76.3%	-17.9%
National	**13.0%**	**-1.8%**

Source: IEP

Colima recorded by far the highest per capita impact from violence, with the financial impact exceeding 110,000 pesos per person in 2023. Colima also had the highest per capita spending on violence containment and per capita impact of interpersonal violence. The per capita economic impact of interpersonal violence in Colima was over seven times greater than the state's expenditure on violence containment, indicating the disproportionately low spending by the state on curbing violence. In contrast, Yucatán's per capita spending on violence containment was greater than the per capita impact of interpersonal violence.

IMPROVEMENTS AND DETERIORATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

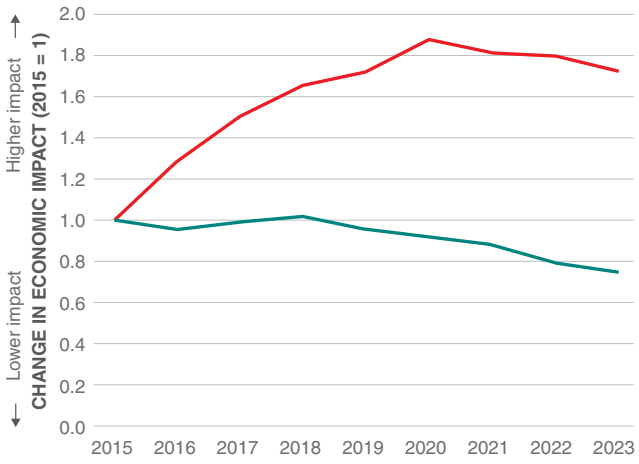
Over the last nine years, the economic impact of violence has improved in 11 states but deteriorated in 21 states. This has led to the economic impact of violence being 13.6 percent higher in Mexico in 2023 than in 2015. The deterioration in the economic impact in Mexico has been much larger in states that were less peaceful to begin with, which has led to an increase in the 'economic impact gap' between the most peaceful and least peaceful states, as shown in Figure 3.6.

The 'economic impact gap' in 2022 was the largest it has been since the inception of the index and has since narrowed by three percentage points in 2023. The economic impact of violence in Mexico's five least peaceful states has, on average, increased by 73 percent since 2015. In contrast, the five most peaceful states have seen, on average, a 24 percent decrease in the economic impact of violence.

FIGURE 3.6

Trends in economic impact of violence, five most and five least peaceful states, 2015–2023

Since 2015, the average economic impact of violence in the five least peaceful states has increased by 73 percent, while the impact in the five most peaceful states has declined by 24 percent.



Source: IEP

IMPROVEMENTS

Since 2015, 11 states have recorded improvements in the economic impact of violence, with an average improvement of 25.1 percent. Among these 11 states, the five that recorded the largest percentage improvements were Tamaulipas, Yucatán, Sinaloa, Coahuila and Guerrero, where the economic impact of violence fell by an average of 34.1 percent. Table 3.8 displays the economic impact in 2015 and 2023 for these five states.

Not only has Yucatán been the most peaceful state in Mexico in each of the past nine years, it also recorded the second largest percentage improvement from 2015, decreasing by 37.2 percent or 17.1 billion pesos.

Tamaulipas has seen the most dramatic improvement since 2015, with a 41.1 percent reduction in the economic impact of violence. Despite historically being an epicenter of organized crime and a major transport site for drugs into the United States, the state has experienced the largest improvement in peacefulness in the country since 2015. Tamaulipas ranked as the fourth least peaceful state in 2015 and as the eighth most peaceful state in 2023. Its decline in levels of *organized crime* drove its improvement in overall peacefulness.

TABLE 3.8

The economic impact in the five most improved states, 2015–2023, constant 2023 pesos, billions

On average, the impact of violence fell by 34.1 percent across the five states with the largest improvements.

STATE	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (CONSTANT 2023 PESOS, BILLIONS)			PERCENTAGE CHANGE (2015–2023)
	2015	2023	CHANGE 2015–2023	
Tamaulipas	155.8	91.8	-64.0	-41.1%
Yucatán	46.1	28.9	-17.1	-37.2%
Sinaloa	144.2	94.8	-49.5	-34.3%
Coahuila	89.0	62.9	-26.2	-29.4%
Guerrero	234.9	168.3	-66.7	-28.4%
Total	**670.0**	**446.6**	**-223.4**	**-34.1%**

Source: IEP
Note: Total refers to the sum of the five states, the total change across the five states and the total percentage change.

DETERIORATIONS

Since 2015, 21 states have recorded deteriorations in the economic cost of violence, with an average deterioration of 52.4 percent. The deteriorations were primarily driven by increases in *homicide* and *organized crime*. The five states that recorded the largest percentage deteriorations in the economic cost of violence were Colima, Oaxaca, Zacatecas, Guanajuato and Nuevo León. Table 3.9 displays the economic impact in 2015 and 2023 for these five states. On average, the economic impact of violence in these states increased by 109 percent. Colima recorded the largest deterioration and ranks as the least peaceful state in the MPI 2023. Its economic impact of violence has increased by 204 percent or 62 billion pesos since 2015.

TABLE 3.9

The economic impact in the states with the largest percentage deterioration, 2015–2023, constant 2023 pesos, billions

On average, the impact of violence increased by 109 percent across the five states with the largest deteriorations.

STATE	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE (CONSTANT 2023 PESOS, BILLIONS)			PERCENTAGE CHANGE (2015–2023)
	2015	2023	CHANGE 2015–2023	
Colima	30.4	92.5	62.1	204.2%
Oaxaca	66.4	133.4	67.0	100.8%
Zacatecas	63.2	118.2	55.0	87.1%
Guanajuato	195.9	346.4	150.5	76.9%
Nuevo León	191.8	336.0	144.2	75.2%
Total	**547.7**	**1026.4**	**478.8**	**108.8%**

Source: IEP
Note: Total refers to the sum of the five states, the total change across the five states and the total percentage change.

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE ON VIOLENCE CONTAINMENT

Government expenditure on containing and dealing with violence accounted for 12.8 percent of Mexico's economic impact in 2023, equivalent to 632 billion pesos. This is down from an all-time high of 722 billion pesos in 2021. Violence containment spending comprises government expenditures on three indicators: *domestic security*, the *military* and the *justice system*. In 2023, expenditures across these three indicators decreased by an average of 7.5 percent from the previous year.

Between 2007 and 2023, federal violence containment expenditures increased by 55.6 percent.[11] While the government's expenditure on the *military*, the *justice system* and *domestic security* have all risen, the funding increases have differed. Of the three, *military* expenditure has had the largest increase, increasing by 80.8 percent since 2007. This was followed by the expenditure on the *justice system*, which has increased by 51.4 percent, then the expenditure on *domestic security*, which has increased 9.5 percent.

Since 2015, the government has cut funding for the *justice system* and *domestic security*. In contrast, expenditure on the *military* steadily increased until 2021. In the past two years, however, it has fallen, and by 2023 it had returned to close to its levels in 2019, Mexico's most violent year on record.

Despite this recent decline, the overall increase in government spending since 2015 has been driven by expenditure on the military. Since 2015, the government's expenditure on *domestic security* has fallen by 41.9 percent and is lower in 2023 than in 2008. Furthermore, spending on the *justice system* has fallen by 10.4 percent since 2015.

Spending on the *justice system* peaked in 2016 and has gradually declined in the years since. In 2023 it stood at 119 billion pesos, 2.7 percent lower than the previous year, and 19.9 percent lower than in 2016.

Most of the rise in *military* spending took place between 2018 and 2021. In that time, it grew from 136 billion pesos to 190 billion pesos or by 39.3 percent, the largest increase of the three categories. However, in 2022, military spending saw an 8.6 percent decrease from the previous year and fell by a further 12.9 percent in 2023. Furthermore, military spending as a percentage of GDP is lower in 2023 than it was in 2019, and per capita military spending is lower than its 2015 levels.

This downward trend is striking, especially as it comes in the context of rising concerns about the militarization of domestic security and other social services in Mexico.[12] Despite this, it is important to note that the military expenditures assessed here are based on defense funding allocated by the federal government to states,[13] and they therefore may not capture all defense-related costs, including spending on the National Guard.

Since 2015, defense spending has increased by an average of 814 million pesos annually. However, on average, government spending on the *justice system* and *domestic security* has decreased by 1.7 and 3.8 billion pesos, respectively, each year over the same period.

The higher levels of expenditure coincide with the increased use of the military to fight *organized crime*. Despite this, Mexico's expenditure on the *military* is equivalent to 0.65 percent of its GDP, well under the global average of 1.7 percent. Figure 3.7 shows the government's expenditure on violence containment from 2007 to 2023.

Similarly, Mexican public spending on the *justice system* and *domestic security* are well below regional and international levels. Mexico spent 0.65 percent of its GDP on the *justice system* and *domestic security* in 2023, less than half of the OECD average, which currently stands at 1.72 percent of their GDP. A similar trend emerges when Mexican spending on *justice* and *domestic* security is compared with other Latin American and Caribbean countries. The Latin American average on public order and safety spending is 1.51 percent of GDP, more than twice that of Mexico.

While violence containment may be underfunded across spending categories, investment is particularly needed to build Mexico's judicial system. Even following a judicial reform that took effect in 2019, there is still limited judicial independence at local and state levels. Mexico has an average of 4.4 judges and magistrates per 100,000 people, one-fourth the global average. This deficit limits the judicial system's capacity to process cases and creates backlogs of unsolved cases and persons incarcerated without a sentence. By increasing the number of judges, the capacity of Mexico's legal system may improve, leading to reductions in overcrowding in prisons and those incarcerated without sentences.[14]

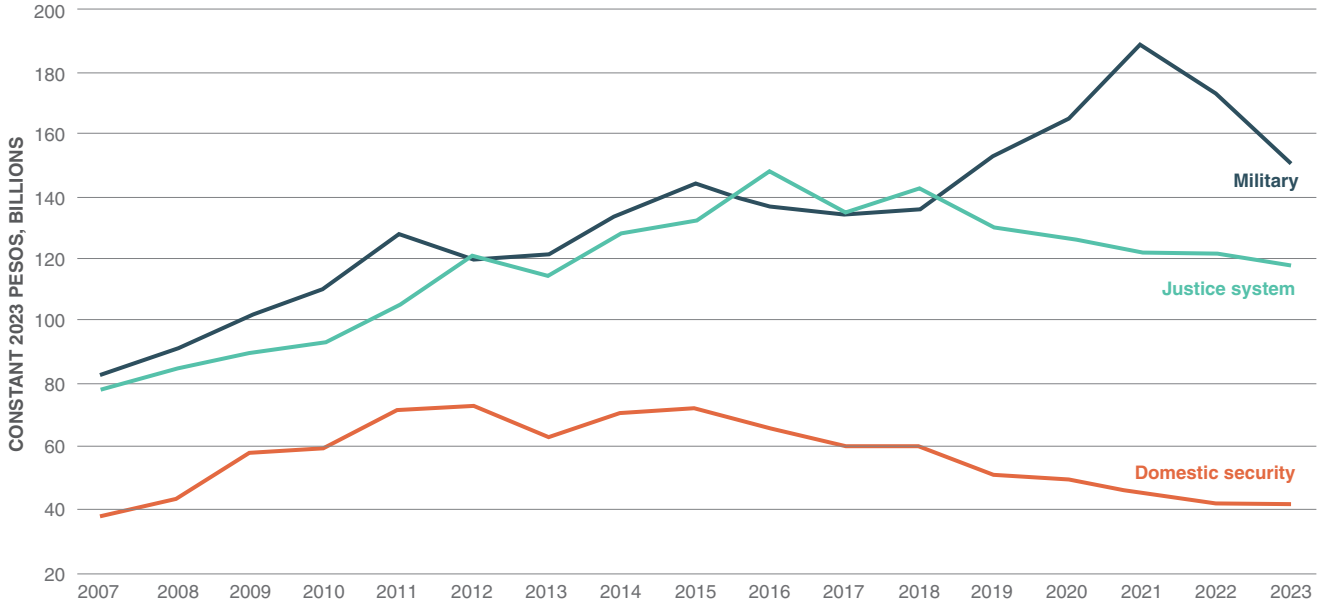
The pattern of federal expenditure on *domestic security* and the *justice system* by state does not match the levels of violence as captured by state MPI scores. States such as Baja California, Guanajuato, Nuevo León and Chihuahua experience high levels of violence, yet they have below-average per capita spending on *domestic security* and the *justice system*. In contrast, Campeche, Baja California Sur, Aguascalientes and Tlaxcala are relatively peaceful, yet they have above-average levels of per capita spending on *domestic security* and the *justice system*. Figure 3.8 shows the level of peacefulness and per capita *domestic security* and *justice system* expenditure by state.

> Mexico spent 0.65 percent of its GDP on the justice system and domestic security in 2023, less than half of the OECD average.

FIGURE 3.7

Trend in government spending on violence containment, 2007–2023

Mexico's expenditure on violence containment was at its highest level in 2021, driven by increases in military spending.

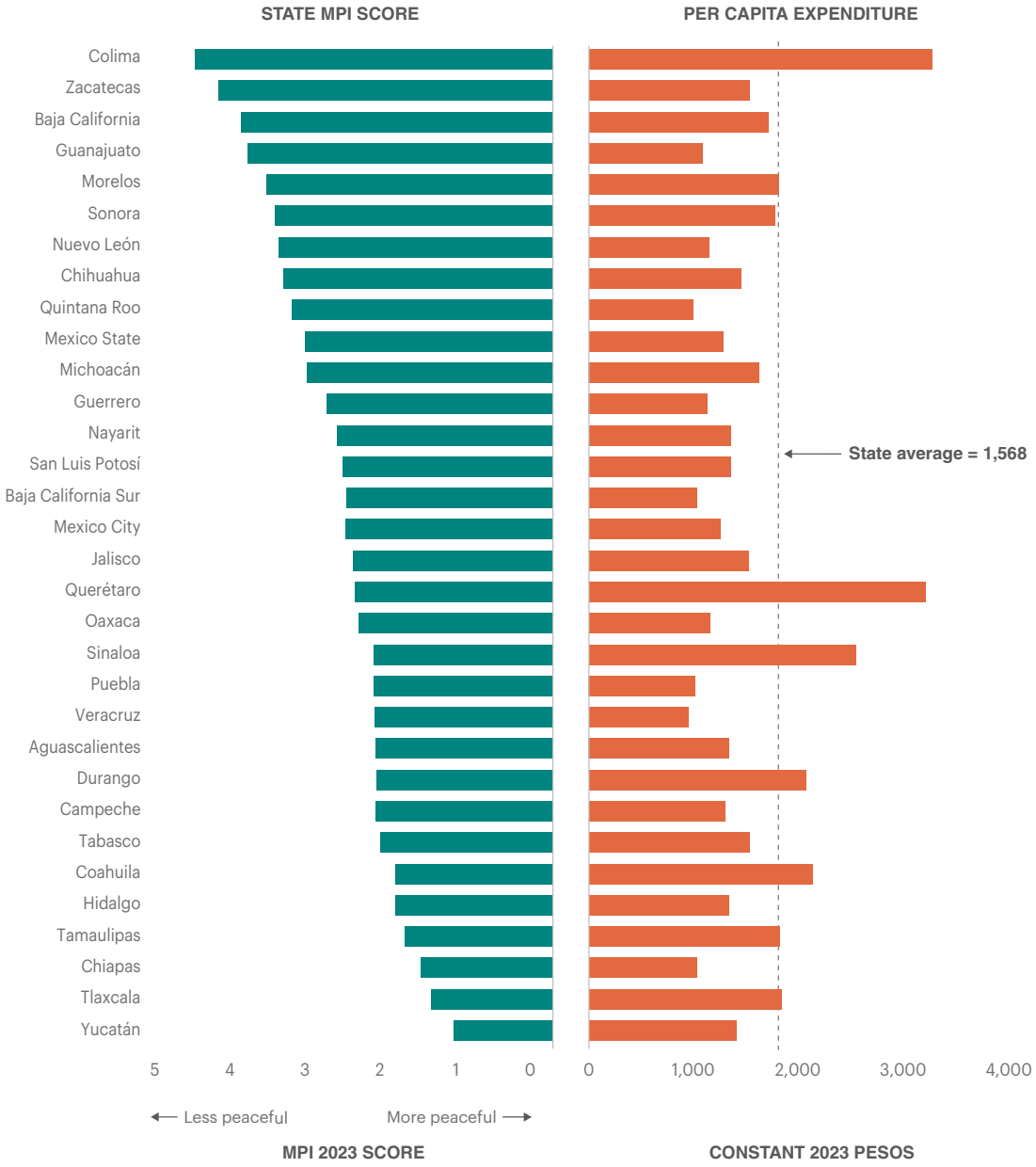


Source: Mexican Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), IEP

FIGURE 3.8

State MPI scores and per capita expenditure on domestic security and justice, 2023

States that experience the lowest levels of peace do not necessarily receive higher per capita funds for domestic security and the justice system.



Sources: INEGI, IEP
Note: State MPI Scores for 2023. Per capita expenditure reflects federal expenditures in 2023.

AT A GLANCE

METHODOLOGY

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic activity related to "*containing, preventing and dealing with the consequences of violence*." The **economic impact of violence** refers to the total cost (direct and indirect) of violence plus an economic peace multiplier. The *economic cost of violence* refers to the direct and indirect costs of violence.

IEP's estimate of the economic impact of violence includes three components:

1. **Direct costs** are the costs of crime or violence to the victim, the perpetrator, and the government, including those associated with policing, medical expenses, funerals or incarceration.
2. **Indirect costs** accrue after the fact. These include physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as the consequential lost future income. There is also a measure of the impact of fear on the economy, as people who fear that they may become a victim of violent crime alter their behavior.
3. The **multiplier effect** is a commonly used economic concept that describes the extent to which additional expenditure has flow-on impacts in the wider economy. Injections of new income into the economy will lead to more spending, which will in turn create employment, further income and encourage additional spending, thereby increasing GDP. This mutually reinforcing economic cycle explains the "multiplier effect," and why a dollar of expenditure can create more than a dollar of economic activity. The multiplier effect calculates the additional economic activity that would have accrued if the direct costs of violence had been avoided. Refer to Box 3.2 for more detail on the multiplier.

Mexico's economic impact of violence consists of three categories:

1. **Violence containment expenditure** refers to the direct and indirect costs associated with preventing or dealing with the consequences of violence. This includes government spending on *domestic security, the justice system* and *military*.
2. **Protection costs** refer to the personal and business expenses from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) surveys.
3. **Interpersonal violence** refers to the direct and indirect costs associated with *homicide, violent crimes, organized crimes* and *fear of victimization*.

This study uses a cost accounting methodology to measure the economic impact of violence. Expenditures on containing violence are totaled and unit costs are applied to the MPI estimates for the number of crimes committed. A unit cost is also applied to the estimated level of fear of insecurity. The unit costs estimate the direct (tangible) and indirect (intangible) costs of each crime. Direct unit costs include losses to the victim and perpetrator and exclude costs incurred by law enforcement and health care systems, as these are captured elsewhere in the model. The direct costs for violent crime and organized crime are obtained from household and business surveys undertaken by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), which assesses economic and health costs to the victim of a crime.
Indirect unit costs include physical and psychological trauma, and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as lost lifetime wages for homicide victims.
The cost estimates provided in this report are in constant 2021 pesos, which facilitates the comparison of the estimates over time. The estimate only includes elements of violence in which reliable data could be obtained. As such, the estimate can be considered conservative. The items listed below are included in the cost of violence methodology:

1. *Homicide*
2. *Violent crime*, which includes assault, sexual violence and robbery
3. *Organized crime*, which includes extortion and kidnapping
4. *Indirect costs of incarceration*
5. *Fear of insecurity*
6. *Protections costs*, including private security and firearms
7. *Federal spending on violence containment*, which includes the military, domestic national security and the justice system
8. *Medical and funeral costs*

The economic impact of violence excludes:

- State level and municipal public spending on security
- The cost of drug trade-related crimes such as the production, possession, transport and supply of drugs
- Population displacement due to violence

Although data is available for some of these categories, it is either not fully available for all states or for each year of analysis.

BOX 3.2

The multiplier effect

The multiplier effect is a commonly used economic concept that describes the extent to which additional expenditure improves the wider economy. Injections of new income into the economy will lead to more spending, which in turn creates employment, further income and additional spending. This mutually reinforcing economic cycle is known as the "multiplier effect" and is the reason that a peso of expenditure can create more than one peso of economic activity.

Although the exact magnitude of this effect is difficult to measure, it is likely to be particularly high in the case of expenditure related to containing violence. For instance, if a community was to become more peaceful, individuals and corporations would spend less time and resources protecting themselves against violence. Due to this decrease in violence, there would likely be substantial flow-on effects for the wider economy, as money is diverted towards more productive areas such as health, business investment, education and infrastructure.

> “
> A dollar of expenditure can create more than a dollar of economic activity

The potential economic benefits from increased peace can be significant. When a homicide is avoided, the direct costs, such as the money spent on medical treatment and a funeral, can be spent elsewhere. The economy also benefits from the victim's lifetime income and expenditure. More generally, there is strong evidence to suggest that violence and the fear of violence can fundamentally alter the incentives for business. For example, Brauer and Marlin (2009) argue that violence or the fear of violence may result in some economic activities not occurring at all. Their analysis of 730 business ventures in Colombia from 1997 to 2001 found that amidst higher levels of violence, new ventures were less likely to survive and profit. Consequently, with greater levels of violence, it is likely that employment rates and economic productivity will fall long-term, due to the disincentives around job creation and long-term investments.

This study assumes that the multiplier is one, signifying that for every peso saved on violence containment, there will be an additional peso of economic activity. This is a relatively conservative multiplier and broadly in line with similar studies.[15]

4 | Positive Peace

KEY FINDINGS

- Mexico's Positive Peace Index (PPI) score has deteriorated by 3.7 percent over the past decade. In contrast, the average score of the countries in the wider Central America and the Caribbean region improved by 0.4 percent during the same period.
- Positive Peace in Mexico has recorded substantial deteriorations since 2016. This coincided with the substantial increases in violence across the country.
- Since 2013, the Pillar of Positive Peace to record the largest improvement was *Free Flow of Information*, on the back of national policies to improve internet access and the use of information technologies.
- The *Equitable Distribution of Resources* Pillar also improved, largely driven by Mexico's successful efforts in reducing inequalities in education, income, and life expectancy.
- The net deterioration since 2013 was driven by five Pillars of Positive Peace: *Well-Functioning Government*, *Good Relations with Neighbors*, *Sound Business Environment*, *Low Levels of Corruption,* and *High Levels of Human Capital*.
- Since 2016, Mexico has witnessed a steep decline in the *Attitudes* and *Institutions* domains, against the backdrop of rising political polarization. This was mainly driven by deterioration in *law to support equal treatment of population segments*, *government openness and transparency* and *regulatory quality*.
- At the sub-national level, the Mexico Positive Peace Index (MPPI) identifies variations in societal resilience across the country's 32 states. Nuevo León, Nayarit, Yucatán, Querétaro and Sinaloa recorded the best levels of Positive Peace. In contrast, Oaxaca, Puebla, Tabasco, Guerrero and Morelos recorded the worst levels of Positive Peace.
- The MPPI Pillars with the strongest associations with actual peace, as measured by the MPI and its five indicators, are *Low Levels of Corruption* and *Well-Functioning Government*. This suggests that corruption and administrative ineffectiveness are key drivers of violence in Mexico, as they contribute to impunity and reduce the resources available to combat crime.
- Improvement in the *fear of violence* indicator appears to be responsive to progress in all eight Pillars of MPPI.
- Nuevo León, Colima, and Baja California had the highest Positive Peace surpluses, while Tabasco, Chiapas, and Tlaxcala had the largest Positive Peace deficits. States with notable surpluses of Positive Peace are better positioned to effectively address violence over the medium to long term.

WHAT IS POSITIVE PEACE?

Positive Peace is defined as the *attitudes, institutions and structures* that create and sustain peaceful societies (Figure 4.1). The same factors also lead to many other desirable socio-economic outcomes. Higher levels of Positive Peace are statistically linked to greater income growth, better environmental outcomes, higher levels of well-being, better developmental outcomes, and stronger societal resilience.

IEP has empirically derived the Positive Peace Index (PPI) through the analysis of almost 25,000 economic and social progress indicators to determine which ones have statistically significant relationships with peace as measured by the Global Peace Index (GPI).

FIGURE 4.1

What is Positive Peace?

Positive Peace is a complementary concept to negative peace.

Source: IEP

THE PILLARS OF POSITIVE PEACE

Positive Peace is predicated on eight key factors, or Pillars, that describe the workings of the socio-economic system:

Well-Functioning Government – A well-functioning government delivers high-quality public and civil services, engenders trust and participation, demonstrates political stability and upholds the rule of law.

Sound Business Environment – The strength of economic conditions as well as the formal institutions that support the operation of the private sector. Business competitiveness and economic productivity are both associated with the most peaceful countries.

Equitable Distribution of Resources – Peaceful countries tend to ensure equity in access to resources such as education, health, and economic opportunity.

Acceptance of the Rights of Others – Peaceful countries often have formal laws that guarantee basic human rights and freedoms, and the informal social and cultural norms that relate to behaviors of citizens.

Good Relations with Neighbors – Peaceful relations with other countries are as important as good relations between groups within a country. Countries with positive external relations are more peaceful and tend to be more politically stable, have better functioning governments, are regionally integrated and have lower levels of organized internal conflict.

Free Flow of Information – Free and independent media disseminates information in a way that leads to greater knowledge and helps individuals, businesses and civil society make better decisions. This results in better outcomes and more effective responses in times of crisis.

High Levels of Human Capital – A skilled human capital base reflects the extent to which societies educate citizens and promote the development of knowledge, thereby improving economic productivity, care for the young, and promotion of political participation and social capital.

Low Levels of Corruption – In societies with high levels of corruption, resources are inefficiently allocated, often leading to a lack of funding for essential services. Low corruption can enhance confidence and trust in institutions.

FIGURE 4.2:

THE PILLARS OF POSITIVE PEACE

All eight factors are highly interconnected and interact in complex ways.

Source: IEP

The Pillars of Positive Peace interact systemically to support the *attitudes, institutions and structures* that underpin development and peacebuilding (Figure 4.2). High levels of Positive Peace occur where attitudes make violence less tolerated, institutions are resilient and more responsive to society's needs, and structures create the environment for the nonviolent resolution of grievances. The application of the global Positive Peace framework to the Mexican context is described in Box 4.1.

In addition to the framework of eight Pillars, Positive Peace can also be studied through the lenses of its three domains:

- ***Attitudes*** describes how members of a society view and relate to one another.
- ***Institutions*** measures the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of administrative organizations.
- ***Structures*** gauges the technological, scientific and economic foundations that support social development.

The Positive Peace Index uses 24 indicators of socio-economic development produced by reputable sources of publicly available data. The data for the indicators covers 163 nations worldwide, corresponding to 99.7 percent of the global population. These statistical indicators are selected for having high correlations with actual peace as measured by the GPI internal peace score.

Each indicator is allocated to a Pillar and a domain according to the nature of the information it conveys. The indicators are harmonized in their directionality, meaning scores close to 5 indicate less socioeconomic resilience and scores close to 1 indicate more socioeconomic resilience. A more detailed discussion of the indicators, concepts, methodology and results of the PPI can be found in the 2024 Positive Peace Report.

BOX 4.1:

Measuring Positive Peace in Mexico

This section assesses the state of Positive Peace in Mexico in two different, but complementary ways. The first – presented in the sub-section 'Positive Peace in Mexico' – is an assessment of Mexico's strength globally in Positive Peace. This approach uses data and insight derived from the Positive Peace Index and allows for comparisons with neighbors or other comparable countries.[1] The objective of comparing and ranking countries is to give policymakers insight into which socio-economic trends, developments and initiatives have been effective in creating and supporting peaceful societies around the world.

The second approach is the development of a sub-national Positive Peace Index for Mexico presented in the section 'Positive Peace by State'. The sub-national Mexico Positive Peace Index uses Mexico-specific data, produced by the national statistical agency and third-party sources, to assess the level of Positive Peace in each of Mexico's 32 states.

It is currently not possible to replicate the 24 indicators of the global Positive Peace Index at the sub-national level in Mexico (see Section 5: Methodology). For the sub-national analysis section, data has therefore been obtained from various statistical sources and selected based on their statistical relationships with the MPI and their ability to, as closely as possible, capture elements of the eight Pillars of Peace.

POSITIVE PEACE IN MEXICO: RESULTS FROM THE GLOBAL POSITIVE PEACE INDEX

Positive Peace has deteriorated by 3.7 percent in Mexico since 2013, contrasting with a 0.4 percent improvement in the average Central America and the Caribbean regional score.[2] This means that the nation has become less socio-economically developed and less resilient than in the early 2010s, both in absolute terms and relative to neighboring countries.

According to (Table 4.1), in 2023, Mexico ranked 85th out of the 163 countries assessed in the PPI. This is 16 places lower than its position in 2013. As a result, it has dropped from the 'High Positive Peace' category to the 'Medium Positive Peace' category. Among its regional neighbors, Mexico now ranks sixth in Positive Peace out of 12 countries.

TRENDS IN POSITIVE PEACE

Mexico's deterioration in Positive Peace has accelerated since 2016 (Figure 4.3). This deterioration was driven by worsening scores for the *Institutions* domain, which measures the effectiveness of administrative organizations, and the *Attitudes* domain, which captures how citizens and social groups interrelate (Figure 4.4).

TABLE 4.1

Positive Peace Index – Central America and the Caribbean rankings, 2023

Mexico displayed a medium level of Positive Peace in 2023, ranking sixth in the Central America and the Caribbean region.

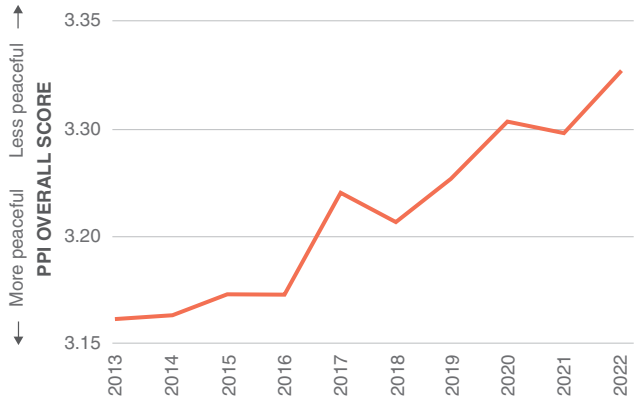
COUNTRY	REGIONAL RANK	GLOBAL RANK	SCORE	POSITIVE PEACE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN SCORE FROM 2013 TO 2023 (%)
Costa Rica	1	38	2.42	Very High	-2.6
Trinidad and Tobago	2	44	2.69	High	-4.6
Jamaica	3	50	2.75	High	-5.1
Panama	4	53	2.82	High	-2.5
Dominican Republic	5	74	3.14	High	-6.0
Mexico	**6**	**85**	**3.23**	**Medium**	**3.7**
El Salvador	7	89	3.28	Medium	3.3
Cuba	8	99	3.36	Medium	-2.6
Honduras	9	107	3.45	Medium	0.2
Nicaragua	10	121	3.59	Medium	7.6
Guatemala	11	129	3.66	Low	2.5
Haiti	12	151	3.95	Low	0.9
Regional Average	**-**	**-**	**3.20**	**-**	**-0.4**

Source: IEP

FIGURE 4.3

Overall Positive Peace Score in Mexico, 2013–2022

Over the past decade, Mexico's national Positive Peace score deteriorated by 3.7 percent, primarily driven by developments since 2016.



Source: IEP

Mexico's deterioration in Positive Peace over the past decade was driven by sharp movements in three indicators within the *Attitudes* domain: a 33.3 percent deterioration in *law to support the rights of population* segments, a 21.1 percent deterioration in the *quality of information* disseminated by the government domestically, and a 10.6 percent deterioration in *factionalized elites*. These indicators reflect several developments that have taken place in Mexico.

The 7.5 percent deterioration over the 2013-2022 period in Mexico's *Institutions* domain was heavily influenced by worsening scores in the *government openness and transparency, regulatory quality*, and *government effectiveness* indicators that declined by 50, 21.4 and 19.3 percent respectively. To some extent, this is reflected in authorities' inability to effectively manage the precarious internal security situation in the country.

Finally, the *Structures* domain improved almost uninterruptedly over the past decade, by almost five percent in total. However, the domain lost some of its gains between 2019 and 2022, mostly as a result of a steep COVID-19-related decline in the *healthy life expectancy* indicator. Between 2019 and 2022, Mexico's healthy life expectancy value dropped by more than four years (from 74.2 to 70.1 years), substantially higher than a global average drop of one year.

POSITIVE PEACE PILLARS

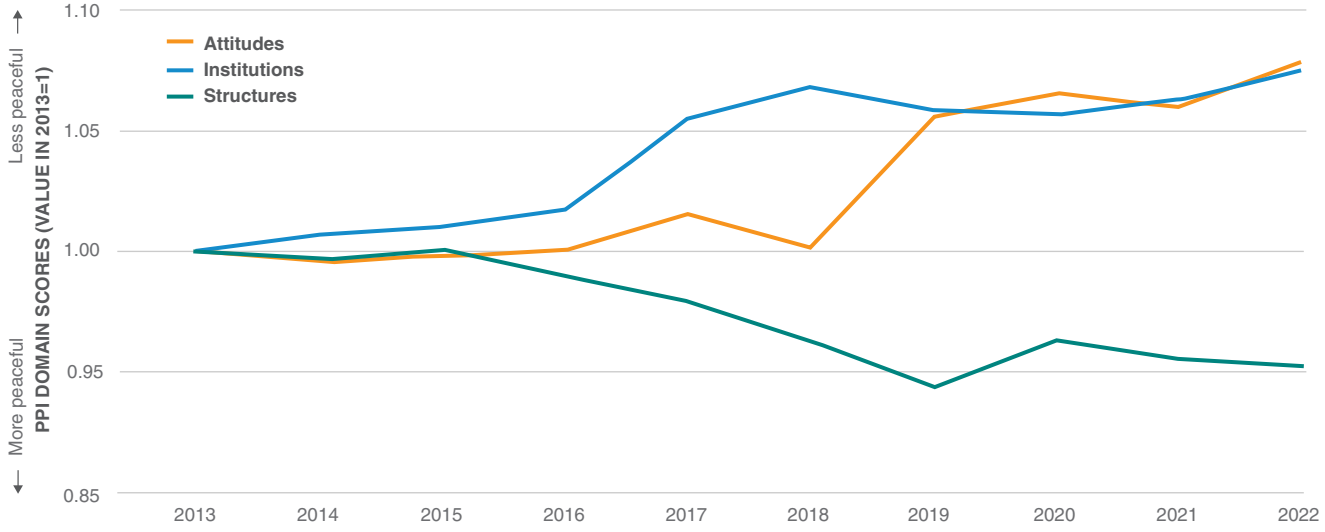
Since 2013, the Pillar with the largest improvement in Mexico was *Free Flow of Information* (Figure 4.5). This was due to a more than 33.8 percent improvement in the *telecom infrastructure index* indicator (Figure 4.6). This trend was observed globally and was greatly influenced by the development and proliferation of new technologies, along with the reduction in the costs of telecommunications equipment.

In the late 2000s, around 26 percent of Mexicans had access to the internet, but by 2022 this proportion had risen to 72 percent.[3] Instrumental to this rise was an initiative called México Conectado (Connected Mexico), which began in 2013. This initiative saw the nation invest US$1 billion in bringing broadband connections to libraries, schools, hospitals, and other public facilities in urban and rural areas.[4]

FIGURE 4.4

Positive Peace Domain Scores in Mexico, 2013–2022

In the last decade, progress in the *Structures* domain was offset by steep deteriorations in the *Institutions* and *Attitudes* domains.

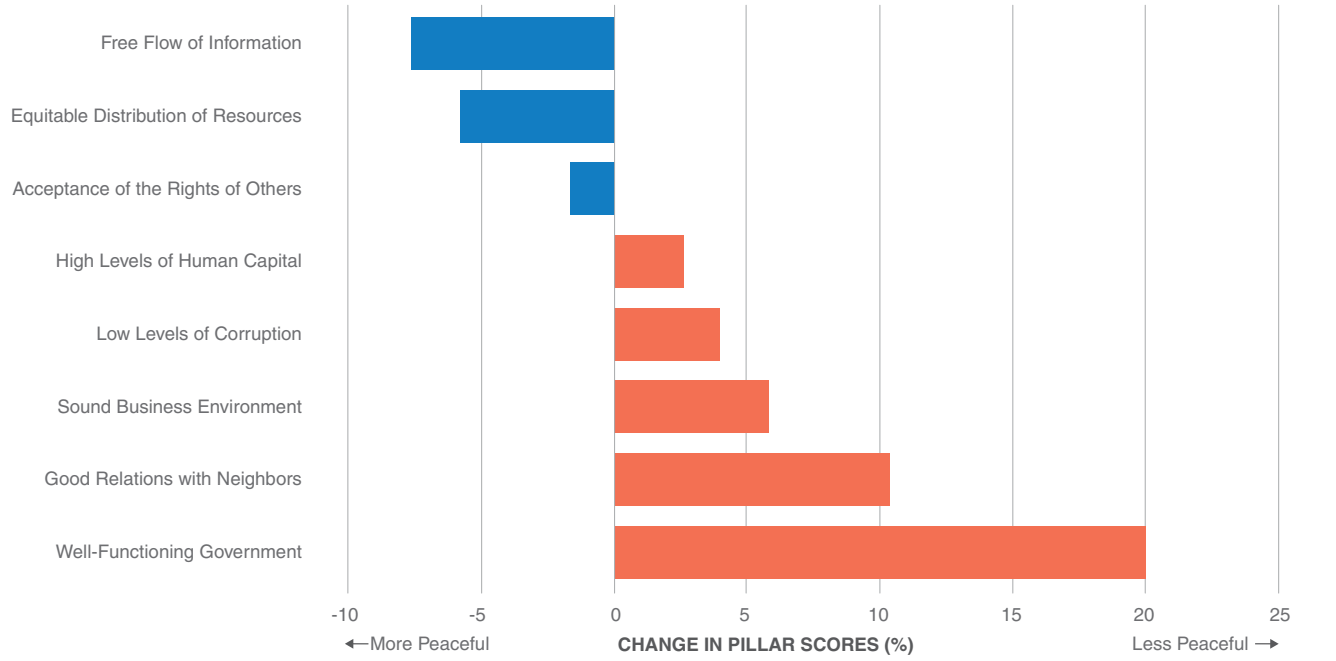


Source: IEP

FIGURE 4.5

Positive Peace changes by Pillar, Mexico, 2013–2022

There were substantial improvements in *Free Flow of Information*, while *Well-Functioning Government, Good Relations with Neighbors* and *Sound Business Environment* had the largest deteriorations.



Source: IEP

Partially offsetting the positive influence of *telecom infrastructure* index, Mexico recorded a steep deterioration in the quality of information disseminated by the authorities domestically. The rise in disinformation has been a global phenomenon, with an average of 56 percent of people around the world reporting concern about the legitimacy of the news they encounter on the internet. However, in Mexico, levels of concern about fake news are slightly higher than the global average, with 60 percent of people reporting concern.[5] The *quality of information* indicator, which is one of the indicators in the *Free Flow of Information* Pillar, deteriorated by 21 percent in the past decade (Figure 4.6).

The *Equitable Distribution of Resources* Pillar improved by more than five percent over the past decade. It was primarily driven by gains in *education and income inequality* and *inequality-adjusted life expectancy* indicators, as a result of increased social spending that reduced the levels of poverty and inequality in the country. Government programs such as *Prospera, Program Pensión para Adultos Mayores* and *Proagro* have contributed to a reduction in poverty in urban and rural areas. The World Bank estimates that Mexico's poverty rate – the number of persons living on US$3.65 per day or less – fell from 16 percent of the population in 2005 to 10 percent in 2020.[6]

The *Acceptance of the Rights of Others* Pillar recorded gains in the 2013-2022 period. The Pillar improved by 1.7 percent on the back of efforts to reduce gender disparities. Mexico made continuous progress in supporting women's rights, especially in political representation at the federal level. Gender quota laws have helped create near gender parity in Mexico's legislature. In 2021, women were elected to 50 percent of the seats in the country's Senate and more than 48 percent of the seats in its Chamber of Deputies.[7] In 2024, the country is poised to elect its first female president, as both of the leading candidates are women.

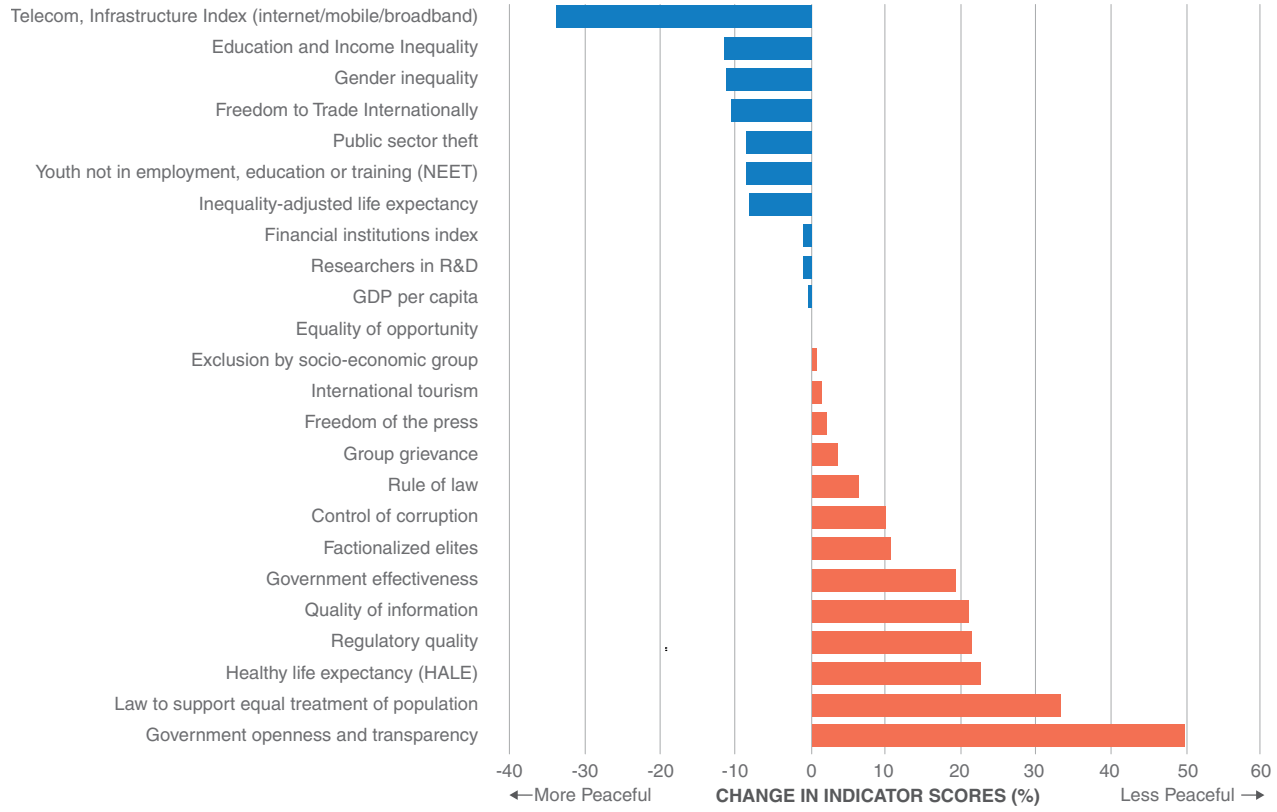
The *High Levels of Human Capital* Pillar declined by 2.6 percent between 2013-2022, although one of its indicators, *youth not in employment, education or training*, has improved substantially over the past decade. The percentage of young people not engaged in work, education or training fell from 20.5 percent in 2013 to 17.3 percent in 2022. This is noteworthy progress, given that the global average rate increased in the same period. This improvement, however, was more than offset by a substantial decline in *healthy life expectancy*, one of the other indicators of the Pillar *High Levels of Human Capital.*

The decline in life expectancy in Mexico experienced after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a 23 percent deterioration in the *healthy life expectancy* indicator between 2019 and 2022. This decline was notably higher than the global average decline of four percent, underscoring the severity of the situation in Mexico. Mexico's COVID-19 death rate has been higher than the global average since the start of the pandemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) data, the global death rate by the end of 2022 was 85 deaths per 100,000 people, while Mexico's death rate was 262 deaths per 100,000 people. Mexico has been one of the countries hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. As of February 2024, Mexico has reported more than 7.7 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and 335,000 deaths.[8]

FIGURE 4.6

Positive Peace changes by Indicator, Mexico, 2013–2022

Positive Peace in Mexico has benefitted from improvements in telecom infrastructure among the population. However, it was more than offset by deteriorations in government openness, passing and enforcing laws supporting equal treatment of population segments and others.



Source: IEP

The *Low Levels of Corruption* Pillar fell by almost four percent since 2013, with two of the three indicators in this Pillar, *control of corruption* and *factionalized elites* deteriorating. In Mexico, corruption is strongly linked with organized crime and drug trafficking, as the cartels often use the official economy to launder money and bribe authorities to facilitate that process. Since 2015, the national organized crime rate has increased by 62.4 percent and, accordingly, corruption has also become more prevalent. Contributing to high levels of crime and corruption, impunity is common across the country, reducing the probability of criminals getting caught and increasing their incentives to commit offenses. According to Impunidad Cero, since 2016, about 93 percent of homicides in Mexico have gone unsolved.[9]

Corruption also affects individuals in Mexico. Acts of petty corruption experienced by ordinary citizens have increased in recent years. The proportion of people reporting such acts in their contact with public servants rose from 12.1 percent in 2013 to a high of 15.7 percent in 2019, before falling slightly to 14.7 percent in 2021.[10] Combating corruption has become a central issue of the current government, which was elected in 2018 on an anti-corruption platform.[11] However, recent surveys indicate that around 86 percent of Mexican citizens report that acts of corruption are commonplace in interactions with the government, and approximately 80 percent of public contracts are still granted without going through a tendering process.[12]

The *Sound Business Environment* Pillar also deteriorated in the 2013-2022 period. Although the *financial institution index* indicator slightly improved, it was outweighed by substantial losses in the *regulatory quality* indicator.

Good Relations with Neighbors deteriorated noticeably, driven by the poor result of the *law to support equal treatment of population segments* indicator. This also reflects the heightened tensions between some Mexican residents and the refugees and international migrants passing through the country on their way to the United States.[13]

Well-Functioning Government recorded the steepest deterioration of all Pillars, registering a 20 percent change since 2013. All three indicators of this Pillar deteriorated in the period, with *government openness and transparency* and *government effectiveness* deteriorating by 50 and 19 percent, respectively. There was also a 6.6 percent decline in the *rule of law* indicator. Since 2006, Mexico has employed its military to combat drug trafficking and organized crime. While this added resources and personnel to the effort, it also meant the military took on responsibilities that were previously managed by civilian agencies. In this shift, there have been many reports of infringements of human rights.[14] Between 2018 and 2021, the number of complaints regarding alleged abuses by the military received by Mexico's National Human Rights Commission / Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH) steadily increased reaching its peak of 941 complaints in 2021.[15]

POSITIVE PEACE BY STATE: THE MEXICO POSITIVE PEACE INDEX

The Mexico Positive Peace Index (MPPI) is calculated using an adapted version of the global Positive Peace Index (PPI) methodology. It uses state-level economic, governance, social and attitudinal data sourced primarily from Mexican government statistics and national surveys, along with several other sources, including the Mexico Democratic Development Index / Índice de Desarrollo Democrático de México (IDD-Mex), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Article 19, Impunidad Cero, and the State Competitivity Index / Índice de Competitividad Estatal (ICE).

This section outlines the sub-national Mexico Positive Peace Index (MPPI), which uses state-level statistical indicators of socio-economic development. The MPPI includes 24 indicators grouped along the eight Pillars of Positive Peace (Table 4.2). These sub-national indicators align with the global Positive Peace Index as closely as possible. However, due to specific issues in the Mexican sub-national context as well as some data limitations, some indicators have had to be slightly adapted.

Like the methodology of the global Positive Peace Index, MPPI indicator scores are harmonized, meaning scores close to 5 indicate less socio-economic resilience and scores close to 1 indicate more socio-economic resilience.

TABLE 4.2

Indicators in the sub-national Mexico Positive Peace Index, 2024

Mexico's sub-national Positive Peace Index was calculated from 24 indicators produced by national and international agencies.

Pillar	Indicator Name	Source*
Acceptance of the Rights of Others	Civil Liberties	IDD-Mex
	Gender Inequality	UNDP HDI-S
	Denial of Rights	ENADIS
Equitable Distribution of Resources	Access to Nutritious and Quality Food	CONEVAL
	Extreme Poverty	CONEVAL
	Inequality	IDD-Mex
Free Flow of Information	Attacks on Journalists	Article 19
	Internet Access	INEGI ENDUTIH
	Proportion of Public Institutions That Have a Website	INEGI CNGSPSPE
Good Relations with Neighbors	Confidence In Neighbors	ENVIPE
	Organized Neighbors to Address Issue of Theft	ENVIPE
	Prevalence of Discrimination	INEGI
High Levels of Human Capital	Access To Health Services	CONEVAL
	Illiteracy Rate	INEGI
	Public Expenditure on Education	IDD-Mex
Low Levels of Corruption	Judicial Corruption	ENVIPE
	Perception of State Government Corruption	ENCIG
	State Government Corruption	ENCIG
Sound Business Environment	Income per capita (2022 pesos)	CONEVAL
	Unemployment Rate	INEGI
	State Competitiveness	ICE
Well-Functioning Government	Trust in state government	ENCIG
	Political Commitment	IDD-Mex
	Homicide Impunity	Impunidad Cero

Note: *Índice de Desarrollo Democrático de México (IDD-Mex), Subnational Human Development Index (HDI-S), Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL), Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI), Encuesta Nacional sobre Disponibilidad y Uso de Tecnologías de la Información en los Hogares (ENDUTIH), Censo Nacional de Gobierno, Seguridad Pública y Sistema Penitenciario Estatales (CNGSPSPE), Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad Pública (ENVIPE), Encuesta Nacional sobre Discriminación (ENADIS), Encuesta Nacional de Calidad e Impacto Gubernamental (ENCIG), Índice de Competitividad Estatal (ICE).

The states of Nuevo León, Nayarit, Yucatán, Querétaro and Sinaloa recorded the strongest performance in the MPPI (Figure 4.7). The states of Oaxaca, Puebla, Tabasco, Guerrero and Morelos had the lowest levels of Positive Peace in the country.

More than half of Mexico's 32 states recorded MPPI scores within one standard deviation (0.35 points) of the national average. This is a relatively high degree of homogeneity and is to be expected in a sub-national analysis since many of the indicators of Positive Peace are influenced by laws and administrative programs implemented nationally. This means developmental successes and failures are more likely connected to state performance.

In addition, within domestic borders, individuals and groups may migrate from one state to another largely unimpeded. The relative freedom of movement of people, resources and capital across state borders also contributes to sub-national Positive Peace indices such as the MPPI being more homogeneous than the global PPI.

This relative uniformity of state-by-state Positive Peace outcomes is one of the reasons the relationship between Positive Peace and negative peace[16] is not as strong at the sub-national level as it is globally. In the case of Mexico, certain characteristics of violence and conflict further distort the relationship between peace and societal resilience.

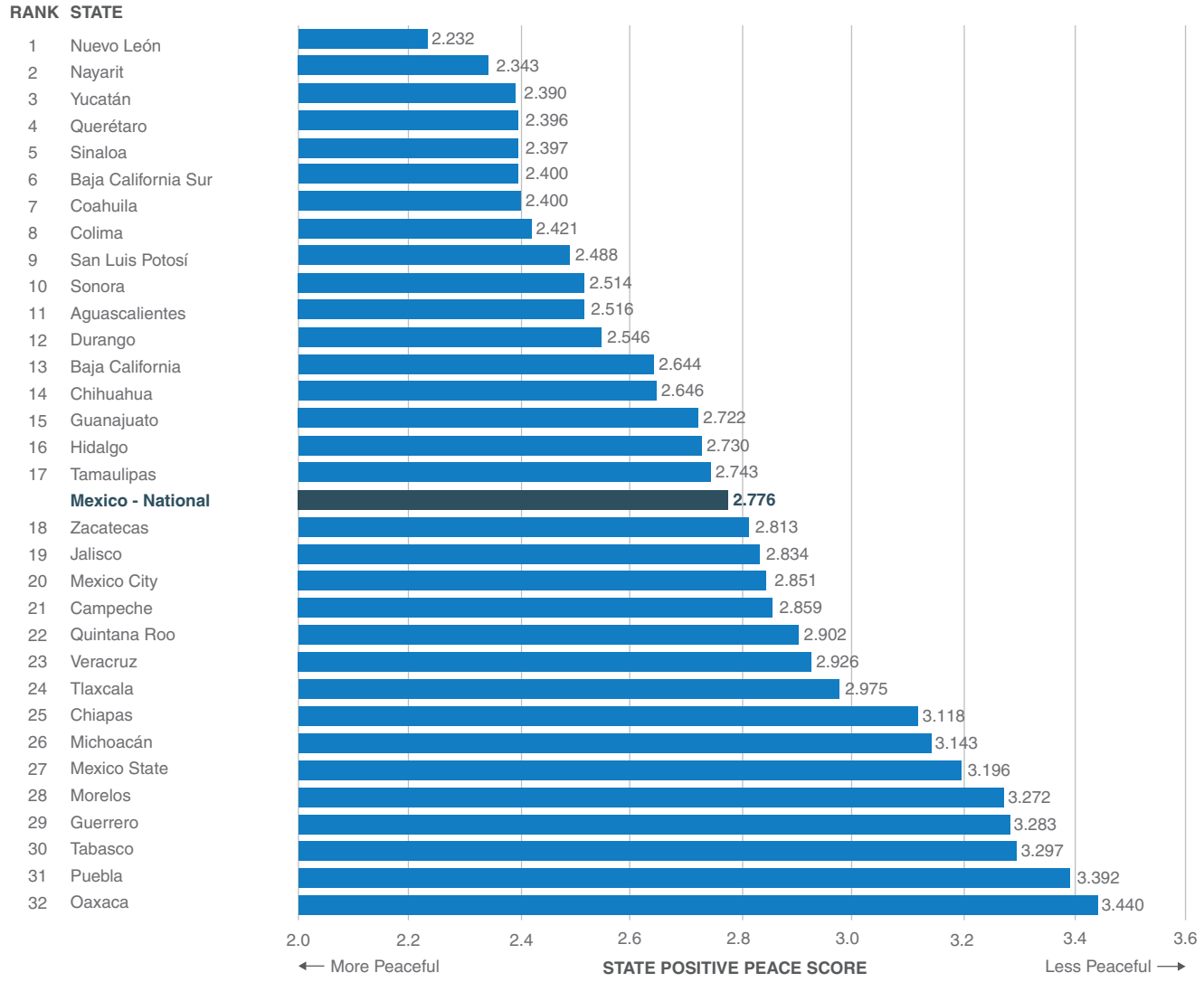
SUB-NATIONAL POSITIVE PEACE AND THE MPI

Figure 4.8 illustrates the relationships between the Pillars of the MPPI and the indicators of the MPI. The correlations in blue represent factors that are inversely related with violence. That is, in states where these MPPI Pillars are stronger, violence tends to be lower. *Low Levels of Corruption* and *Well-Functioning Government* show direct correlations across all types of crime in the MPI. A possible explanation is that corruption and administrative ineffectiveness enable crime and violence through misallocating funds that could otherwise have been dedicated to public security.

FIGURE 4.7

Positive Peace by state, 2024

Nuevo León, Nayarit and Yucatán had the highest levels of Positive Peace.



Source: IEP

Conversely, Positive Peace Pillars such as *Free Flow of Information*, *Acceptance of the Rights of Others* and *Sound Business Environment* show an inverse relationship with crime and violence in Mexico. That is, states that perform well in these Pillars counterintuitively tend to have higher levels of violence. For example, wealthier and more prosperous states—which generally perform well in *Sound Business Environment*—also happen to have higher levels of organized crime and violent crime, reflecting the economic nature of these illicit activities. Simultaneously, wealthier states tend to perform more strongly in gender equality indicators, literacy rates, internet access and access to food and health services. This results in states that perform better in traditional human development measures, such as health, wealth, and education, also having higher rates of organized and violent crime.

As such, organized crime and drug trafficking in Mexico distort the relationship between levels of violence and Positive Peace. The *organized crime* indicator of the MPI is negatively correlated with the MPPI and all its Pillars, except *Well-Functioning Government* and *Good Relations with Neighbors*. States with higher levels of socio-economic resilience, as measured by the MPPI and its Pillars, also have greater markets for drugs and more suitable infrastructure of roads and ports through which criminal organizations may transport illegal substances. In addition, some of the states with the highest levels of Positive Peace are located close to the border with the United States, which means they have high strategic value for the illegal drug trade.

Wealth in Mexico also tends to be disproportionately concentrated in the north of the country, where higher levels of trade and industrialization tied to the economy of the United States have spurred economic growth over decades. However, the strategic value of border regions for drug trafficking organizations drives up violence and crime in these areas, which in turn drives down peacefulness.

Nevertheless, some of these strong negative associations can be spurious. For example, *Free Flow of Information*, measuring internet access and state government's digital outreach are, unsurprisingly, higher in wealthier states. More economically prosperous states are in turn more susceptible to drug trafficking activities for the reasons elaborated above.

In some circumstances, the presence of organized crime may also facilitate other types of crime. For instance, regions where drug cartels operate more intensely will also support narcomenudeo (retail drug sales), which can be associated with firearms crime. Violent individuals involved with the cartels or in narcomenudeo may also be more likely than others to engage in extortion, kidnapping, and other crimes. These factors contribute to a lack of correlation between internal security and Positive Peace in Mexico.

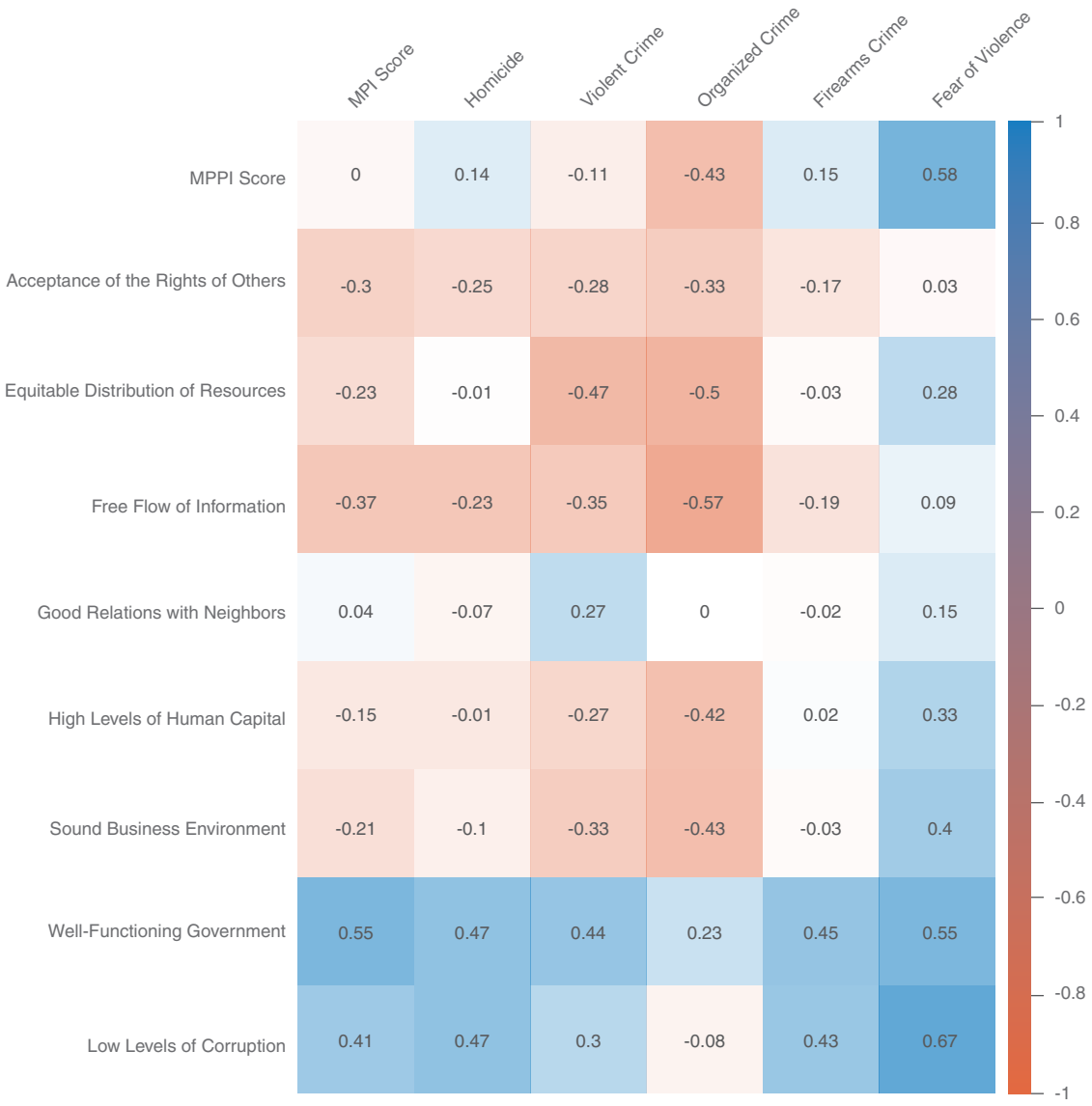
The link between wealth and organized crime has important implications for corruption. A recent study indicates that Mexican police officers are underpaid, and in some cases, severely so, suggesting that low police wages could compel officers to resort to corrupt practices to supplement their income.[17] The Positive Peace analysis presented here suggests that corruption at an institutional level, especially in the judiciary and political systems, shows a stronger relationship to violence in the country.

Among the MPI indicators, *fear of violence*, which measures the degree to which citizens perceive the state in which they live to be unsafe, shows by far the highest level of correlation with the MPPI and almost all of its individual Pillars. This is a striking finding, as peacefulness refers not only to the absence of external manifestations of violence but also to people's perceptions that they live in environments that are secure. The *fear of violence* indicator correlates most strongly with *Low Levels of Corruption* and *Well-Functioning Government*, underscoring the necessity of addressing those issues to bolster citizen confidence about their safety, even when external peace conditions may be degraded.

FIGURE 4.8

Correlations between Positive Peace Pillars and the MPI indicators, 2024

Well-Functioning Government and *Low Levels of Corruption* are associated with lower levels of violence broadly. Improvements in all Positive Peace Pillars exhibit a positive correlation with lower levels of *fear of violence*.



Source: IEP

States that have a higher rank on the MPI than in Positive Peace, as measured in the MPPI, are said to have a 'Positive Peace deficit'. This is where a state records a higher level of peacefulness than can be sustained by its level of socio-economic development. If a state has a higher MPPI ranking than its MPI ranking, then it is considered to have a 'Positive Peace surplus', meaning its stronger institutions and socio-economic capital make it better positioned to improve its ranking on the MPI in the long term.

Figure 4.9 presents Positive Peace deficits by state in 2023. Positive Peace is calculated by subtracting a state's MPI ranking from its MPPI ranking. Nuevo León, Colima, and Baja California exhibit the highest Positive Peace surpluses. This implies that these states are experiencing significantly better socio-economic development than what is indicated by their MPI ranking alone.

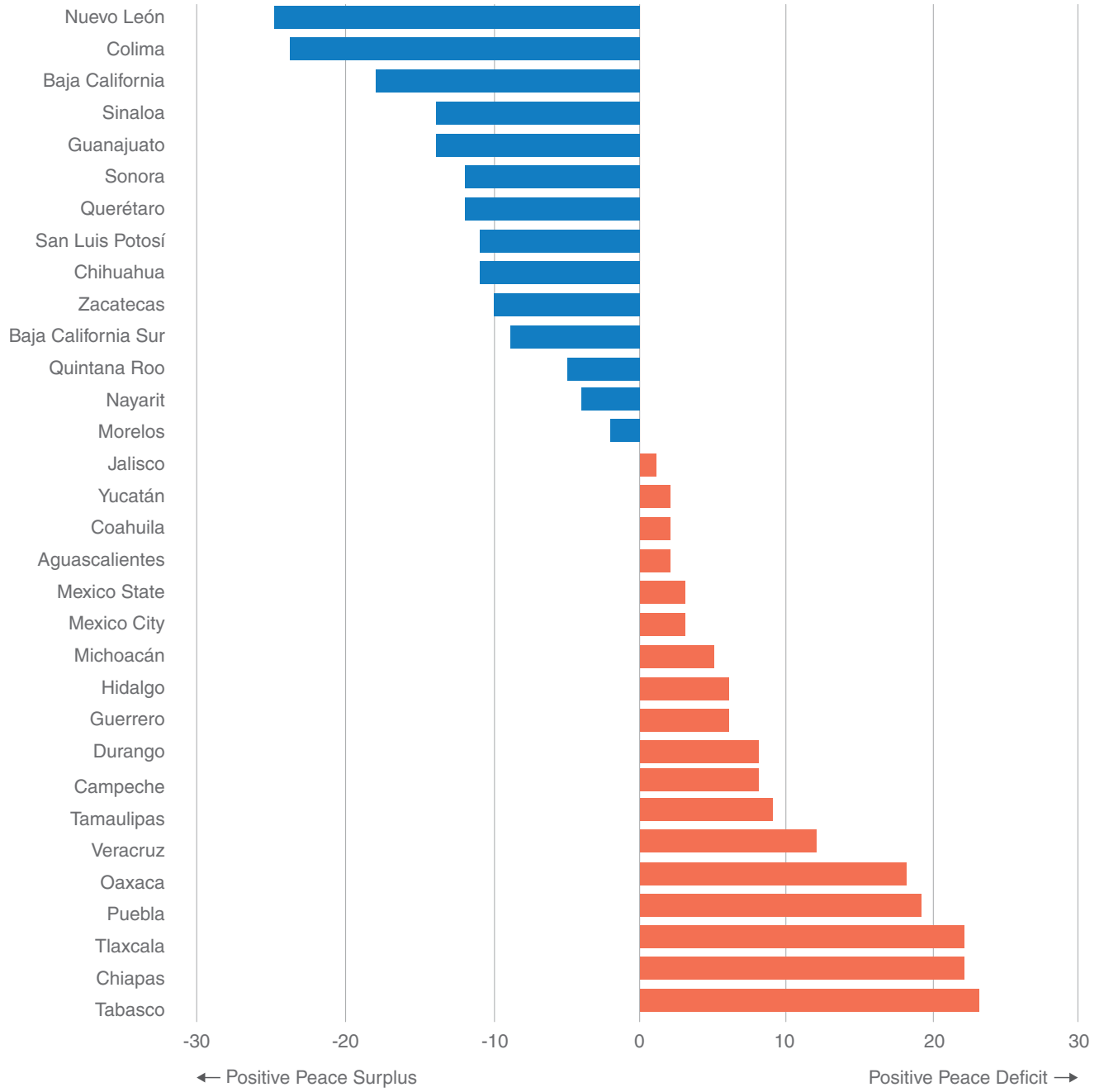
Conversely, Tabasco, Chiapas, and Tlaxcala show the highest Positive Peace deficits, suggesting that their relatively lower levels of violence, as measured in the MPI, do not align with their weaker performance in terms of socio-economic development.

Among states, those with high Positive Peace surpluses demonstrate greater institutional, attitudinal, and structural capacities in relative terms. Consequently, they are expected to have a better chance of addressing violence in the medium to long term.

FIGURE 4.9

Positive Peace deficit by state, 2023

States with Positive Peace surpluses are more likely to effectively address violence in the long term, while states with high Positive Peace deficits have a greater risk of plunging further into violence.



Source: IEP

5 | 2024 Mexico Peace Index Methodology

The Mexico Peace Index (MPI) is based on the concepts and framework of the Global Peace Index (GPI), the leading global measure of peacefulness, produced annually by IEP since 2007. As an internal analysis of a single country, the MPI adapts the GPI methodology for a sub-national application. Both indices measure negative peace - that is, the "absence of violence or fear of violence".

The 2024 edition is the tenth iteration of the MPI and uses data published by the Executive Secretary of the National System for Public Security / *Secretariado Ejecutivo de Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública* (SESNSP).

The MPI measures peacefulness at the state level in Mexico. A key reason for choosing this unit of analysis is that Mexico's state governments have wide-ranging autonomous powers, allowing them to have a significant impact on the levels of violence within their states. The response to violence may therefore differ significantly from state to state.

The MPI is composed of five indicators. The *homicide* and *violent crime* indicators are based on those used in the IEP's United Kingdom Peace Index (UKPI) and United States Peace Index (USPI), using the US Federal Bureau of Investigation's standard definition of violent crime. The *fear of violence* indicator in the MPI captures the degree to which citizens feel unsafe in the states in which they reside. The *firearms crime* indicator represents gun use and availability, using the best available data. This is similar to the approach used in the USPI. Lastly, the *organized crime* indicator is specific to Mexico because of the problems the country faces with organized criminal activity.

All data used to calculate the MPI comes from government bodies in Mexico. IEP then uses survey data collected by the national statistics office to adjust the crime figures for underreporting.

2024 MPI INDICATORS

DATA SOURCES

The MPI is composed of the following five indicators, scored between 1 and 5, where 1 represents the most peaceful score and 5 the least peaceful. Population data is used for estimating rates per 100,000 people. The data runs from 2015 to 2023.

Homicide

The number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

Violent Crime

The number of robbery, sexual assault, and family violence cases and the number of violent assault victims per 100,000 people, adjusted for underreporting. Robbery cases must meet one of two criteria to be included:

- types of robbery that rely on the threat of violence, such as a mugging, or
- robbery incidents where the database indicates violence was used.

Source: SESNSP

Organized Crime

The number of extortions, drug trade related crimes, and kidnapping or human trafficking investigations per 100,000 people. Extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking rates are adjusted for underreporting. Drug trade and major organized crime offenses include:

- the federal crimes of production, transport, trafficking, trade, supply, or possession of drugs or other crimes under the Crimes Against Public Health Law / *Los Delitos contra La Salud Pública*
- retail drug crimes, as a proxy indicator of the size of the market fueled by illegal drug production and distribution
- and crimes classed under the Law Against Organized Crime / *La Ley Contra El Crimen Organizada*, which includes all of the above crimes when three or more people conspire to commit them.

Source: SESNSP

Firearms Crime

The number of victims of an intentional or negligent homicide or assault committed with a firearm per 100,000 people.

Source: SESNSP

Fear of Violence

The percentage of people that perceive the state in which they reside as unsafe.

Source: ENVIPE

Population data

The estimated population of each state in each year.

Population data is used to calculate the rate per 100,000 people for homicide, violent crime, organized crime and weapons crime.

Source: National Population Council / Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO)

UNDERREPORTING

Only about ten percent of crimes in Mexico are reported to the authorities.[1]

Two of the MPI indicators – *violent crime* and *organized crime* – are adjusted for underreporting. IEP uses ENVIPE data to calculate underreporting rates for each state and adjusts the official statistics for robbery, assault, family violence, sexual violence, extortion and kidnapping and human trafficking to better reflect actual rates of violence. This approach helps to counterbalance the high rates of underreporting in Mexico.

IEP calculated the underreporting rates for each state and crime based on the information from ENVIPE. The survey asks each

respondent if they were a victim of a particular type of crime and whether or not they reported it to the authorities. IEP sourced this data from each victimization survey for the years 2019 to 2023 and took the total number of each crime in each state for the five years. IEP then divided the total numbers of crimes reported by survey respondents by the number of crimes that survey respondents said they reported to the authorities. This produces a multiplier for adjusting the official statistics. The adjustments are made for the crimes of robbery, assault, family violence, sexual violence, extortion and kidnapping and human trafficking.

The underreporting rates use five years of data because, in some states, there were crimes where none of the victims reported the crime to the authorities. If none of the crimes were reported, the reporting rate of zero percent cannot be used to adjust the police-recorded numbers. Additionally, combining the data over time smooths out any large fluctuations in underreporting rates that may be the result of complex and imperfect surveying methodologies, rather than a true change in reporting. Reporting rates have not changed significantly in Mexico over the last five years.

Underreporting rate

Definition: Number of crimes reported by victims on the victimization survey divided by the number of those crimes that victims stated they reported to the authorities.

Source: ENVIPE

INDICATOR SCORE & OVERALL CALCULATIONS

The MPI indicators are scored between 1 and 5, with 5 being the least peaceful score and 1 being the most peaceful score. Banded indicator scores are calculated by normalizing the range of raw values based on each state's average value over the period 2015 to 2023. First, the average value for each state over the nine years of the study is calculated. Then the outliers are removed from the range of average state values in order to identify the min and max of normally distributed average values. Outliers in this case are defined as data points that are more than three standard deviations greater than the mean. Next, the values for each year are normalized using the min and max of the normal range and are banded between 1 and 5. The calculation for banded scores is:

$$Banded\ score_x = \left(\frac{raw\ value_x - min_{sample}}{max_{sample} - min_{sample}} \times 4 \right) + 1$$

Finally, if any of the banded values are above 5, the state is assigned a score of 5 and if any values are below 1, the state is assigned a score of 1.

There is one additional step used to calculate the *organized crime* and *firearms crime* score. In the case of the *organized crim*e indicator, raw values are multiplied by the indicator sub-weights listed in Table 5.2. The sub-weights are used so that the indicator score reflects the more serious societal impact of particular crimes and to correct for the uneven distribution of offenses. In 2018, extortion and retail drug crimes made up 88.6 percent of crimes, which means that the trend in these offenses would overshadow any changes in kidnapping, human trafficking or major drug crime rates.

Major organized crime offenses, such as drug trafficking and kidnapping and human trafficking have the highest weights in the *organized crime* score. These crimes reflect more severe acts of violence and provide an indication of the strength and presence of major criminal organizations. Retail drug crimes serve as a proxy indication of the size of the drug market. However, some portion of the retail drug market will represent small individual sellers or reflect personal drug use, both of which are of less concern. Human trafficking and major drug trafficking offenses are more destabilizing to Mexican society because these crimes:

- reflect large revenue sources for criminal organizations
- absorb more human and physical resources into violent, illicit economic activity
- depend upon a greater level of corruption
- indicate the presence of organizations that pose a greater threat to the Mexican state.

In the case of *firearms crime*, there are also sub-weights for its two sub-indicators. The first sub-indicator, assault with a firearm, is weighted twice as heavily as the second, homicide with a firearm. This sub-weighting is applied to reduce the effects of double-counting with the *homicide* indicator, as the majority of homicides in Mexico are committed with guns.

After the score for each indicator has been calculated, weights are applied to each of the five indicators in order to calculate the overall MPI score. The overall score is calculated by multiplying each indicator score by its index weight and then summing the weighted indicator scores.

There are many methods for choosing the weights to be applied to a composite index. In order to maintain consistency across IEP's various peace indices, the weights in the MPI mirror those used in the GPI, USPI and UKPI as closely as possible.

The weights for the GPI indicators were agreed upon by an international panel of independent peace and conflict experts and are based on a consensus view of their relative importance. To complement this approach and reflect the local context of Mexico, a second expert panel was formed consisting of leading Mexican academics and researchers to determine the final weights for the five indicators in the MPI. With direction from the expert panel at the time of the design of the index, a number of different methods, such as equal weighting, principal component analysis and analytical hierarchical processing, were used to test the robustness of the results. The final weights as determined by the IEP research team and the expert panel are shown in Table 5.1.

TABLE 5.1

Indicator weights in the MPI

INDICATOR	% OF INDEX
Homicide	30%
Violent Crime	22%
Organized Crime	22%
Firearms Crime	16%
Fear of Violence	10%

TABLE 5.2

Composition of the MPI organized crime score

MPI INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT AS % OF OVERALL MPI SCORE	INDICATOR SUB-TYPE	VARIABLES INCLUDED	SUB-WEIGHT RELATIVE TO OTHER CRIMES IN THE INDICATOR
Organized crime	Extortions, kidnappings and cases of human trafficking, and narcotics crimes per 100,000 people	22%	Extortion (adjusted for underreporting)	Extortion	3
			Kidnapping & human trafficking (adjusted for underreporting)	Kidnapping	5
				Human trafficking	
				Trafficking of minors	
			Retail drug crimes	Possession, commerce and supply in small amounts	1
			Major organized crime offenses	Violations of the law prohibiting crimes against public health, which criminalizes drug trafficking	20
				Violations of the organized crime law, which criminalizes organized crime related offenses committed by three or more people	

Source: IEP

Methodology for Calculating the Economic Impact of Violence

The economic impact of violence is defined as the expenditure and economic activity related to "containing, preventing and dealing with the consequences of violence." The **economic impact of violence** refers to the total cost (direct and indirect) of violence plus an economic peace multiplier. The **economic cost of violence** refers to the direct and indirect costs of violence.

IEP's estimate of the economic impact of violence includes three components:

1. **Direct costs** are the costs of crime or violence to the victim, the perpetrator and the government, including those associated with policing, medical expenses, funerals or incarceration.

2. **Indirect costs** accrue after the fact. These include physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as the consequential lost future income. There is also a measure of the impact of fear on the economy, as people who fear that they may become a victim of violent crime alter their behavior.

3. The **multiplier effect** is a commonly used economic concept that describes the extent to which additional expenditure has flow-on impacts in the wider economy. Injections of new income into the economy will lead to more spending, which will in turn create employment, further income and encourage additional spending, thereby increasing GDP. This mutually reinforcing economic cycle explains the "multiplier effect," and why a dollar of expenditure can create more than a dollar of economic activity. The multiplier effect calculates the additional economic activity that would have accrued if the direct costs of violence had been avoided. Refer to box 5.1 for more detail on the multiplier.

Refer to Box 5.1 for more detail on the multiplier.

CATEGORIES AND INDICATORS INCLUDED IN THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

1. **Violence containment expenditure** refers to the direct and indirect costs associated with preventing or dealing with the consequences of violence. This includes government spending on domestic security, justice and military.

2. **Protection Costs** refers to the personal and business expenses from the National Survey of Business Victimization (ENVE) and the National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) surveys.

3. **Interpersonal Violence** refers to the direct and indirect costs associated with homicide, violent crimes, organized crimes and the fear of victimization.

This study uses a cost accounting methodology to measure the economic impact of violence. Expenditures on containing violence are totaled and unit costs are applied to the MPI estimates for the number of crimes committed. A unit cost is also applied to the estimated level of fear of insecurity. The unit costs estimate the direct (tangible) and indirect (intangible) costs of each crime. Direct unit costs include losses to the victim and perpetrator and exclude costs incurred by law enforcement and health care systems, as these are captured elsewhere in the model. The direct costs for violent crime and organized crime are obtained from household and business surveys undertaken by the Mexican statistical office, which assesses economic and health costs to the victim of a crime.

Indirect unit costs include the physical and psychological trauma and the present value of future costs associated with the violent incident, such as lost lifetime wages for homicide victims.

The cost estimates provided in this report are in constant 2023 pesos, which facilitates the comparison of the estimates over time. The estimate only includes elements of violence in which reliable data could be obtained. As such, the estimate can be considered conservative. The items listed below are included in the cost of violence methodology:

1. Homicide
2. Violent crime, which includes assault, violence within the family, sexual violence and robbery
3. Organized crime, which includes extortion, kidnapping and human trafficking
4. Indirect costs of incarceration
5. Fear of insecurity
6. Protections costs, including private security and firearms
7. Federal spending on violence containment, which includes the military, domestic security and the justice system
8. Medical and funeral costs

The economic impact of violence excludes:

- State level and municipal public spending on security
- The cost of drug trade related crimes such as the production, possession, transport and supply of drugs
- Population displacement due to violence

Although data is available for some of these categories, it is either not fully available for all states or for each year of analysis.

BOX 5.1

The multiplier effect

The multiplier effect is a commonly used economic concept, which describes the extent to which additional expenditure improves the wider economy. Injections of new income into the economy will lead to more spending, which in turn creates employment, further income and additional spending. This mutually reinforcing economic cycle is known as the "multiplier effect" and is the reason that a peso of expenditure can create more than one peso of economic activity.

Although the exact magnitude of this effect is difficult to measure, it is likely to be particularly high in the case of expenditure related to containing violence. For instance, if a community were to become more peaceful, individuals and corporations would spend less time and resources protecting themselves against violence. Due to this decrease in violence, there would likely be substantial flow-on effects for the wider economy, as money is diverted towards more productive areas such as health, business investment, education and infrastructure.

The potential economic benefits from increased peace can be significant. When a homicide is avoided, the direct costs, such as the money spent on medical treatment and a funeral, can be spent elsewhere. The economy also benefits from the victim's lifetime income and expenditure. More generally, there is strong evidence to suggest that violence and the fear of violence can fundamentally alter the incentives for business. For example, Brauer and Marlin (2009) argue that violence or the fear of violence may result in some economic activities not occurring at all. Their analysis of 730 business ventures in Colombia from 1997 to 2001 found that amidst higher levels of violence, new ventures were less likely to survive and profit. Consequently, with greater levels of violence, it is likely that employment rates and economic productivity will fall long-term, due to the disincentives around job creation and long-term investments.

This study assumes that the multiplier is one, signifying that for every peso saved on violence containment, there will be an additional peso of economic activity. This is a relatively conservative multiplier and broadly in line with similar studies.[2]

ESTIMATION METHODS

A combination of approaches are used to estimate the economic cost of violence to Mexico's economy. The analysis involved two components:

1. Financial information detailing the level of expenditure on items associated with violence was used wherever possible.

2. Unit costs were used to estimate the cost of violent activities. Specifically, an estimate of the economic cost of a violent act was sourced from the literature and applied to the total number of times such an event occurred to provide an estimate of the total cost of categories of violence. The MPI data are used for the number of homicides, sexual assaults, violent assaults, robberies, kidnappings and extortions.

IEP uses federal government expenditure data for military, domestic security and the justice system as federal government violence containment costs. Data are sourced from the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit / *Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (SHCP). State and municipal level spending are excluded from the study due to data unavailability.

The federal government expenditure data does not provide details of the spending at the state level. Therefore, a combination of state population size and the state funding allocation from the Public Security Contribution Fund / *Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública* (FASP) is used to estimate the likely distribution between states.

A unit cost approach is used to estimate the economic cost of homicide, violent crime, organized crime and fear of insecurity.

Unit costs for the homicide, violent crimes and organized crimes are based on a study by McCollister (2010) that estimated the tangible and intangible cost of violent crimes in the United States. The McCollister (2010) direct and indirect costs are applied to the number of homicides to calculate the total cost of homicide. Only the McCollister (2010) intangible (indirect) costs are applied to violent crime and organized crime. The direct costs of violent crime are taken from the nationally representative victimization surveys (ENVIPE and ENVE) administered by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). Both surveys collect data on economic and health-related direct costs due to violent crime.

1. Direct costs or tangible costs of crime include medical expenses, cash losses, property theft or damage, and productivity losses.

2. Indirect costs include physical and psychological trauma as well as long-term costs due to a violent incident.

In addition to the breakdown by tangible and intangible costs, McCollister (2010) offers further details of the costs by victim, perpetrator and justice system. Such itemization enables IEP to exclude the justice system costs to avoid double counting with expenditure data used for the justice system and domestic security.

IEP also uses Dolan & Peasgood's (2006) estimate of the unit cost of fear of crime to calculate the cost of perceptions of insecurity in Mexico.

To ensure that cost estimates appropriately represent relative income levels in Mexico, they were scaled according to Mexico's GDP per capita relative to the United States before being

converted to 2023 Mexican pesos. This was based on the aforementioned US study suggesting that the indirect cost of a homicide approximates US$8.4 million. The equivalent cost in Mexico was then calculated based on purchasing power adjusted GDP per capita of US$20,277 for Mexico as compared to $69,288 for the United States in 2020. This is called the adjusted unit cost.

All the costs are adjusted to constant 2023 pesos using GDP deflator data from the World Bank. The base year of 2023 was chosen because it is the most recent year for which GDP deflator data was available. Estimating the economic impact in constant prices facilitates comparisons over time.

Any GDP-related analysis uses the most recently available GDP data from INEGI.

CALCULATING THE COST OF HOMICIDE, VIOLENT CRIME AND ORGANIZED CRIME

To calculate the cost for the categories of crime used in this study, IEP uses the data from the MPI.

Data on the incidence of homicide is sourced from the SESNSP. Homicides are multiplied by adjusted unit costs to calculate the total cost of homicide in Mexico.

Violent crime, which includes incidents of sexual violence, robbery and assault are also sourced from SESNSP and are adjusted for underreporting. For more details on the data and underreporting adjustment refer to pages 79-80. The economic costs of each category of violent crime are calculated using the respective adjusted unit costs.

The cost of organized crime is based on the number of incidents of extortion and kidnapping or human trafficking. To estimate the total cost of extortions and kidnapping in Mexico, IEP assumes that extortions and robbery — as well as kidnapping and assault — are equivalent in terms of their economic impact on the victim.

Therefore, unit costs for the indirect costs are sourced from McCollister (2010) and applied to extortion and kidnapping. The direct costs for violent and organized crime are sourced from ENVIPE, a national household survey of victimization and perception of public safety and ENVE, a national survey of business victimization. These surveys collect data on the economic and health-related losses to the victim of violent and organized crime.

COST OF FEAR OF INSECURITY

ENVIPE data are used to estimate the perception of insecurity at the state level in Mexico. IEP uses the proportion of respondents who felt insecure, multiplied by the state's population to arrive at the number of people who reported a fear of insecurity. Victimization survey estimates are conducted yearly and are available from 2011 to 2023. Therefore, IEP estimates the fear of insecurity for the years for which data is not available. The unit cost of fear is taken from Dolan and Peasgood (2006), from which the adjusted unit cost is derived.

PROTECTION COSTS

Protection costs represent spending by households and businesses on measures that reduces victimization from violent and organized crime. Both households and businesses take measures such as hiring private security, purchasing firearms or insurance, installing alarms, locks and changing place of residence or business to protect themselves in the face of high levels of crime and violence. This category replaces private security expenditure and the cost of firearms.

Data for protection costs are sourced from INEGI, both for households and businesses. INEGI provides state level summaries of protection costs developed from the ENVIPE (household survey) and ENVE (business survey).

CALCULATING THE INDIRECT COST OF INCARCERATION

The direct cost of incarceration is included in the government expenditure on domestic security and the justice system. Therefore, IEP only includes the indirect cost of incarceration, which is the lost income due to imprisonment. This is calculated using the Mexican minimum wage and the number of inmates that would have been in full-time employment. Data on the minimum wage for Mexico are sourced from the Department of Labor and Social Welfare (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social*, STPS). For 2023, the minimum wage of 207.44 pesos is used. This is calculated for a yearly wage of 54,764 pesos. Literature suggests that 60 percent of people who were sentenced to prison had full-time employment prior to being in prison and 20 percent of them have some employment inside prison. Based on this, IEP considers that 60 percent of the inmates would have been in full-time employment. The minimum wage lost is calculated for 60 percent of the prison population in Mexico.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE CONTAINMENT

To estimate the total economic impact of violence, IEP uses a peace multiplier to estimate the additional economic activity that would have resulted if violence was avoided. The conceptual underpinning of the multiplier is the opportunity cost of the resources lost by the victim, perpetrator, and the law enforcement agencies due to the crime. Therefore, the peace multiplier represents the flow-on effects of redirected expenditure from violence containment to more economically enabling activities, such as business investment or education.

Positive Peace Methodology

Positive Peace is defined as the *attitudes, institutions* and *structures* that create and sustain peaceful societies. IEP has measured Positive Peace at both the state and national levels in Mexico. The subnational Mexico Positive Peace Index (MPPI) is based on the methodology for the global PPI, described in full in the 2024 Positive Peace Report, available at www.visionofhumanity.org.

MEXICO POSITIVE PEACE INDEX

The methodology for measuring Positive Peace at the state level is the same as that for the global index, but the indicators in the sub-national MPPI differ slightly for two reasons:

- Sub-national data on Positive Peace is limited
- Considerations specific to the Mexican context require some changes in indicators.

The sub-national MPPI was derived from a different set of indicators using information sourced from reputable Mexican and international sources (Table 5.3). Due to the frequency of data releases for some sources, the sub-national index is updated every two years.

Correlations between sub-national MPPI indicators and negative peace are relatively low. For this reason, all indicators were weighted equally in building the Pillars and the overall score.

Correlations are low presumably because most policies influencing socio-economic outcomes are set up at the national rather than state level. Thus sub-national data may be more prone to statistical noise. That is, variations in the measurement statistic that reflect mostly methodological issues and data-gathering limitations rather than actual differences in the underlying social phenomenon being measured.

Further, in some countries – and this appears to be the case in Mexico – the states or regions with the highest standards of living are sometimes those with greater urbanization and interpersonal violence. In addition, Mexican states with higher levels of socio-economic resilience are typically those where criminal organizations are more active since they have more suitable infrastructure of roads and ports through which criminal organizations may transport illegal substances.

CALCULATING STATE SCORES

The process for calculating state Positive Peace scores is similar to that described for calculating the MPI, but all indicators in the MPPI are evenly weighted. Thus, the indicators are normalized and banded, and then the arithmetic mean of indicator score is calculated as the score for each Pillar. The arithmetic mean of the Pillar scores is used for each state's overall score.

TABLE 5.3

Indicators in the sub-national Mexico Positive Peace Index, 2024

PILLAR	INDICATOR NAME	SOURCE*	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT (TO THE MPI)
Acceptance of the Rights of Others	Civil Liberties	IDD-Mex	0.06
	Gender Inequality	UNDP HDI-S	-0.40
	Denial of Rights	ENADIS	-0.16
Equitable Distribution of Resources	Access to Nutritious and Quality Food	CONEVAL	-0.25
	Extreme Poverty	CONEVAL	-0.31
	Inequality	IDD-Mex	-0.03
Free Flow of Information	Attacks on Journalists	Article 19	-0.16
	Internet Access	INEGI ENDUTIH	-0.42
	Proportion of Public Institutions That Have a Website	INEGI CNGSPSPE	-0.07

Good Relations with Neighbors	Confidence In Neighbors	ENVIPE	0.01
	Organized Neighbors to Address Issue of Theft	ENVIPE	0.25
	Prevalence of Discrimination	INEGI	-0.20
High Levels of Human Capital	Access To Health Services	CONEVAL	-0.25
	Illiteracy Rate	INEGI	-0.24
	Public Expenditure on Education	IDD-Mex	0.28
Low Levels of Corruption	Judicial Corruption	ENVIPE	-0.14
	Perception of State Government Corruption	ENCIG	0.52
	State Government Corruption	ENCIG	0.48
Sound Business Environment	Income per capita (2022 pesos)	CONEVAL	-0.34
	Unemployment Rate	INEGI	-0.04
	State Competitiveness	ICE	0.03
Well-Functioning Government	Trust in state government	ENCIG	0.47
	Political Commitment	IDD-Mex	0.17
	Homicide Impunity	Impunidad Cero	0.46

Sources: *Índice de Desarrollo Democrático de México (IDD-Mex), Sub-national Human Development Index (HDI-S), Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL), Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI), Encuesta Nacional sobre Disponibilidad y Uso de Tecnologías de la Información en los Hogares (ENDUTIH), Censo Nacional de Gobierno, Seguridad Pública y Sistema Penitenciario Estatales (CNGSPSPE), Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción sobre Seguridad Pública (ENVIPE), Censo Nacional de Gobierno (CNG), Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública (SESNSP).

APPENDICES

RESULTS TABLES

APPENDIX A

MPI RESULTS

TABLE A.1

Indicator scores, 2023

A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.

STATE	OVERALL SCORE	HOMICIDE	VIOLENT CRIME	ORGANIZED CRIME	FIREARMS CRIME	FEAR OF VIOLENCE
AGUASCALIENTES	2.329	1.392	3.112	2.831	1.779	3.194
BAJA CALIFORNIA	4.422	4.827	4.206	4.507	4.088	4.026
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	2.609	1.203	3.629	4.645	1.131	2.474
CAMPECHE	2.381	1.659	3.098	2.245	2.097	3.721
CHIAPAS	1.738	1.605	1.542	1.294	1.451	4.007
CHIHUAHUA	3.570	4.241	3.107	2.339	4.091	4.451
COAHUILA	2.074	1.241	2.746	2.776	1.198	2.950
COLIMA	4.742	5	4.019	5	5	4.574
DURANGO	1.961	1.315	2.722	1.976	1.277	3.284
GUANAJUATO	4.055	3.928	3.216	4.106	5	4.662
GUERRERO	3.271	3.754	2.378	2.508	3.945	4.388
HIDALGO	2.336	1.518	3.045	2.533	1.718	3.783
JALISCO	2.729	2.375	3.121	2.123	2.591	4.478
MEXICO CITY	2.726	1.617	4.456	2.115	2.135	4.539
MEXICO STATE	3.446	1.893	4.846	3.991	2.785	4.888
MICHOACÁN	3.000	3.149	2.183	2.343	3.762	4.568
MORELOS	4.123	5	4.149	2.635	4.040	4.842
NAYARIT	2.080	1.592	2.674	2.066	1.597	3.043
NUEVO LEÓN	3.621	2.442	4.031	4.741	3.513	3.961
OAXACA	2.578	2.434	2.421	2.062	2.704	4.288
PUEBLA	2.375	1.883	3.082	1.596	2.096	4.460
QUERÉTARO	2.634	1.510	3.847	3.101	1.947	3.408
QUINTANA ROO	3.678	3.404	4.986	2.942	2.921	4.452
SAN LUIS POTOSÍ	2.868	2.053	3.701	2.866	2.306	4.382
SINALOA	2.794	2.038	3.427	3.254	2.107	3.760
SONORA	3.254	3.687	2.922	2.704	2.961	4.365
TABASCO	2.278	1.609	2.940	1.800	1.915	4.453
TAMAULIPAS	2.328	1.787	2.988	2.069	1.549	4.309
TLAXCALA	1.609	1.535	1.325	1.238	1.305	3.755
VERACRUZ	2.370	1.693	2.588	2.289	2.058	4.595
YUCATÁN	1.314	1.107	1.096	1.395	1.041	2.670
ZACATECAS	3.791	4.470	3.483	2.368	4.144	5
NATIONAL	**2.917**	**2.387**	**3.336**	**2.768**	**2.678**	**4.297**

Source: IEP

TABLE A.2

Overall scores, 2015–2023

A lower score indicates a higher level of peacefulness.

STATE	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
AGUASCALIENTES	1.907	1.806	2.149	2.346	2.394	2.291	2.142	2.237	2.329
BAJA CALIFORNIA	3.317	3.330	4.248	4.465	4.577	4.453	4.425	4.441	4.422
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	2.838	3.423	4.503	3.301	2.897	2.743	2.700	2.730	2.609
CAMPECHE	1.653	1.634	1.628	1.661	2.024	1.665	1.819	2.327	2.381
CHIAPAS	1.966	1.925	1.969	2.097	1.992	1.823	1.823	1.750	1.738
CHIHUAHUA	2.869	3.083	3.626	3.760	4.038	3.998	3.896	3.431	3.570
COAHUILA	2.601	2.039	2.069	2.231	2.274	2.169	2.157	2.140	2.074
COLIMA	2.372	3.763	4.019	4.213	4.446	4.425	4.285	4.786	4.742
DURANGO	2.428	2.356	2.418	2.347	2.394	2.252	2.283	2.152	1.961
GUANAJUATO	2.407	2.453	2.809	3.643	3.800	3.976	4.012	4.026	4.055
GUERRERO	3.692	4.020	3.998	4.060	3.786	3.318	3.179	3.219	3.271
HIDALGO	1.718	1.796	2.007	2.177	2.380	2.222	2.159	2.258	2.336
JALISCO	2.527	2.580	2.814	3.139	3.144	3.011	2.904	2.787	2.729
MEXICO CITY	2.692	2.730	2.951	3.363	3.414	2.883	2.864	2.724	2.726
MEXICO STATE	3.123	2.837	3.050	3.154	3.336	3.381	3.420	3.551	3.446
MICHOACÁN	2.448	2.656	2.852	3.026	3.241	3.341	3.459	3.303	3.000
MORELOS	3.095	3.178	3.053	3.165	3.622	3.405	3.661	3.724	4.123
NAYARIT	1.789	1.492	2.184	2.480	1.931	1.821	1.877	1.975	2.080
NUEVO LEÓN	2.613	2.846	2.892	2.901	2.993	2.888	3.125	3.536	3.621
OAXACA	1.653	2.339	2.482	2.818	2.747	2.569	2.491	2.575	2.578
PUEBLA	2.166	2.008	2.231	2.488	2.659	2.364	2.324	2.353	2.375
QUERÉTARO	1.862	1.965	2.125	2.375	2.695	2.665	2.641	2.673	2.634
QUINTANA ROO	2.547	2.139	2.799	3.742	4.215	3.553	3.480	3.482	3.678
SAN LUIS POTOSÍ	2.050	2.288	2.609	2.706	2.884	3.193	3.079	2.827	2.868
SINALOA	3.399	3.185	3.556	3.162	2.892	2.771	2.646	2.519	2.794
SONORA	2.762	2.968	2.724	2.554	3.134	3.468	3.886	3.498	3.254
TABASCO	2.686	2.738	3.046	3.533	3.445	2.878	2.632	2.448	2.278
TAMAULIPAS	3.215	3.016	3.288	3.141	2.727	2.511	2.431	2.293	2.328
TLAXCALA	1.583	1.577	1.698	1.770	1.775	1.711	1.623	1.650	1.609
VERACRUZ	1.806	2.117	2.608	2.512	2.752	2.530	2.451	2.380	2.370
YUCATÁN	1.552	1.529	1.423	1.343	1.351	1.260	1.262	1.284	1.314
ZACATECAS	2.591	2.943	3.560	3.760	3.797	4.473	4.599	4.627	3.791
National	**2.550**	**2.570**	**2.837**	**3.025**	**3.105**	**2.987**	**2.974**	**2.959**	**2.917**

Source: IEP

APPENDIX B

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

TABLE B.1

The economic impact of violence, 2023, constant 2023 pesos

STATE	Economic Impact of Violence (Billions)	Per Capita Economic Impact of Violence	Economic Cost of Violence % GDP
AGUASCALIENTES	40.6	27,239	9.3%
BAJA CALIFORNIA	263.1	69,271	23.2%
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	31.6	37,066	12.7%
CAMPECHE	36.4	34,660	5.7%
CHIAPAS	116.4	19,487	24.3%
CHIHUAHUA	223.6	57,291	20.0%
COAHUILA	62.9	18,792	4.7%
COLIMA	92.5	112,660	51.3%
DURANGO	43.7	22,804	10.3%
GUANAJUATO	346.4	54,294	24.9%
GUERRERO	168.3	45,607	45.2%
HIDALGO	88.6	27,795	15.8%
JALISCO	312.0	36,091	13.6%
MEXICO CITY	325.9	36,345	6.4%
MEXICO STATE	620.9	34,620	22.9%
MICHOACÁN	211.0	42,893	26.1%
MORELOS	163.2	77,500	53.0%
NAYARIT	45.9	34,214	22.3%
NUEVO LEÓN	336.0	57,596	13.8%
OAXACA	133.4	31,713	26.1%
PUEBLA	191.0	28,171	17.6%
QUERÉTARO	89.2	37,208	11.4%
QUINTANA ROO	115.3	62,823	26.3%
SAN LUIS POTOSÍ	95.9	32,794	13.6%
SINALOA	94.8	29,343	14.4%
SONORA	161.8	50,863	16.2%
TABASCO	66.3	24,975	7.7%
TAMAULIPAS	91.8	24,572	9.4%
TLAXCALA	28.2	19,751	12.6%
VERACRUZ	195.7	22,548	14.6%
YUCATÁN	28.9	12,407	4.4%
ZACATECAS	118.2	69,523	44.6%
NATIONAL	**4,939**	**37,430**	**19.5%**

Source: IEP

TABLE B.2

The economic impact of violence, 2015–2023, constant 2023 pesos, billions

State	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
AGUASCALIENTES	34.7	33.6	37.1	42.2	46.8	50.9	41.6	40.7	40.6
BAJA CALIFORNIA	186.6	195.7	292.5	351.4	324.3	310.8	303.7	278.0	263.1
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	39.0	47.8	91.9	40.9	38.4	32.3	33.4	33.7	31.6
CAMPECHE	23.2	25.8	24.1	25.8	27.6	26.6	28.8	36.2	36.4
CHIHUAHUA	162.7	188.6	242.6	268.3	281.8	277.6	255.0	215.9	223.6
CHIAPAS	137.9	131.1	138.6	150.6	139.9	120.5	126.4	112.7	116.4
COAHUILA	89.0	81.1	88.3	89.8	78.3	70.3	64.7	59.9	62.9
COLIMA	30.4	67.1	90.8	82.6	87.3	76.8	65.7	88.6	92.5
MEXICO CITY	350.0	331.2	379.0	455.5	561.3	488.7	346.9	313.1	325.9
DURANGO	60.3	60.2	62.2	55.3	51.0	49.1	52.1	47.5	43.7
GUERRERO	234.9	249.8	277.1	268.3	219.1	160.9	154.1	147.7	168.3
GUANAJUATO	195.9	203.7	236.7	394.9	426.4	487.3	376.6	345.7	346.4
HIDALGO	64.4	69.1	85.1	90.7	99.7	89.8	85.6	93.2	88.6
JALISCO	266.4	289.3	321.5	386.0	402.9	388.6	341.4	323.0	312.0
MEXICO STATE	733.7	662.1	719.1	770.5	749.7	701.2	651.4	658.2	620.9
MICHOACÁN	173.1	199.3	218.9	236.1	269.9	282.2	316.7	252.6	211.0
MORELOS	106.8	118.3	116.1	135.0	145.3	131.4	143.0	142.5	163.2
NAYARIT	30.3	22.3	48.2	53.4	41.2	40.6	41.2	43.5	45.9
NUEVO LEÓN	191.8	210.9	215.5	258.9	250.2	246.2	262.7	298.3	336.0
OAXACA	66.4	148.0	153.8	178.6	171.7	142.9	128.5	131.9	133.4
PUEBLA	167.0	179.2	211.5	241.3	284.9	242.3	188.0	187.8	191.0
QUERÉTARO	65.5	65.4	73.6	83.9	120.9	124.2	90.0	82.4	89.2
QUINTANA ROO	66.6	51.7	71.8	111.5	119.4	103.6	116.3	111.7	115.3
SINALOA	144.2	149.7	187.4	145.8	129.6	115.0	98.6	91.7	94.8
SAN LUIS POTOSÍ	66.8	77.4	100.5	115.1	99.5	112.0	113.2	101.0	95.9
SONORA	117.8	130.0	132.3	136.6	175.2	186.7	209.5	185.9	161.8
TABASCO	84.4	87.6	103.6	119.6	123.5	103.6	88.8	77.6	66.3
TAMAULIPAS	155.8	153.8	165.9	163.2	137.0	116.3	108.2	90.7	91.8
TLAXCALA	28.1	28.2	32.4	34.1	37.4	33.0	31.3	30.2	28.2
VERACRUZ	165.9	229.6	308.3	284.3	286.7	249.4	223.5	195.6	195.7
YUCATÁN	46.1	48.5	40.4	44.5	31.8	29.3	29.1	28.5	28.9
ZACATECAS	63.2	82.4	95.7	98.4	102.9	127.0	163.0	143.1	118.2
National	**4,349**	**4,618**	**5,363**	**5,913**	**6,062**	**5,717**	**5,279**	**4,989**	**4,939**

Source: IEP

ENDNOTES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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SECTION 3: ECONOMIC VALUE OF PEACE IN MEXICO

1 The average conversion rate used is 20.12 Mexican pesos for one US dollar.

2 The average annual wage income for 2022 in constant 2022 pesos was 199,108 pesos. (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Average annual wages, 2022. https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=AV_AN_WAGE).

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4 Public Security Contribution Fund / Fondo de Aportaciones para la Seguridad Pública (FASP).

5 Calculated using the Global Peace Index (GPI) economic impact of violence and includes the indicators military expenditure, internal security expenditure and private security expenditure.

6 Calculated using the 2023 GPI economic impact of violence homicide indicator.

7 In 2023, 59 billion pesos were spent on science, innovation and technology.

8 Protection costs are the latest costs reported by ENVE. The 2023 value comes from the 2022 ENVE survey and is adjusted for inflation.

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SECTION 4: POSITIVE PEACE

1 This data is based on 2024 Positive Peace Index.

2 Mexico is included in the Central America and the Caribbean region in the global Positive Peace Index based on the regional grouping of the underlying index data sources and because, in terms of peace and security, Mexico has more in common with its Central American neighbors than with the US and Canada, making Central America a more useful analytical category.

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SECTION 5: METHODOLOGY

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NOTES

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