Great Expectations and Grim Realities in AMLO’s Mexico

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Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, commonly known as AMLO, assumed office in December 2018 with a robust electoral mandate having trounced traditional parties and secured a clear majority in the Mexican Congress. With approval ratings at about 80 percent, López Obrador seems so far to be satisfying his supporters’ expectations. To the delight of those disgusted with elite privileges, AMLO flies commercial (in coach), plans to sell the presidential plane, and slashed the salaries of top officials (including his own), putting their government vehicles up for auction. He has acted quickly to redistribute wealth by increasing pensions for the elderly, offering scholarships or apprenticeships to millions of young people, and providing additional subsidies to marginalized small farmers.

López Obrador has also solidified labor union support by reversing some of his predecessor’s most controversial “neo-liberal” measures. He suspended an education reform enacted to improve the country’s underperforming public schools. And he has started to undo an energy overhaul designed to modernize the state-dominated oil industry, promising workers that he will rescue the heavily indebted government company, Petróleos Mexicanos or Pemex, by investing billions in a new refinery to make the country self-sufficient in gasoline.

But the new president still faces his toughest challenge: reducing violence in a country plagued by some of the world’s most vicious criminal gangs. About 230,000 people were murdered between 2008 and 2017, more than double the number killed in the previous decade. This tsunami of violence continues to crest: during the first quarter of 2019 homicides have risen nearly 10 percent from the same period in 2018.

On security, Mexico’s radical new president has thus far offered more continuity than change. He favors the same top-down, militarized approach that failed to curb violence over the past decade. The government’s marquee security reform is the creation of a national guard with at least 50,000 members recruited largely from the armed forces. Under fire from human rights defenders, López Obrador agreed
to place the force under the Secretariat of Security and Civilian Protection, though its commander will be General Luis Rodríguez Bucio, an active duty officer who is in the process of retiring.\textsuperscript{8}

López Obrador has taken steps to address past atrocities (appointing a special prosecutor to investigate the 2014 killing of 43 students) and to prevent future abuses (signing an agreement with the UN to oversee the guard’s human rights training).\textsuperscript{9} But critics worry that a force led by and recruited from the military will simply reproduce past patterns of repression, gang fragmentation, and dispersion, followed by violent escalation.

An iron-fist approach to crime, moreover, fails to address Mexico’s fundamental problem: rampant impunity. Government victimization surveys suggest that authorities fail to investigate more than 90 percent of the crimes committed, often because citizens don’t bother to report crimes to state or municipal police regarded as incompetent, impotent, or corrupt.\textsuperscript{10} More than a decade of federal military intervention has undermined, not strengthened, the country’s approximately 345,000 state and local police.\textsuperscript{11} Poorly trained, under-resourced, and often under threat themselves, municipal and state authorities have little incentive to combat Mexico’s increasingly diverse and localized criminal gangs.

López Obrador must grapple with the reality that federal power alone is unlikely to bring violence under control. There is no populist playbook for building effective police and an efficient, fair judicial system. The criminal groups operating in Mexico have proven remarkably resilient, surviving the killing or arrest of cartel leaders by morphing into smaller factions that not only produce and transport illegal drugs for sale in the US market but also steal gasoline, derail and rob rail cars, run illegal mining and logging operations, and hold entire communities hostage to extortion and kidnapping rings.

The United States has a huge stake in Mexico’s success: the criminal organizations responsible for rising violence in Mexico have also fueled a U.S. drug epidemic resulting in 72,000 fatal overdoses during 2017 alone. U.S. agencies have worked closely with Mexican police and military forces to capture drug kingpins; Congress has also appropriated nearly $3 billion in equipment, training, and capacity building assistance.\textsuperscript{12} This is only a fraction of the approximately $14 billion Mexico spends each year. But by accepting shared responsibility for the illegal drug trade—long a Mexican demand—the United States has secured cooperation on security issues that would have been unthinkable less than a generation ago.

This article examines the evolution of security policy under Presidents Felipe Calderón, 2006-2012, and Enrique Peña Nieto, 2012-2018. López Obrador could learn much from his predecessors’ failures. Calderón began his term with a frontal attack on drug cartels, though he came to understand that Mexico could not control organized crime without social programs and institutional reforms. Peña Nieto initially promised demilitarization and violence prevention, but soon abandoned these efforts, reverting again to military intervention. Neither president strengthened the country’s embattled state and local police who are responsible for enforcing the law after federal troops depart.

\textit{Calderón’s Crusade}

Calderón took the Mexican public by surprise when he decided to confront the cartels with military force at the start of his term, proclaiming a “national crusade” against crime.\textsuperscript{13} As a candidate, he had not placed security issues at the forefront of his campaign, much less argued for a military offensive against organized crime. In his memoir, Calderón would reject the phrase “war on drugs,” which he dismissed as a slogan coined in the United States, saying his intention was to end the “cynical impunity” enjoyed by powerful criminals who had infiltrated Mexican institutions.\textsuperscript{14} But those institutions were ill-equipped to handle the fallout as federal troops fought organized crime on multiple fronts. Instead of taking preventive measures, Calderón launched his offensive without considering “how the criminals would respond.”\textsuperscript{15}
He was not the first president to deploy troops in counter-narcotics operations. The army had been eradicating marijuana and poppy crops for decades. His predecessor, Vicente Fox, sent troops to the northern border states under his “Secure Mexico” program beginning in 2005, when the military removed hundreds of police in Nuevo Laredo for conspiring with drug traffickers. But Calderón’s efforts were on a much larger scale. By the end of 2007, the federal government had launched joint military/police operations in 9 of the country’s 32 states; at the height of the offensive in 2011 it was deploying about 50,000 soldiers. Calderón also strengthened the federal police, dramatically increasing the force from 6,000 agents in 2006 to 36,000 by 2012.

The mission quickly racked up impressive results, including the seizure of more than $200 million in cash crammed into closets, cabinets, and suitcases at an upscale home in Mexico City and the confiscation and destruction of some 23 tons of cocaine (with an estimated street value of about $2.7 billion) found in a container ship at the port of Manzanillo. Calderón also went after so-called “high-value targets” or kingpins, capturing or killing dozens of major traffickers. Powerful organizations, such as the Beltran-Leyva, Tijuana, Juárez, and Gulf cartels, lost top leaders. The hyper-violent Zetas (formed by ex-Gulf hitmen with military experience) were especially hard hit by both the government and former allies.

It also quickly secured backing from the United States. In March 2007, Calderón and U.S. president George Bush met in the city of Merida, Yucatán, to begin a “new and intensified level of bilateral cooperation” against drug trafficking. From 2008 to 2010, Congress appropriated about $1.5 billion for the initiative, including $421 million in foreign military funding, which allowed Mexico to purchase aircraft and helicopters. The Obama administration would provide an additional $425 million from 2011-2012.

As much or more important than U.S. funding, which represented only a small fraction of the $14 billion the Mexican government itself spent each year on security toward the end of Calderón’s term, was U.S. cooperation. The Drug Enforcement Administration, along with other U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies, worked with vetted Mexican military or federal police units to capture or kill “high-value targets.” Fusion centers allowed U.S. and Mexican agencies to exchange intelligence. Cooperation was especially close with the Mexican navy—a nimbler, less insular institution than the army—which marine units often took the lead in high-profile counter-narcotics operations.

The United States also helped ensure that captured kingpins would face trial, relieving Mexico’s overburdened justice system. Extraditions to the United States increased dramatically under Calderón, who sent nearly 600 suspects to face trial in the United States, twice as many as the total number extradited by the two previous presidents combined.

Less visible, though potentially more important, were efforts to fortify Mexican institutions. The Calderón government passed a series of constitutional reforms in 2008 to transform its judicial system over a period of eight years from a closed-door process based on written dossiers to an adversarial model where defendants can challenge the evidence against them in open court. Mexico has both a federal court system and 32 state (including the federal district) systems, all of which needed to train judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys in oral trial procedures for more serious crimes and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for lesser offenses.

The Calderón government also tried to address deficiencies in law enforcement. It raised selection standards, enacted vetting, and improved training for the federal police while also expanding subsidies for state and municipal police to do the same. It created a national database designed to allow police at all levels to share information. However, it failed to pass its key initiative: a constitutional reform establishing “unified commands” that would have placed municipal forces under the control of state governors.
Although homicides initially fell during 2007, they rose sharply in 2008 peaking at more than 27,000 in 2011, almost three times their level just four years before. The rise was especially steep in states along the border and the Pacific coast where Calderón had sent federal forces to confront the cartels. The government’s assault had left drug trafficking groups wounded, but still dangerous. Fragmented criminal organizations engaged in bloody battles for succession or territory, in some cases outsourcing enforcement to street gangs. Federal forces struggled to replace local law enforcement in multiple hot spots, patrolling urban and rural areas, manning checkpoints, sometimes even directing traffic. Aggressive tactics led to abuse. Complaints against both the federal police and the military for human rights violations quintupled between 2007-12.

**Juárez**

Ciudad Juárez on the U.S. border became a virtual war zone. As federal forces took control of law enforcement, homicides accelerated from less than 200 in 2007 to 3,000 in 2010—a rate of more than 200 per 100,000 people, or about 12 percent of the country’s total homicides. Thousands fled across the border into Texas. Outrage over mounting casualties erupted into protests, especially in January 2010 after gunmen, apparently looking for rival gang members, burst into a birthday party in the working-class neighborhood of Villas de Salvácar, killing 15 people, mostly teenagers.

The massacre of high-school students in a city occupied by federal forces made national and international headlines. The Calderón government, which was already preparing to change tack, decided to make the northern border city the test case for a new approach. “Military action is not enough,” Calderón told the citizens of Juárez when he announced a major initiative to address violence in February 2010. His government invested more than $380 million in the city under a program dubbed “Todos Somos Juárez”
(We are all Juárez), which financed social programs designed to make communities, especially those with large numbers of unemployed or underemployed youth, more resistant to violent crime. The idea was to create a multi-sectoral model to address risk-factors while strengthening institutions of justice and law enforcement. The crisis also spurred institutional reforms at the Chihuahua state level. State prosecutors were purged, subjected to vetting, and offered better training and work conditions.29

Although homicides remained historically high, violence was ebbing when Calderón left office in 2013. It subsided especially rapidly in Juárez, which the government cited as vindication of its approach. But the Calderón government remained identified with the militarized counter-narcotics operations blamed for tens of thousands of deaths. The incoming president would publicly repudiate his predecessor’s actions even as he adapted or continued many of the same policies.

**Peña Nieto’s Pact**

When the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) returned to power in December 2012, some feared it meant restoration of the “democratic authoritarianism”—periodic elections within a system of de-facto single-party rule—that had characterized PRI governments during most of the 20th century.30 Enrique Peña Nieto assumed office with great political strength. The PRI controlled not only the presidency but also 21 of the 32 state governments in the country. Although his party failed to win a majority in either house of Congress, the president had already secured support from the country’s three major parties for an ambitious reform program dubbed the “Pact for Mexico” before he took office.

By the end of 2013, the Peña Nieto government had passed finance, telecommunications, and education reforms plus a controversial energy bill that permitted foreign investment in the oil and gas sector for the first time since Mexico expropriated foreign oil companies in 1938.31 The youthful president’s free-market agenda won him high international praise, including a cover photo on the international edition of Time with the headline, “Saving Mexico: How Enrique Peña Nieto’s Sweeping Reforms Have Changed the Narrative in his Narco-Stained Nation.”32

Peña Nieto also moved quickly to put his stamp on security policy by dissolving the Secretariat of Public Security, created in 2000 under President Vicente Fox, and moving federal police and civilian intelligence back into the interior secretariat. He promised to take the military out of counter-narcotics operations by deploying a new civilian-controlled gendarmería, a paramilitary force recruited largely from former military officers, which would have 40,000 members.33 During his first year in office, Peña Nieto also appeared to put the Merida Initiative on hold by requiring, for example, that all cooperation goes through a “single window” in the interior secretariat, which delayed dispersal of millions in assistance.34

The PRI government embraced violence prevention, citing efforts in Ciudad Juárez as a model. It created the National Program for the Social Prevention of Violence and Delinquency (PRONAPRED) to channel federal subsidies to state governments for disbursement in more than 50 districts identified as violent hot spots in 2013 and to more than 80 two years later. Municipal governments and civil society groups were to use the funding to identify and address risk factors, reclaim public spaces and strengthen local capacity.35

Peña Nieto’s strategy soon fell apart. His government never managed to secure political support for the idea of a gendarmería, which fell prey to bureaucratic infighting over responsibilities and budgets. When the new force finally debuted in August 2014, it was only 5,000 strong. Peña Nieto’s proposed a constitutional reform mandating unified police commands at the state level stalled in Congress. Major cities objected to putting their forces under state control, and critics questioned whether state police were any more
effective or honest than municipal forces. The idea limped along as some states negotiated unified commands municipality by municipality with mixed results.36

His national violence prevention plan also succumbed to confusion and controversy. The program never developed clear criteria for selecting projects or rigorous procedures for evaluating them. Civil society groups complained that it provided only short-term funding, which arrived months behind schedule, making planning impossible, and that municipal governments selected projects based on political, not community, impact. After 2015, the federal government slashed and then eliminated the subsidies amid a series of budget cuts, though some funding returned in 2018. Peña Nieto never overcame the perception that his signature violence prevention program had degenerated into an exercise in political patronage.37

Peña Nieto’s security policies ended up looking much like his predecessor’s. He continued to arrest high-value targets with the help of U.S. intelligence, capturing or killing 109 of the 122 traffickers that his government considered most dangerous. His government had less success in bringing these alleged kingpins to justice: by mid-2018 Mexican courts had convicted only four of them.38 Like Calderón, Peña Nieto sent the most notorious to the United States for trial, including Joaquín Guzmán, the Sinaloa Cartel chief known as “El Chapo,” who had escaped twice from Mexican prisons.39

Like Calderón, Peña Nieto relied heavily on the military for both enforcement and intelligence, though his attempt to institutionalize the military’s police role with the Internal Security Law failed to pass muster with the Supreme Court, which overturned the measure on constitutional grounds in November 2018.40

Meanwhile, his government largely ignored the country’s police forces. A 2017 survey of more than 56,000 police at the federal, state, and municipal levels found agents who were overworked, underpaid, ill-equipped, and widely abused. Nearly 90 percent said they had to buy some of their own equipment, including necessities such as uniforms or bullet-proof vests. One in four worked second jobs to make ends meet. About one in five felt discriminated against for being members of the police force; one in seven had been threatened, verbally or in writing, by civilians, criminals, or their own colleagues and superiors.41

The Peña Nieto presidency faced problems beyond its control, such as weak oil prices that undermined efforts to raise revenues and stimulate investment in the energy sector.42 Anger over corruption and cronyism, especially his wife’s purchase of a $7 million home on favorable terms from a government contractor, also undermined his popularity.43 But the greatest scandal faced during the Peña Nieto government was its bungled response to one of the country’s most horrific atrocities.

Ayotzinapa

On September 26, 2014, local police in the city of Iguala, Guerrero, attacked several busloads of students from the rural teaching college of Ayotzinapa leaving 6 people dead and 43 missing. Instead of immediately ordering a federal investigation, the Peña Nieto government spent eight days dithering with the state government over who should take responsibility. Then it launched a massive federal probe that arrested more than 100 people, including 70 municipal police for allegedly turning the students over to local gang members who then executed them, incinerating their remains. Prosecutors rushed to close the case with the attorney general himself presenting their findings in January 2015 as “the historic truth,” though investigators had been unable to find or identify most of the students’ remains. They also failed to pursue allegations that a local army battalion, which had reportedly monitored the students’ movements, may have been complicit in the disappearances.44
To quell the outcry over what some dismissed as a cover-up, the government invited international experts to review its investigation. That too backfired when the commission issued a scathing 500-page report detailing inconsistencies and irregularities, including the possible torture of suspects. Meanwhile, the search for the missing students spurred the relatives of other missing persons to demand justice. Around the city of Iguala, relatives, who called their loved ones “the other disappeared,” discovered dozens of unmarked graves, often acting on anonymous tips. Human and victims’ rights groups also intensified efforts to find such clandestine cemeteries in other states. According to a government registry, unsolved missing person cases totaled about 37,000 nationwide.

Peña Nieto invoked the Ayotzinapa tragedy when he launched a 10-point security strategy in November 2014. It repackaged some previous proposals, such as Calderón’s state-led unified police commands and added a reform that would establish procedures for the federal government to take over corrupt municipal governments. He even echoed his predecessor’s slogan about the still-popular initiative in Ciudad Juárez, declaring “We are all Ayotzinapa” as he proposed additional social and economic investment in the region. The constitutional amendments affecting local governance, which would have transferred considerable authority away from municipalities, died in congress, though the government did push through legislation to strengthen laws on torture and enforced disappearance. A year later Peña Nieto, whose approval ratings had fallen sharply, appeared to have abandoned much of his November strategy.

With local police reform impossible, the federal government’s main tool remained the deployment of military force. In the wake of the Ayotzinapa disappearances, the government sent troops to take over law enforcement in a dozen Guerrero municipalities. Nonetheless, homicides continued to rise in the state, including in the municipalities where federal police or military troops provided public security. Locals complained that while federal forces set up checkpoints and patrolled highways in heavily armed convoys, they did little to protect ordinary people from violence or predatory crimes, such as extortion. Criminal gangs could simply retreat to outlying areas, temporarily lowering their profile until federal forces withdrew.

The Ayotzinapa disappearances were not the only atrocities during Peña Nieto’s government, nor were local police the only perpetrators. In July 2014, the army allegedly executed 15 people in Tlatlaya, Mexico state, following a shoot-out with suspected kidnappers; in January 2015, federal police shot at least 8 people while breaking up a demonstration in Apatzingán, Michoacán; in May 2015 federal police killed 42 alleged gang members in Tanhuato, Michoacán.

Ayotzinapa struck an especially deep chord, however, because it involved young students with no apparent link to organized crime. The Escuela Normal Rural Raúl Isidro Burgos in Ayotzinapa, moreover, has a long history of leftist activism, giving its supporters the determination and means to keep the issue alive. Peña Nieto’s government would never recover from its mishandling of the tragedy, especially as homicides, which had declined during the first two years of his term, started trending upward.

**Diffusion and Diversification**

On July 2, while many Mexicans were celebrating López Obrador’s historic victory, gunmen intercepted a red pickup truck in Tecalitlán, Jalisco, killing Víctor Díaz, the municipality’s 28-year-old mayor, in a barrage of AK–47 fire. The assassination was far from unique; criminals murdered some 152 politicians and activists during the 2018 campaign plus more than 350 non-elected officials. Most of these political cadres (125) were involved in municipal politics; a much smaller number were competing at the state level (26); only one was campaigning for federal office. Many bore the hallmarks of organized crime...
hits: interception by a vehicle filled with heavily armed men who quickly dispatch their victims with automatic weapons fire.

2018: Homicide Rates by Mexican State (per 100,000 people)

Source: Homicide rates were calculated using intentional homicides (homicidos dolosos) from the Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection (Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana) and population projections from the National Population Council (Consejo Nacional de Población).33

Police are also dying in record numbers. In 2017, criminals killed nearly 400 police, mostly municipal officers. 2018 surpassed that record with 421 officers killed.34

Tecalitlán (once best known for its mariachis) had already made national news twice before in 2018. In January, the president and secretary of defense visited the town to inaugurate a new army base, one of three new facilities planned to provide security in the region.35 A month later, three Italian businessmen went missing while visiting the area. Investigators say local police kidnapped them, then turned them over to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel or CJNG, a relatively new group now believed to be one of the country’s most powerful cartels.36

The municipality, which has a population of about 16,000, is in a dangerous neighborhood; it sits within the western Sierra Madre mountain system, which extends along Mexico’s Pacific Coast and produces most of the heroin consumed in the United States. Its mountainsides not only offer an ideal climate for growing opium poppies and marijuana but also provide cover for labs that fabricate synthetic drugs, using chemicals often made in China and then smuggled via cargo ship to Pacific coast ports.37 The five states on the U.S. State Department’s “do not travel” list for April 2019 are located either within this corridor (Sinaloa, Michoacán, Colima, and Guerrero) or along the United States border (Tamaulipas).38

But while violence remains high along these drug production and trafficking routes, it has also spread to central Mexico. In Guanajuato, a major automobile manufacturing state, the number of homicide
investigations more than doubled between 2017 and 2018, rising from 1,423 to 3,290 cases. Guanajuato also lost 64 police officers in 2018, more than any other state.

The uptick of violence in central Mexico seems related to increased competition over two lucrative rackets that have taken off in recent years: fuel theft and train robbery. Fuel thieves or huachicoleros (from a slang term for adulterated gas or diesel fuel) are costing PEMEX, the state-run oil company, more than $1.6 billion a year. They tap pipelines, board ships or oil platforms, and siphon fuel from tanker trucks, sometimes aided by corrupt employees. Train robbers use rocks or vehicles to obstruct tracks or sometimes loosen rail fasteners to cause derailments. Then they break into the freight cars, rapidly loading waiting vehicles with auto parts or appliances or even bulk goods, like grain and cement.

Gangs rely on local support and official complicity or, at least, negligence to carry out such crimes. As criminal organizations fracture and diversify into new rackets, the control of local territory becomes increasingly important. This puts mayors and other local officials in the crossfire. Many local leaders are victims of extortion themselves; they pay local gangs off out of municipal coffers to guarantee their own and their community’s protection.

Basic Lessons

There is no single strategy that can quickly overcome the violence consuming many Mexican communities. López Obrador can no more save Mexico through massive social programs than Peña Nieto could by enacting sweeping economic reforms or Calderón by deploying tens of thousands of federal forces. Mexico’s criminal groups have proven to be as complex as the country itself, with an uncanny ability to mutate and migrate. Change will come community by community, municipality by municipality, and state by state through designing effective violence prevention programs, ensuring genuine transparency, strengthening civilian law enforcement, and building a justice system that is both efficient and fair.

López Obrador, who repeatedly stated during his campaign that “only I can fix corruption,” must modulate his own insurgent instincts. Institution building is a painstaking process that will require collaboration not only across regions and political parties but across Mexico’s vibrant and vociferous civil society groups, from business and professional associations to universities and think tanks to social activists and human rights defenders. To avoid the mistakes that undermined previous governments, the new president should undertake reforms guided by certain goals or principles:

1. **Violence prevention** programs should be based on evidence, not political expediency. This means the next government needs to define a clear methodology for selecting the municipalities or districts eligible for funding and then help local authorities or non-profit groups develop projects designed to produce measurable results.

2. **Transparency** is essential to avoid the clientelism and corruption that has undermined both anti-poverty and anti-violence efforts in the past. The selection, monitoring, and evaluation of all publicly funded social programs should be subject to public scrutiny and outside evaluation by recognized experts from Mexican universities and think tanks.

3. **Demilitarization and police reform** should go together. The next president should work with state governors to establish benchmarks for the military to withdraw gradually from its police duties while empowering specially trained and vetted federal police units to take on criminal organizations. States and municipalities should also obtain the funding necessary to recruit more and better police officers by offering them higher salaries, better training and equipment, and merit-based promotions. Police
cannot purge themselves of corrupt and abusive officers. External oversight through independent auditors or civilian review boards is essential at the federal, state, and municipal level.

4. **Justice reform** should continue. Truth commissions and special prosecutors are necessary but insufficient to address widespread impunity. The new government should find the resources and will to strengthen the capacity of independent prosecutors and the courts, both at the state and federal levels. Although some changes are controversial, especially limits on pre-trial detention, the new system remains Mexico’s best opportunity to create a justice system that is both efficient and fair.

The United States, for its part, should continue to accept its shared responsibility for the rise of transnational drug trafficking organizations. Both governments should work together to stop the northward flow of illegal drugs that kill U.S. consumers and the southward flow of firearms that slaughter Mexican civilians. U.S. policymakers need to stop repeating past mistakes, whose costs in blood and treasure are born largely by the Mexican public, by focusing not only on stopping drug trafficking but also, and most importantly, on preventing violence and strengthening law enforcement.

In the absence of strong police and a capable justice system, capturing high-value targets has fractured criminal groups, igniting more violence, with little impact on the drug trafficking business itself. The United States should instead concentrate on the long-term task of helping Mexico strengthen law enforcement by sharing expertise to create a new generation of professional police, prosecutors, and judges.

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Endnotes


6 This article uses the annual homicide statistics from 1990 through 2017 collected by Mexico’s National Institute of Statistics and Geography. This data can be downloaded at: www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/olap/proyectos/bd/continuas/mortalidad/defuncionesom.asp?sest.


26 Ibid.


28 Calderon, Retos, 62.


35 “Back from the Brink,” Crisis Group, 17.


57 These include the chemical precursors used for methamphetamine and fentanyl, a synthetic opioid often added to heroin, with potentially lethal consequences. See Kristina Davis and Sandra Dibble, “Tentanyal has taken over America’s drug market. Where is it coming from?” *San Diego Union*, June 17, 2018, https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/sd-me-fentanyl-pipeline-20180617-story.html.


60 See “Registro de policías asesinados 2018,” Causa en Común.

