



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

navigation

- Main page
- Contents
- Featured content
- Current events
- Random article

search

Go

Search

interaction

- About Wikipedia
- Community portal
- Recent changes
- Contact Wikipedia
- Donate to Wikipedia
- Help

toolbox

- What links here
- Related changes
- Upload file
- Special pages
- Printable version
- Permanent link
- Cite this page

languages

- Español
- Nederlands
- Norsk (bokmål)

You can **support Wikipedia** by making a tax-deductible donation.

- [article](#)
- [discussion](#)
- [edit this page](#)
- [history](#)

[Log in](#) / [create account](#)

Gulf Cartel

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



This article needs additional citations for verification.

Please help [improve this article](#) by adding [reliable references](#). Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. *(August 2008)*

The **Gulf Cartel** (Spanish: *Cártel del Golfo*) is a **Mexican drug trafficking cartel** based in **Matamoros, Tamaulipas**. Heavy operations also include the cities of **Reynosa** and **Nuevo Laredo**. Its chief rival is the **Sinaloa Cartel**. The Gulf Cartel traffics **cocaine**, **marijuana**, **methamphetamine** and **heroin** across **the border** to major cities in the **United States**. The group is known for its violent methods and intimidation, and works closely with corrupt law officials and business people in **Mexico** as well as in the United States. The sphere of influence for the cartel has been determined to be from the Gulf Coast state of Tamaulipas to **Piedras Negras, Coahuila**.

Aside from earning money from the sales of narcotics, the Cartel also collects taxes aka *piso*, *cuota* from street level dealers, prominent businesses. Anyone passing narcotics or aliens through a *plaza* belonging to the Gulf Cartel is subject to payment of these 'taxes' to the cartel, regardless of whether the contraband is subsequently apprehended by US law enforcement or not. Payment of these taxes assure that the Cartel will not strike violently at those who pay them. The Gulf cartel does not limit itself solely to narcotics trafficking, as they have been known to kidnap local businessmen to collect money.

Contents [hide]
1 History
2 Alignment of Los Zetas and the Beltran-Leyva brothers
3 Alignment with Arellano Félix Organization
4 Structure
5 Recent developments
6 See also
7 References
8 External links

History

The Gulf Cartel was founded by **Juan Nepomuceno Guerra** and its origins date back to the 1970s. Juan Nepomuceno Guerra was a notorious Mexican **bootlegger** who smuggled **whiskey** into the **United States** in the 1930s along the **Gulf of Mexico**. In the 1970s, he became politically active and began smuggling more contraband into the United States. His nephew, **Juan García Abrego**, was born in a ranch called "La Puerta", Matamoros, Tamaulipas. He began slowly taking over day to day operations of what was now being called the Gulf Cartel. García Abrego expanded the business to include the more lucrative cocaine trade throughout the 1980s and 1990s, all with the assistance of the political connections that his uncle had fostered. Juan García Abrego became so powerful that he was placed on the **FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives** in 1995. He had the distinction of being the first **drug trafficker** to ever be placed on that list.

García Abrego was captured in 1996 and immediately returned to the **United States**. According to Janet Reno, the **US Attorney General** at the time, Mexican and US officials agreed on the fact that he was an American citizen, born in La Paloma, Texas (Although a birth record in the Matamoros Registrar's Office also exists) After his arrest, he was sent to the United States, where he is currently serving eleven life terms in a **maximum security** federal prison in Colorado. Juan Nepomucena Guerra died in 2001 as a free man, never admitting to any connection to the drug trade or The Gulf Cartel.

Juan García Abrego's arrest left a void in The Gulf Cartel. Several Gulf Cartel captains jockeyed for position. The first to step to the front was **Salvador "El Chava" Gómez**. His ascent to the top was short lived when a rival captain, **Osiel Cárdenas**, assassinated him in a shootout in 1996. After the coup, Cárdenas became the undisputed leader of the Gulf Cartel.

In 1999, Cardenas learned that a Gulf Cartel informant was being transported through **Matamoros, Tamaulipas**, by the **FBI** and **DEA**. Cardenas and his men surrounded the vehicle on a public street and demanded the **informant** be released to him. The **FBI** and **DEA** agents refused to turn over their **informant** and after a tense **standoff** were released. As for Cárdenas, the damage had been done by taking on the U.S. government. The United States placed enormous pressure on the Mexican government to apprehend Cárdenas. Cárdenas was arrested during a furious gun battle in Matamoros in March 2003, in front of **Televisa** television cameras, perhaps to show the **United States** that **Mexico** was making an effort.

Cárdenas was sent to the **Penal del Altiplano** (formerly known as "La Palma"), the federal high security prison in **Almoloya de Juárez, Estado de México**. It was widely known that Cárdenas still ran the Gulf Cartel from his prison cell in La Palma.

On September 17,2008, **United States Attorney General** Michael Mukasey announced that 175 alleged cartel members were arrested in a crackdown on the cartel in the US and Italy.^{[[2](#)]}

Alignment of Los Zetas and the Beltran-Leyva brothers

[\[edit\]](#)

Sensing a void in the Gulf Cartel after **Osiel Cárdenas'** arrest, the **Sinaloa Cartel**, headed by **Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán**, began to move into Gulf Cartel territory. This prompted Cárdenas to employ a group of former Mexican military gunmen known as **Los Zetas** to keep Guzmán from entering Gulf Cartel territory. Both gangs have been battling each other in northern Mexican cities since then, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people including civilians, police and journalists. The killings were so numerous that President **Vicente Fox** was forced to deploy the **Mexican Army**.

Several of the **Zetas**, former members of an elite anti-drug commando force were employed by the Cartel. Los Zetas' military expertise allowed the group to increase the efficiency and violence of its operations. The Beltran-Leyva brothers, who were formerly aligned with the **Sinaloa Cartel**, are now allies of Los Zetas of the Gulf Cartel.

Alignment with Arellano Félix Organization

[\[edit\]](#)

In 2003, the Gulf Cartel joined in an alliance with the remnants of the **Arellano Félix Organization** (AFO), a MDTO based out of the state of **Baja California**.^[1] This was based primarily on prison negotiations between top leaders such as **Benjamín Arellano Félix** and Osiel Cárdenas. After a personal dispute between leaders, however, Osiel Cárdenas ordered Benjamin Arellano Félix beaten, and all alliances ceased at that point. It is reported that after the fallout, Cárdenas ordered the Zetas to Baja California to wipe out the AFO.^[2]

Structure

[\[edit\]](#)

On **January 20, 2007** Osiel Cárdenas was extradited to the United States by the Mexican Government. Newly elected president **Felipe Calderón** has also come down on the drug cartel's hold on Mexico by recently arresting several major drug kingpins. The Gulf Cartel's leadership has since evolved into one with a decentralized structure, with three major lieutenants sharing control of the Cartel.^[3] These three factions are each headed by:

- Los Zetas**, headed by **Heriberto Lazcano** (a.k.a: *El Lazca* and *Zefa 3*), provide the gunmen for the Gulf Cartel. Lazcano may be the current the leader of the new cartel, which is integrated by Los Zetas, Gulf Cartel, and the **Beltran-Leyva brothers**.^[4]
- Hector Manuel Saucedo Gamboa (a.k.a: *Kari Saucedo*) controled three of the most important cities of the cartel (Matamoros, Reynosa and Nuevo Laredo Tamaulipas) and replaced the brother of Osiel Cardenas *Tony Tormenta*, former capo of the Cartel. Saucedo was killed in a gun battle with the federal police on February 17, 2009 in Reynosa, Tamaulipas.^[5]
- Jorge Eduardo Costilla Sánchez** (a.k.a: *El Coss*) is the top Lieutenant and partner of Osiel Cárdenas; he maintains close contacts with Colombian narcotics suppliers.

The decentralized structure of the cartel differentiates it from other Cartels, in that power is shared equally among a set of gatekeepers (*plaza heads*, each of whom is responsible for running different trafficking routes ^[6]). Each gatekeeper is also responsible for security and the collection of taxes for each plaza they are responsible for.

Recent developments

[\[edit\]](#)

On September 15, 2008, it was announced that the leaders of each faction were wanted and have been indicted in the U.S. District Court.^[7]

On September 16, 2008 at 00:01 a terrorist attack occurred in the city of **Morelia, Michoacán** - the home state of the current president of Mexico - during the Mexican Independence Day celebrations. Evidence suggests it was perpetrated by the Gulf Cartel.^{[[citation needed](#)]}

See also

[\[edit\]](#)

- Mérida Initiative
- Vicente Carrillo Fuentes
- Tijuana Cartel
- Juárez Cartel
- Los Zetas
- Joaquín Guzmán
- War on Drugs
- Los Negros
- Narcotraficking in Colombia
- Operation Solare

<div> • v • d • e </div>	Mexican Drug War (2006-present)	<div>[hide]</div>
Participants	Juárez Cartel • Sinaloa Cartel • Gulf Cartel • Tijuana Cartel • Los Negros • Los Zetas • La Familia • Mexican Army • Mexican Air Force • Mexican Navy • Federal Investigations Agency • Federal Police	
People	Édgar Eusebio Milán Gómez • Osiel Cardenas • Ramón Arellano Félix • Joaquín Guzmán • Vicente Carrillo Fuentes • Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo • Ismael Zambada García • Miguel Treviño Morales • Edgar Valdez Villarreal • Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo • Heriberto Lazcano • Juan José Esparragoza Moreno • Ignacio Coronel • Jorge Eduardo Costilla • 	
See also	Timeline of the Mexican Drug War • Mérida Initiative • Narco submarine • Project Gunrunner • War on Drugs • Operation Solare • Operation Xcellerator	

