

Mexico Foreign Press Chatter

February 27, 2026

The historic military operation that killed Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, “El Mencho,” leader of the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), grabbed the vast majority headlines this week. The NYT reported coordinated retaliatory violence across 13 states, calling it one of the most widespread cartel backlashes in recent years. The WSJ focused on the government’s containment efforts, citing security expert Eduardo Guerrero’s assessment that this was the biggest blow “the government has ever struck against a criminal group,” and later reporting 30 deaths and more than 70 detentions. The NYT added further context, describing the CJNG as a 15,000–20,000-strong organization known for terrorizing communities and brazen attacks on authorities.

As one would expect, plenty of op-eds and analysis pieces followed. The NYT framed the strike as a tactical success that now opens a dual-front fight against both CJNG and the Sinaloa cartel, testing Mexico’s coordination and security minister Omar Garcia Harfuch’s aggressive strategy. Writing for The Washington Post, León Krauze called it a “turning point” for Sheinbaum, deviating from López Obrador’s “hugs not bullets” approach but warned that the cartel’s scale and fragmentation mean the conflict is far from over. The FT and Reuters described the operation as a risky gamble — accelerated by U.S. pressure and the World Cup in June — which was praised in Washington but can be destabilizing if political and financial networks tied to the cartel are not dismantled. Meanwhile, Bloomberg’s J.P. Spinetto argued Sheinbaum deserves credit for demonstrating state capacity and willingness to improve security, even as political risks mount. Broadening the lens, the NYT situated the episode within the broader history of the U.S. drug war, noting that removing criminal organizations’ leaders without institutional reform often breeds fragmentation.

The bilateral relationship was inextricably linked with the operation. The NYT underscored that Sheinbaum has taken advantage of Trump’s pressure for a more assertive stance, while noting improved intelligence cooperation over the past year. The Guardian emphasized that Trump’s security expectations remain high, demanding Mexico “step up” and linking security progress to Trump’s trade negotiations, while The Economist highlighted the diplomatic risks if violence escalates. U.S. intelligence support was also widely reported: The NYT disclosed that a C.I.A. task force specializing in drone intelligence contributed, while Reuters revealed that a U.S. interagency task force focused on cartel intelligence was instrumental, while Mexican security officials stressed the operation was nationally led and complemented by U.S. intelligence.

As the days have passed, headlines have turned to how the operation unfolded and how CJNG operates. The LA Times detailed El Mencho’s military-style security apparatus, including land mines and 400-armed men, noting a party on Saturday night left him vulnerable. The NYT and the WSJ reported on a security official’s confirmation that he was tracked down to a mountain

cabin in Tapalpa through a romantic partner and triggered a subsequent gunfight. Reuters visited the site, describing bullet holes, unmade beds, and abandoned medicine, while the NYT extended the visit to the town, reporting that locals said cartel dominance had long underpinned a fragile calm. Meanwhile, the NYT and WSJ mapped cartel territory nationwide, and The Guardian revisited Mencho's rise from police officer to small-time dealer to elusive drug lord. In Guadalajara, the NYT captured the eerie quiet as daily life resumed, portraying the panic felt by citizens, which, per Reuters, was exacerbated by cartel-linked disinformation, including fabricated images of attacks.

Tourism, unfortunately, also entered the picture, with the NYT and WSJ describing how Puerto Vallarta, a popular beach destination for American retirees and tourists, was jolted by the violence. Bloomberg then reported that the U.S. Department of State urged Americans to "shelter in place." This provoked The Guardian to question Mexico's readiness to host the upcoming World Cup and welcome millions, noting Guadalajara's Akron Stadium sits close to Sunday's roadblocks. Echoing concerns, the AP reported that Portugal's football federation would "monitor" the situation ahead of a friendly match in Mexico City. However, The Guardian reported that Sheinbaum said there is no risk for visitors and that Guadalajara's hosting capabilities are assured, a view echoed by FIFA president Gianni Infantino, per the AP.

Beyond El Mencho, Bloomberg reported that a hacker used Anthropic AI to steal 150 gigabytes of sensitive government information, including taxpayer records and voter information. Meanwhile, domestic reforms did not pause: the AP noted Congress approved reducing the workweek from 48 to 40 hours, while the FT examined Sheinbaum's controversial 10-point electoral reform proposal.

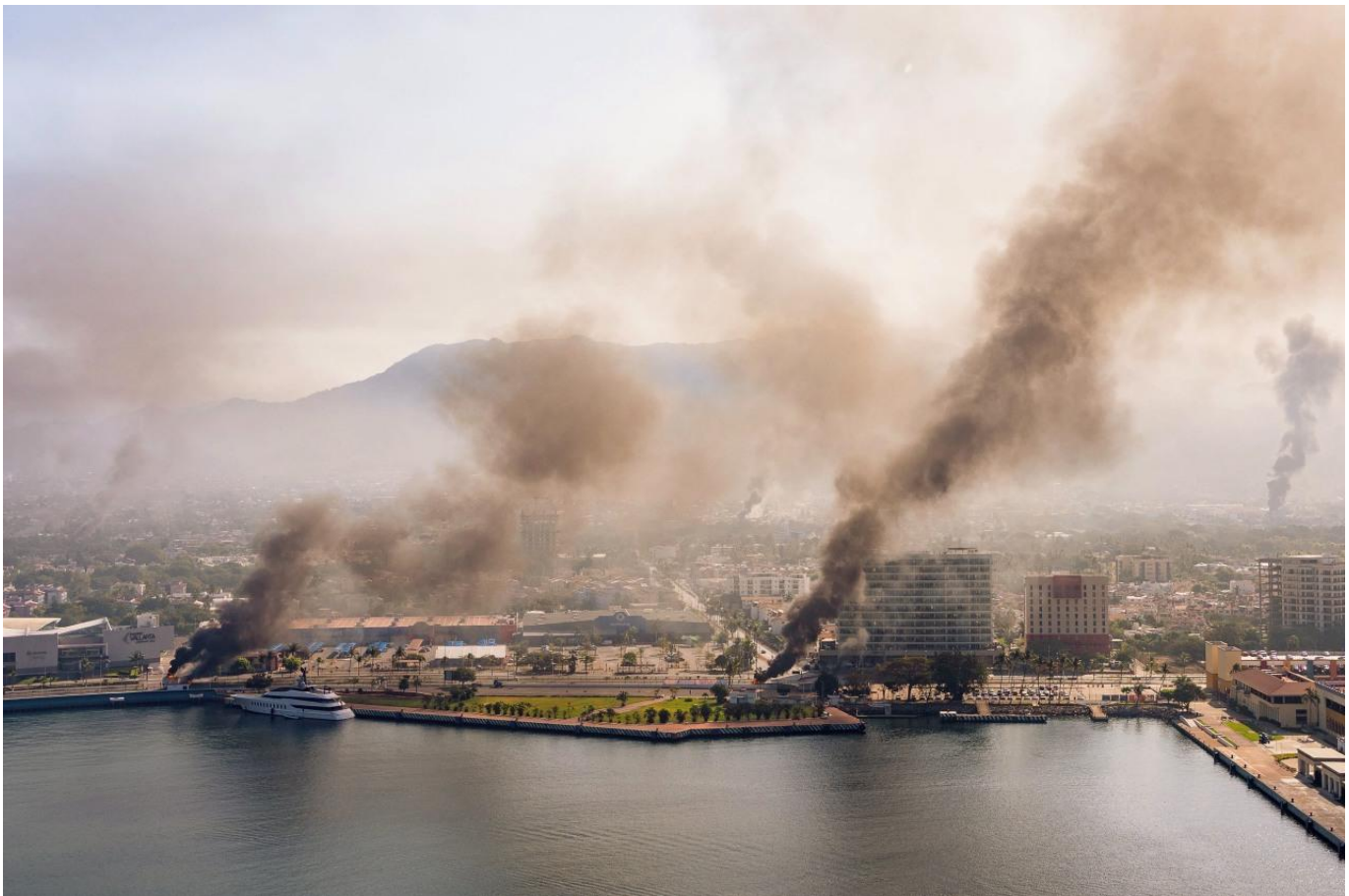
On business and the economy, the NYT and the LA Times reported that while the Supreme Court's decision voiding Trump's tariffs may have limited short-term impact on Mexico given USMCA protections, it injects fresh uncertainty ahead of the pact's scheduled review. Bloomberg covered investment news, as Citigroup struck a deal to sell another 24% of Banamex, the government announced plans to invest \$233 million in a fund focused on alternative assets, and Visa's proposed takeover of payment processor Prosa was blocked by Mexico's antitrust watchdog. On macro figures, Bloomberg reported that Mexico's final growth number for 2025 came at 0.6%, as investment challenges continue to constrain growth.

Shifting gears, The Guardian reviewed *Ways to Traverse a Territory*, Gabriela Domínguez Ruvalcaba's documentary on the Tzotzil women of Chiapas, emphasizing the community's deep relationship with the surrounding landscape while acknowledging persistent discrimination. In history, the LA Times covered Marco Rubio's controversial claims that the American cowboy archetype was born in Spain, sparking online debate surrounding Mexican vaqueros. In Mexico City, Reuters previewed Shakira's free Mexico City concert in the Zocalo this weekend.

Notable blogs in English on Mexico

Mexico-related Substacks were also mostly about “El Mencho”. On [Crashout](#), Ioan Grillo cites unnamed sources that suggest officials decided he would not be kept alive, and stressed that the timing of the operation is linked to U.S. pressure and the World Cup. In a [follow-up](#), he dubbed cartel retaliation “the menchazo,” reporting on a total of 252 coordinated narco-blockades and over 60 deaths, showing an unprecedented level of cartel capacity. On [Mexico Decoded](#), Viri Ríos warned that the CJNG’s profitability and decentralized structure mean that killing its leader will result in more violence without sustained policing and effective intelligence coordination. The [Mexico Political Economist](#) discussed whether Sunday’s attacks threaten World Cup security, arguing that violence in Mexico is geographically concentrated and often strategically calibrated to avoid harming tourist hubs; some security experts suggested the operation may have been partly aimed at securing Guadalajara ahead of the tournament. Elsewhere on [Materia Gris](#), Eduardo García argued that Mexico’s oil industry has grown into a nationalistic myth, which has shielded Pemex from the scrutiny it deserves and has normalized failure and prevented structural reforms.

Photo of the Week



Smoke rises in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, after violent reactions to the killing of Nemesio ‘Mencho’ Oseguera. Photo by Gerardo Santillan for EPA/Shutterstock

FOREIGN PRESS COVERAGE

[Mayhem Rocks Mexico After Most-Wanted Cartel Boss Is Killed](#)

02/22/26, NYT, Jack Nicas and Paulina Villegas

[What to Know About the Killing of 'El Mencho'](#)

02/22/26, NYT, Ephrat Livni

[Gunmen Wreak Chaos in Mexican Coastal Retreat After Cartel Killing](#)

02/22/26, WSJ, Juan Forero and Jenny Carolina González

[Mexico Races to Prevent Cartel War After the Killing of Top Drug Boss](#)

02/23/26, WSJ, Santiago Pérez and José de Córdoba

[Mexico Fights Back Against the Cartels](#)

02/23/26, WSJ, The Editorial Board

[Videos Show How Mayhem Unfolded in Mexico](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Devon Lum and Pablo Robles

[Mexico Killed 'El Mencho.' What's Next for the Drug Cartel He Led?](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Maria Abi-Habib

[Opinion| Mexico just decapitated its most dangerous cartel. That means war.](#)

02/24/26, Washington Post, Leon Krauze

[Mexico's biggest battle in the drug war is yet to come](#)

02/25/26, FT, Editorial Board

[Sheinbaum Kills a Drug Lord and Crosses Her Rubicon](#)

02/23/26, Bloomberg, JP Spinetto

[Unprecedented military raid is risky gamble for Mexico's Sheinbaum](#)

02/23/26, Reuters, Laura Gottesdiener and Emily Green

[Claudia Sheinbaum's risky bet on dethroning 'El Mencho.'](#)

02/24/26, FT, Ciara Nugent

[After Six Decades of War on Drugs, Does Anything Work?](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Maria Abi-Habib

[Mexico Is Caught Between Trump and the Cartels](#)

02/24/26, NYT, Jack Nicas

[Mexico faces uphill battle to appease kingpin Trump after cartel boss's killing](#)

02/23/26, Guardian, Oscar Lopez

[The killing of Mexico's most powerful narco will please Donald Trump](#)

02/23/26, The Economist, Staff

[C.I.A. Intelligence Helped Lead Mexican Authorities to 'El Mencho'](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Julian E. Barnes et. Al

[Exclusive: New US military-led group aided Mexico's hunt for 'El Mencho' cartel boss](#)

02/22/26, Reuters, Phil Stewart and Laura Gottesdiener

[Inside El Mencho's arsenal: high-powered weapons, 400 gunmen, drones and land mines](#)

02/24/26, LA Times, Steve Fisher

[Mexican Forces Say They Tracked El Mencho to Cabin by Following His Lover](#)

02/23/26, NYT, James Wagner

[Mexico, U.S. Tracked Drug Lord's Lover Before Deadly Raid](#)

02/23/26, WSJ, Santiago Pérez and José de Córdoba

[This Is Where Mexico's Most-Wanted Cartel Boss Made His Last Stand](#)

02/26/26, NYT, Paulina Villegas

[Inside the Mexican country villa that became 'El Mencho's' final refuge](#)

02/25/26, Reuters, Natalia Siniawski and Jose Luis Gonzalez

[What to Know About the Cartels Operating in Mexico](#)

02/24/26, NYT, Ephrat Livni

[See Where Mexico's Cartels Are in Control](#)

02/24/26, WSJ, Emma Brown and Kejal Vyas

[Who was El Mencho, the former police officer who co-founded an ultraviolent cartel in Mexico?](#)

02/23/26, Guardian, Staff

[After killing of top drug lord, cartels use fake news to spread fear in Mexico](#)

02/24/26, Reuters, Laura Gottesdiener and Stefanie Eschenbacher

[After Chaos Rips Across Mexico, the Remnants of Cartel Violence Haunt Residents](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Paulina Villegas

[A Tourist City Is Jolted by Violence in Mexico](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Amelia Nierenberg and David Shortell

[It Was Paradise for American Retirees—Until It Became the Center of a Drug War](#)

02/24/26, WSJ, Anne Tergesen

[Hunkering Down in Mexico, Some Hope for a Flight Out Amid Burning Cars](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Soumya Karlamangla

[What Travelers Need to Know as Cartel Violence Rattles Mexico](#)

02/23/26, NYT, Stephen Hiltner

[Is It Safe to Travel to Mexico Right Now?](#)

02/24/26, NYT, Shannon Sims

[US Asks Citizens in Mexico to Shelter After Cartel Leader Killed](#)

02/22/26, Bloomberg, María Paula Mijares Torres

[Mexico erupts and World Cup security fears rise after a cartel boss's killing](#)

02/23/26, Guardian, Jon Arnold

[Mexico pledges safety for World Cup after violence erupts from cartel boss's killing](#)

02/24/26, Guardian, Thomas Graham

[Portuguese soccer federation monitoring situation in Mexico ahead of friendly in March](#)

02/24/26, AP, Staff

[FIFA's Infantino has 'complete confidence' in Mexico to host World Cup games despite cartel violence](#)

02/25/26, AP, Carlos Rodriguez

[Mexican Congress approves trimming work week to 40 hours](#)

02/25/26, AP, Staff

[Hacker Used Anthropic's Claude to Steal Sensitive Mexican Data](#)

02/25/26, Bloomberg, Andrew Martin and Carolina Millan

[Mexico weighs legal action after Musk links president to drug cartels](#)

02/24/26, Reuters, Staff

[Mexican Congress approves trimming work week to 40 hours](#)

02/25/26, AP, Staff

[Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum Unveils Electoral Reform Despite Allies' Pushback](#)

02/25/26, Bloomberg, Alex Vasquez and Gonzalo Soto

[Supreme Court ruling against Trump's tariffs leaves Mexico in cautious wait-and-see mode](#)

02/21/16, LA Times, Patrick J. McDonnell

[What Happens to All These Trade Deals Now?](#)

02/20/26, NYT, Emiliano Rodríguez Mega et. Al

[Grupo Aeromexico Resuming Operations After Cartel Rampage](#)

02/23/26, WSJ, Elias Schisgall

[Visa's Prosa Deal Rejected by Mexico's Antitrust Watchdog](#)

02/20/26, Bloomberg, Amy Stillman and Paige Smith

[Citigroup Strikes Banamex Stake Sales With Blackstone, BTG](#)

02/23/26, Bloomberg, Andrea Navarro, Cristiane Lucchesi, and Michael O'Boyle

[Mexico's Economy Barely Grew in 2025 as Sheinbaum Chases More Investment](#)

02/23/26, Bloomberg, Gonzalo Soto

[Mexico Mid-Month Inflation Data May Keep March Cut in Play](#)

02/24/26, Bloomberg, Gonzalo Soto and Alex Vasquez

[Banxico Has Room for More Interest Rate Cuts, Deputy Governor Says](#)

02/25/26, Bloomberg, Alex Vasquez

[Ways to Traverse a Territory review – documenting an ancient and disappearing way of life](#)

02/23/26, Guardian, Phuong Le

[Rubio credited Spain for the origins of the American cowboy. Mexico begs to differ](#)

02/23/26, LA Times, Patrick J. McDonnell

[Shakira brings free concert to Mexico City in March](#)

02/20/26, Reuters, Staff